

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA HONORS PROGRAM FALL NEWSLETTER



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On the Cover: Renee Mittelberg, BS Industrial Engineering, is one of 56 anticipated December University Honors graduates. An honors peer mentor, Renee previously served as an honors outreach ambassador and president of Phi Eta Sigma honor society. She completed an internship as part of her honors experiential learning. Read more about internships on page 20.

Photos courtesy: Justin Torner and University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication



WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings for the Fall/Winter of 2020 to our Honors Program students, faculty, alumni/ae, and friends. I hope you, your families, and your friends are staying safe and well during these very challenging times.

By Dr. Art Spisak

UPDATE ON COVID-19 CONDITIONS

The Honors Program staff, both our professional staff and our student staff, are and will continue to work remotely, although we will meet with students face-to-face at their request. Students did return to campus for most of the Fall semester, yet the majority of classes (over 75 percent)



are online, masking and social distancing are required, and most all classes went virtual after November 30th. My appreciation to the honors staff for facilitating so well the return to classes this Fall. In August and September, pandemic-related challenges seemed to arise almost on a daily basis, and yet they worked through them all with no complaint. They are a remarkably dedicated and capable group.

Many of this newsletter's articles revolve around changes the pandemic has necessitated and how it's affected students. Yet, you'll also read about several opportunities that we've created for our students whose academic plans have been disrupted by the pandemic. A major example is the Summer 2020 Project: it's enabled students to do independent research when access to labs and face-to-face contact have been restricted severely. About one hundred students completed the Summer 2020 Project, which included a reflection on how the pandemic affected their project, and hence they also documented in some way what conditions were like. We've asked the University Library to digitally archive the projects. Moreover, we have decided to continue that project for at least next summer, if not permanently.

Finally, on COVID-19 conditions, as people know who have been through challenging situations, they can bring out both the best and worst of people. I want to commend our entering honors students who took part in Honors Primetime, this

year comprised of eighteen one-semester-hour seminars that took place one week before the start of regular classes, as described below in this newsletter. Our students modeled safe and responsible behavior and took the modifications all in stride that were made to some seminars because of the pandemic. The quality of the final presentations they made of their seminar experience showed how seriously they took their learning experience. My thanks also to our Honors Primetime instructors, who showed that they could teach under even the most challenging circumstances.

HONORS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning, which is learning by doing and then reflection on that experience, comprises half the Honors Program curriculum. It's an especially good fit for our program, since self-discovery is an integral part of our mission statement. We give our students a menu of options for their experiential learning, which include, among other things, hands-on laboratory experiments, internships, teaching practicums, study abroad, and undergraduate research. Regarding undergraduate research, the most popular option with our students, nearly 75 percent of honors students at Iowa participate in undergraduate research. That's compared to about 25 percent of non-honors students. In this newsletter, you'll find out what draws our students to undergraduate research. You'll also see how our students have been able to continue with their internships and even study abroad under pandemic conditions.

HONORS PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS

As announced in this newsletter, the call for applications for Honors Program scholarships has gone out for next academic year. Last year, through the ever-amazing generosity of our donors, the Honors Program awarded nearly \$200,000 in support to honors students. This took the form of travel grants, support for research, fellowships, such as our Honors Writing Fellows Program, with the largest portion of the total amount going to fund our honors scholarships. The continual decline in

state support for public universities and resulting increases in tuition have in many cases made scholarships essential to our students. Moreover, federal support for students from mid- and lower-income families is nowhere near adequate, as reflected in the alarming amount of outstanding debt for student loans, which topped \$1.3 trillion (not billion) in 2017. Deserving and highly capable young adults simply would not have access to higher education without the help of caring and concerned benefactors. Some of our scholarship recipients would literally not be able to attend university without that support. In that case, our donors have changed lives in unimaginable ways. In other cases, scholarships lessen student debt so that students feel more confident about attending graduate or professional school. In every case, scholarships boost students' confidence and sense of worth. They are then inspired to extend themselves even farther and accomplish more. I have personally observed this incentivizing effect scholarships have on our students, who are typically very modest about their capabilities. I extend a heartfelt thanks to those who support Honors at Iowa for making this help and recognition available to our students. Your generosity brings about incalculable good.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email (art-spisak@uiowa.edu) or phone (319.335.1685) with any comments, questions, or concerns you have about the Honors Program. I'm happy to have such conversations. Also, you can direct questions on anything related to the Honors Program experience to honors-program@uiowa.edu.

Cordially,



Art L. Spisak, PhD
 Director, UI Honors Program
 Professor, Classics Department
 Past President (2017), National Collegiate Honors Council



CLASSROOM

Photo courtesy: University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

HONORS PRIMETIME:

AD ASTRA PER ASPERA

Through Hardships to the Stars

By James Transue

It was quiet. Late-morning sunbeams slipped through the windows of Van Allen Hall and crawled across the tile floor. Adjustable chairs circled gray tabletops, each crowned by a tangle of cords. It was a classic college classroom scene, except for the white, streetlamp-shaped hand sanitizer dispenser by the door and the black-and-gold social distancing stickers marking every other seat. The tabletops smelled of scrubbed-in disinfectant after their months-long abandonment and meticulous rounds of cleaning.

When the first student entered, Professor Allison Jaynes stood in the center of the room. Her computer towered over her desk, wires tethering it downward to the floor, through the walls, and up into the projector. The sunlight flared along her face shield. Needless to say, she had some first day jitters too: “It was the first time [post-lock-down] I was going back and teaching in person.”

The rest of the 21-person class trickled in, each face half-observed by surgical blue paper or a favored color of cloth. As the last few students found their seats, Professor Jaynes directed their attention to the projector. Thus began Honors Primetime: “Society in Space.”

The University of Iowa Honors Program has offered Honors Primetime as a way for incoming honors students to get a jump start on learning,

socializing, and building communities since 2009. But this year has been different from the rest. Honors Primetime still offered incoming students the opportunity to choose a niche topic and begin their college experience learning about it, but some had to do it online.

Online classes are a fact of life right now, but for a course focused on community-building and intertwined with the thrill of being college students on campus for the first time, the online format seemed somewhat counter-intuitive. Students and teachers alike had to reckon with the effects of the pandemic and the restrictions it warranted as well, whether that came in the form of a Zoom classroom or in person social-distancing enforcement.

Jaynes, assistant professor of physics and astronomy at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, who taught one of the in-person Honors Primetime sections, observed, “It was the first time I had to try to be exciting and engaging, to teach with so many things covering my face. That was a big reservation for me.”

For Jaynes, though, neither her reservations nor the fact that this was her first time teaching a Primetime section held her back. Her passion for the topic drove her to be excited for the new experience. “I think people need to be more ex-

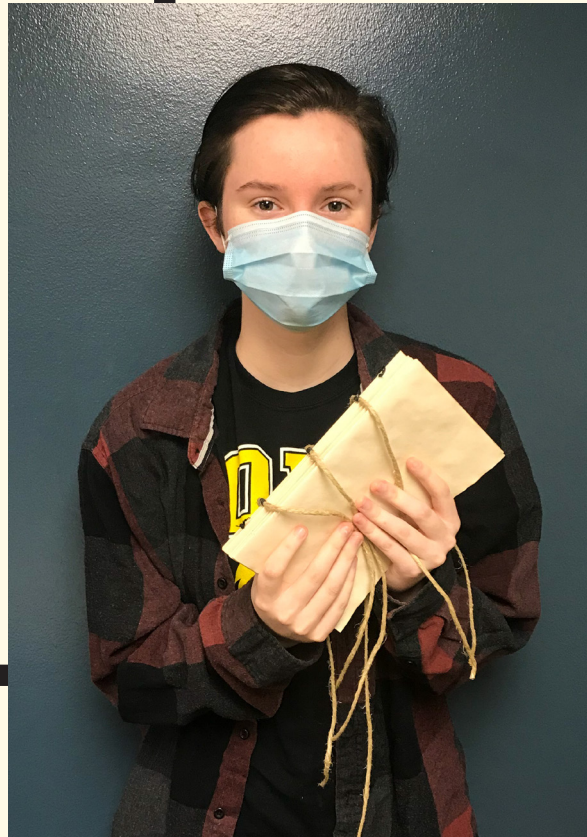
"In some ways, I actually feel like being virtual made the class stronger. Everyone got to share...When you're virtual, it allows [shy or reluctant students] to feel like they have the confidence to share."

- Professor Daniel Khalastchi

cited about how we're exploring space and what that might mean for the future of our society," she said.

Though Professor Daniel Khalastchi, poet and Director of the Magid Center for Undergraduate Writing, had taught a Primetime section before, he had similar reservations. This year, he taught a Primetime section titled "On Paper, In Print: Writing, Sharing, and Publishing Our Work at Iowa," one of the eight online sections. "My [biggest] reservation was: how would we keep students engaged?" he said. "But I found out on the very first day that just wasn't going to be an issue. My students were committed, they were there to learn and to participate, and they were eager to get to know each other. The class went off without a hitch."

As for the change in format, Khalastchi didn't see it as a downgrade. He said, "In some ways, I actually feel like being virtual made the class stronger. Everyone got to share...When you're virtual, it allows [shy or reluctant students] to feel like they have the confidence to share."



Pictured: Kit Andrews shows off their latest book-binding project, employing another skill they learned in "On Paper, In Print."

Provided by: Kit Andrews

One of the students in Khalastchi's Primetime section was Kit Andrews, a first-year majoring in English and creative writing. Andrews's main take-away was what they'd learned about writing-related extracurriculars on campus. "Primetime gave me an idea for the future of what exactly I'll be doing and how to get involved. It made me less anxious about the whole process, and it made it all a lot easier for me to comprehend and compartmentalize," they said.

They thought the class went well overall, citing a good balance between hands-on creative writing exercises and what they learned about opportunities on campus. However, they also said,

"I learned that I'm a very **sporadic learner**: unless I'm really in-the-zone and really hyper-motivated to do something, I can't just sit down and learn it from start to finish. I take **little chunks** at a time and piece out what I can."

- Anthony DeSalvo '21, Engineering

"I feel that both online and in-person [teaching methods] have their merits, but if I had the choice between the two to take the course again...I'd do this specific Primetime in person. Then we'd be able to pass around literary magazines to flip through them and see firsthand what past years had done."

Khalastchi also regretted that his students couldn't exchange chapbooks of their writing from the class at its end, but his reflection on the course was positive. Going into the course, he was filled with questions and apprehension: "Would it work? What happens if Zoom just shuts down? There are those lingering fears that you can't control. I was thankful that it all worked out."

That said, both professors and Andrews concluded that the course exceeded their expectations. "It was fantastic: it was a good introduction for all of us," said Jaynes, despite her concerns about teaching through PPE. Similarly, Khalastchi said, "I critique myself a lot, I'm hyper-critical, but I think the class went really well."

Andrews, meanwhile, is eager to put what they learned from Khalastchi's course to use finding extracurriculars to join in the future. "It was a great opportunity," they said, "I thought it was a blast, and I'm glad I did it."

A PRIMETIME COURSE SAMPLING

"How Birds Work"
Dr. Christopher Brochu

"The History of Weddings"
Dr. Anna Flaming

"Society in Space"
Dr. Allison Jaynes

"Cities: Ancient and Modern"
Dr. Glenn Storey

IOWA ONLINE

By Seth Foster, Olivia Tonelli, & Maggie Winegar

“None of us really expected our freshman year of college to be like this,” says Malayna Stober, a freshman honors student from Oklahoma.

As classes have shifted online and access to study spaces like the Blank Honors Center has been restricted, honors students have been forced to alter their study habits, with many studying in their rooms to stay safe during the pandemic. One’s room is supposed to be a place to relax and unwind, but online classes have caused this personal space to become one of work and mental exhaustion. Stober emphasized the importance for her to “have places outside of my room to do my classes and homework because I will not focus or learn as well if I sit in my room.” Having a familiar, comfortable study space such as a library or classroom aids focus, while combining a study and living spaces often results in frustration.

Recognizing the struggles online classes present to students, professors have implemented changes to make their courses more engaging and accessible. Professor Richard Tyler, whose Fall 2020 Honors First-Year Seminar centers on smartphone use, acknowledges the need to provide his students with an engaging classroom experience over Zoom. Because of this, Professor Tyler regularly offers students “opportunit[ies] to interact with [others]” in his class.

“At the end of each week, [students] are required to give feedback,” Tyler explains. “Everyone shares their understanding of the assignment.” By offering time for each student to share opinions and stories that connect back to class material,

Tyler allows for personal engagement within the virtual classroom.

Tyler’s assignments also take into account the many stressors of the current times. One tasks students to find a relaxation app to research and share with the class. Tyler believes that “in times where there’s a lot of tension and we’re not able to lead our lives in the way we are used to,” this assignment can function as “a way of helping.”

Many students are finding other ways to adjust to this change in learning and lifestyle on their own. Stober, who describes herself as “super outgoing,” reflects that she has “made it a point to talk to as many people as [she] can, anywhere and everywhere.” Indeed, with social media applications like Discord and GroupMe, interacting with others while practicing social distancing has never been easier.

Online classes have brought a few upsides to students too, with some viewing the online format as a blessing in disguise. Stober said that she likes how Zoom lectures are often recorded and put on ICON, a virtual classroom platform, so they can be viewed more than once. Before the pandemic, lectures for in-person classes were often only posted for classes with triple-digit enrollments, leaving out smaller classes.

Online classes have been a mixed bag: Stober and many of her peers say they would rather return to a face-to-face format. Ultimately, students and teachers alike are making the most of this unprecedented learning experience, despite the many hindrances the pandemic has presented. “We have to do our best to make the best of it,” says Stober.

This article was originally published in the 2020 edition of the Alumni Connection.

DR. HILL'S HONORABLE WELLNESS

By Lauren Sanyal

For honors students at the University of Iowa, higher-level classes and elevated expectations can really take their toll. If you are interested in learning more about taking care of yourself as a high-ability student, there's a fantastic new course offering for you. A new special topics honors course, High Ability College Students and Wellness, created by University of Iowa Honors Program Assistant Director Dr. Emily Hill for the spring semester of 2021, will focus on the ways in which ability interacts with wellness.

The course is largely inspired by Hill's research into twice-exceptional college students: students who are high ability/gifted who also live with mental health issues. According to her research, this demographic has difficulty in admitting that they need resources and help. A lot of gifted students believe that because their high achievement lends them control over their academic and extracurricular endeavors, it also does so for their mental health.

Through this research and the realization that mental health struggles are at an all-time high as a result of the pandemic, Hill came up with the idea of an honors student wellness class that could address some of these issues.

Hill said: "Pandemic or not, when I was a college student, if there had been something like this—a class where we could talk about mental illness and wellness in general—I know that would've helped me a lot."

This is Hill's first time creating an honors spe-

cial topics class at the UI, and the process has been exciting. After she pitched her idea to Honors Program Director Dr. Art Spisak, he suggested that she pitch it to the rest of the honors staff as well. From there, it was a collaborative effort to progress her idea to a point where it was ready to offer to students.

Hill is excited that honors students will have access to a two-credit honors class that will provide a place to think about and discuss wellness, self-care, and what they need to do to be healthy. Too often, students don't have a place to do that. "Whatever program you're in, sometimes self-care and learning about what it is and what it means to you is often put on the back burner, especially if you're a high achieving student," Hill said.

However, the creation of this class has been nerve-racking in some respects. Hill understands that this course could encourage sensitive or difficult conversations, which could be challenging for students, but she hopes that those signing up for the course will realize this going into it. She wants to create a comfortable, safe, and respectful space over Zoom for students to discuss these topics.

The class will work in a seminar format with readings, podcasts, and videos on the side and discussions in class. Hill commented: "I'm not big into lecturing. Sometimes you have to do that as an instructor, but I am much more of a fan of the honors education style where you are cultivating knowledge all together. I really see it as an active



Pictured: Emily Hill
Provided by: Emily Hill

learning atmosphere.”

Hill looks forward to answering questions anyone may have about the course over email or through an office hours appointment. She understands that this class may feel like a risk, and she wants everyone to feel comfortable with their decision to take the course.

For any students who are interested in learning more about her research, Hill is happy to discuss it with them in further depth: “I do truly believe that learning is a collaborative effort, so if there are things that students are curious about...that we don’t have on the syllabus, I am very, very open to ideas—if we need to make some adjustments, that’s okay.”

She hopes this course will offer more than just a class, instead serving students well beyond the semester. “I think this course will hopefully help students with self-discovery and cultivating community...I think that having students in this class and discussing shared experiences will be a great thing as they go along in their college careers.”

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

HONR:2600:0004

INSTRUCTOR: Emily Hill

2 s.h.

TIME: Wednesday and Friday 12:30-1:20 PM

DELIVERY MODE: Web, Synchronous

TITLE: High Ability College Students and Wellness

DESCRIPTION: In this course, honors students will learn about how their high ability and wellness interact with one another. There will be a focus on mental health, touching on various areas such as impostor syndrome, existential depression, and the intersectionality of giftedness, mental health, gender, and race. Additionally, honors students will learn about holistic wellness (physical, nutritional, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, financial, and environmental) and what strengths and challenges high ability individuals may encounter beyond their college careers.

Capped at 30 students for now, but will revisit if there seems to be a need for more seats.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT DR. HILL!

Email: emily-d-hill@uiowa.edu
 Office hours: Mondays 3-5 PM
 or by appointment

BALANCING PRE-MEDICAL EDUCATION

Tips for Pre-Medicine Students from a Tattoo Artist and a Medical Student

By Sam Eliassen

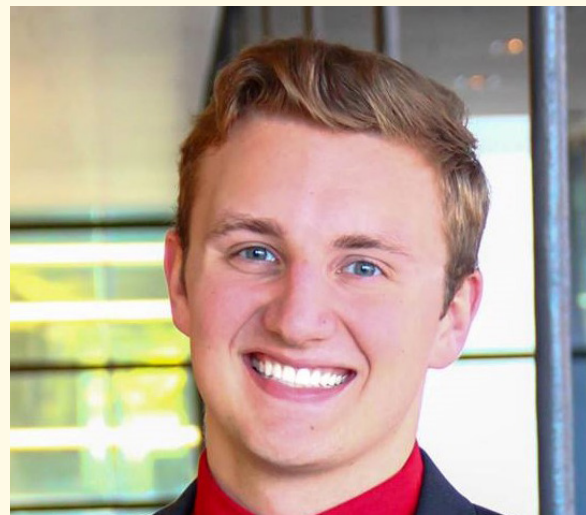
Pre-medicine is a popular academic track at the University of Iowa. With Carver College of Medicine continually ranking in the top 25 medical schools for primary care, opportunities for involvement in the medical community are abounding. Even the University of Iowa's now-famous Kinnick halftime wave connects a seemingly disjointed sports culture to a community of medical excellence in Iowa City.

Medical schools in general, however, have the capacity to seem daunting and mysterious, even to pre-medicine students. After all, they're highly selective, intensive, and rigorous. Typically, an undergraduate degree, a pre-medicine program, hours of job-shadowing and a hefty amount of medical involvement stand between a new student and entrance to a Medical Doctorate (MD) program. Additionally, no medical student forgets about the seven-hour Medical College Admissions Test, also known as the MCAT.

Amidst all this potential stress, students should not have to feel alone. In fact, the Honors Program can help carry some of the burden of medical school preparation. Specifically, honors sections of required pre-medicine classes can provide a smaller learning environment and can work personally with students to build a foundation for

things they will need in the future including the MCAT and initial classes in medical school.

Honors alumnus Mason Lamarche (17BS) is a third-year student at Iowa's Carver College of Medicine; right now, he's working toward an MD with a special focus in pathology. Reflecting on his time at Iowa, both as an undergraduate and in



Pictured: Mason Lamarche, third-year student at Iowa's Carver College of Medicine
Provided by: Mason Lamarche

"[During quarantine] I realized that I was focusing too much on myself and whether I was okay or not. It's good to take care of myself, but it's also nice to just **step back** and **live**. I'm learning to let it be what it's going to be."

- Caroline Meek '21, English and Creative Writing

medical school, he particularly notes how honors courses helped prepare him for a future in health-care.

"Being in honors was definitely helpful," he says. "Honors sections of classes like chemistry or physics are particularly helpful in test prep."

Lamarche encourages undergraduate students in honors to take advantage of these classes, when their schedule allows for it. They provide a closer learning environment, with more opportunities for one-on-one engagement. Generally, they also engage with course materials at a deeper level, touching on topics that general sections may not have the time or capability to incorporate.

While students have a specific course load that must be finished to apply to medical schools, they should feel comfortable with exploring their non-medical interests in their academic downtime. Lamarche advises students to take a step back and focus on their real interests when considering their plans. He even argues against the popular notion that pre-medicine students have to be working towards a major in the hard sciences.

"One of the biggest misconceptions that I've seen," he says, "is that someone in pre-med has to be working towards a STEM degree. In my experience, it's best to study what you like, and to let that shine through your application. Med schools

like to see uniqueness."

Lamarche notes that "typical" pre-medicine degrees like biology, chemistry, or human physiology are helpful in preparing for school, but he also points out that pertinent natural sciences will be covered in depth in any medical program.

"Do what you love," he advises, "if that's chemistry or biology, then go for it. If it's not, then don't feel pressure. You can still get into med school with a different degree." He even notes that erring from the beaten path may help to make someone a more interesting applicant.

This movement towards a more expansive set of academic courses is even reflected in the undergraduate degrees of students in top US medical schools. In a survey by US News, about 25.7% of students at schools like Harvard, Vanderbilt, and the University of Washington held a bachelor's degree in non-scientific areas of study. This category is actually 2.4% larger than that of students with degrees in physical sciences.

However, this phenomenon isn't just for far-away places with fancy names. Hawkeyes are also doing what they love and are being surprised by the medical intersections in traditionally non-medical areas of study. Evangeline Scheibe is a senior at the University of Iowa, completing bachelors degrees in biochemistry and English while on the



Pictured: Carver College of Medicine
Photo courtesy: University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

pre-medicine track. She's the president of the undergraduate chapter of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), an assistant at the cardiovascular metabolic research lab, and a University of Iowa Healthcare pharmacy employee.

As a student, she's a competitive applicant for medical schools and will be applying in the next admissions cycle. Scheibe declared a second major in English during her sophomore year at Iowa, when pre-medicine and STEM course loads were piling up around her. Though she loves biochemistry and medicine, she notes that balance is always key. Since declaring her double major, she's been more content in both fields of study. Unexpectedly, her English studies have also made her more equipped for a career in healthcare.

"Communications tactics that I've learned in English have been useful in labs and classes. The blending is helpful." Scheibe also comments on the professional medical environment, from her perspective in the pharmacy.

"One thing that I've noticed is that doctors are



Pictured: Evangeline Scheibe, fourth-year student majoring in biochemistry and English on the pre-medicine track. **Provided by:** Evangeline Scheibe

kind of notorious for not being able to communicate well. It's downplayed how big of a part of medicine [communication] is. If you can't communicate a diagnosis, there's really no use."

She continues: "I expected [biochemistry and English] to be two different things, but they're not. I'm happy to be learning skills as opposed to just accumulating a portfolio. Writing has been easier, and it's been valuable to know how to take information and express it succinctly to people."

Though Scheibe and Lamarche do not recommend that every pre-medicine student pursue an additional English degree, they are consistent in

their recommendation to find balance and fulfillment. Pre-medicine should be an enjoyable track, and both of these students advise against checking off boxes on an application. Programs like honors allow students to place some of the pre-med stress in built-in curricula, allowing them to use their time more effectively, and more personally.

Scheibe closes with some advice for undergraduates: "Don't sacrifice the things that you enjoy, even when it's hard to maintain balance. You have to make time for friends. Sometimes, you have to give someone a tattoo."



Pictured: Medical Education Research Facility

Photo courtesy: University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

HONORS SCHOLARSHIPS

By Jayne Mathis & Mia Knapp

The University of Iowa Honors Program is dedicated to helping its students succeed, whether that be through academic resources, community building, or financial assistance. Through generous donations from alumni and sponsors, the program can award numerous scholarships each year. In 2019, of the roughly 250-member applicant pool, 108 candidates received scholarships or about 43%.

During the application process, students en-

ter their information into a universal application through the Iowa Scholarship Portal for Undergraduate Students. This single submission applies to all the available scholarships a student qualifies for from the Honors Program. Students are asked to provide a résumé/CV, a letter of recommendation, and an essay. A few additional honors scholarships are available but not included in the universal application. More information about the application process for these scholarships can be found on the honors website.

The essay, which is limited to 750 words, is utilized to highlight who the student is outside of the classroom, with less emphasis strictly on grades. Camille Socarras, the Honors Scholarship Coordinator, says, "Honors is really about developing the whole student and most successful scholarship applications show how the honors experience has contributed to both their academic and personal growth."

For many students, scholarships are vital to continuing their education at the University of Iowa, and this has been amplified due to the pandemic. This year, more scholarships were given out than in previous years. The application for the 2021-2022 academic year will open on Friday, November 27th, 2020, and will close on Monday, February 22nd, 2021 at 11:59. For more information please see the honors website at honors.iowa.edu.

KEY ASPECTS

Resume

Demonstrates intellectual growth, professionalism, and a student's developmental process

Essay

Offers a 3-dimensional picture of a student, and reveals their direction and trajectory

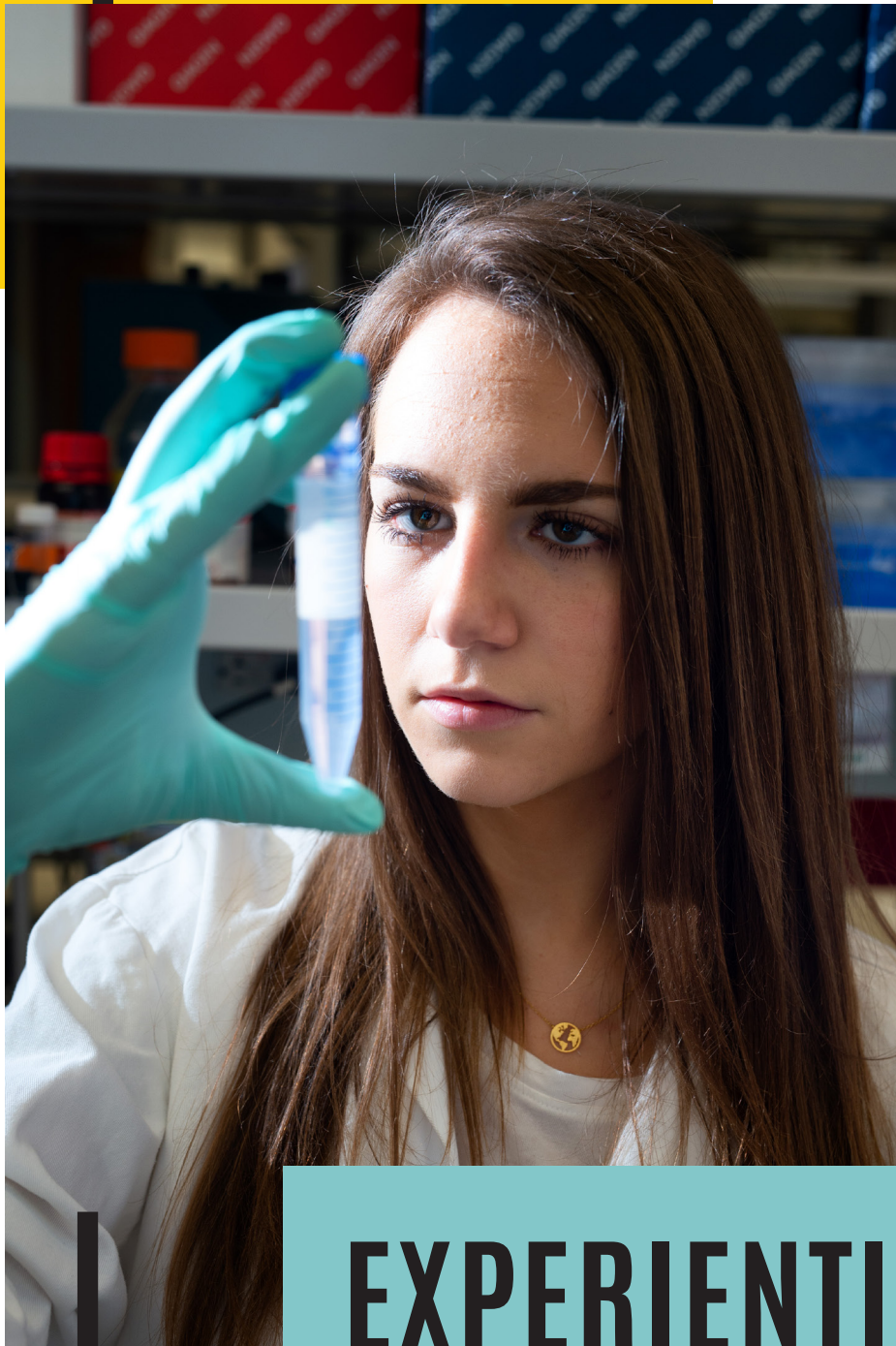
Letter of Recommendation

Outside representation of student character

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Check out the honors website at honors.iowa.edu

This article was originally published in the 2020 edition of the Alumni Connection.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Photo courtesy: University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

FOSTERING **CURIOSITY**

Honors Students in Undergraduate Research

By Julia Fout

According to the 2019-2020 Senior Exit Survey, of those surveyed, 74% of honors students and 23% of non-honors students reported engaging in research during their time as undergraduates. Based on this statistic, honors students were about 3.2 times more likely to investigate interesting subjects along with faculty and explore what opportunities come from their flourishing curiosity.

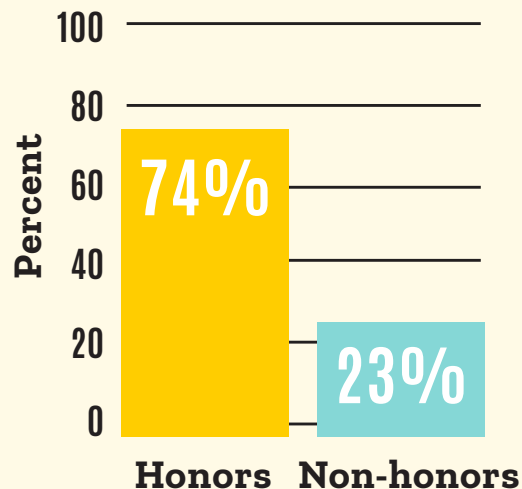
Why do we observe such a stark difference between the two groups of students? Is it because honors students are more interested in research? Are honors students more encouraged or expected to research? Do the differences lie in opportunities for research? Bob Kirby, director of Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates and former associate director of the Honors Program, says there is no singular cause, but there are several contributing factors.

For instance, the honors curriculum significantly increases the number of honors students who engage in research because it was created, in part, for students to participate in “high-impact” experiential learning opportunities for credit. “High-impact” experiences include studying abroad, internships, service learning, and research. They are embedded in the expectations of University of Iowa honors students because the program, as Kirby says, “makes sure honors students get the best education they can at the university, and the best way to do that is to extend [their] education beyond the classroom.” As a result, honors students are also more encouraged to explore enriching experiential learning opportunities like research than their non-honors counterparts. Additionally, for some departments, completing

research is a way for students to receive departmental honors, which could increase the number of honors students in research since many strive to obtain this accreditation.

Furthermore, honors students often think about more than just getting an undergraduate degree: they strive for graduate school, law school, medical school, or other higher education. Getting in-

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PARTICIPATION



HONORS STUDENTS ARE **3.2 TIMES** MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

involved in research and learning from professionals in their field is very beneficial if they wish to be involved with it in their future pursuits. Research is not the only experience that can prepare students for higher education, but it remains a top choice for many honors students because of the unique opportunities and skills it helps them develop. The Honors Program is not “one size fits all;” it allows for students to choose which highly impactful and influential experiences suit their interests and goals.

Elizabeth Janey, a senior honors student and student ambassador for undergraduate research, has been involved in research since her freshman year. Janey will soon finish a Bachelors of Science in psychology and will apply to an eagerly-awaited graduate program. For Janey, research allows her to “think critically, come up with new ideas, and be curious about what [she is] doing.” She believes research has given her the space to put “coursework into reality,” through which she has found a potential career path.

She notes that being an honors student was a “motivating factor” for her involvement in research since she wished to complete an honors thesis project to attain departmental honors. Janey says, “being in the Honors Program gives me that accessibility or drive to be involved with things like research.”

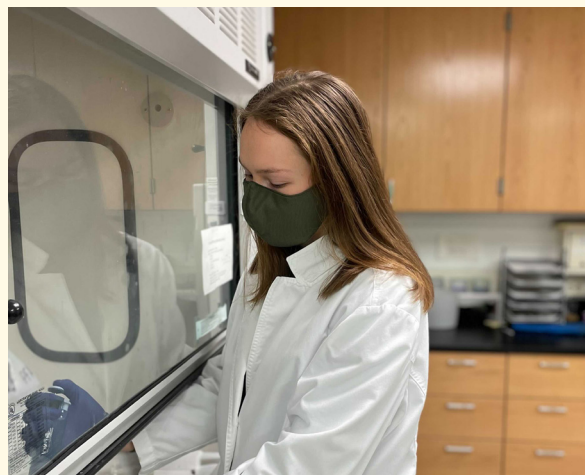
Honors students stick out in a statistic like this because the program offers them more incentive and encouragement to experience learning outside of the classroom and surrounds them with a smaller, more involved community. Although some broad inferences can be made from this statistic, it has some shortcomings. Kirby notes there may be underreporting of research experiences by non-honors students, which contributes to potential inaccuracies. Nevertheless, Kirby asserts the survey is significantly valid and consistent. This means, in a proper statistics context, the survey accurately measures what it intends to and that it is reliable.

Students do not need to be a part of the Honors Program to participate in research. In fact, the un-

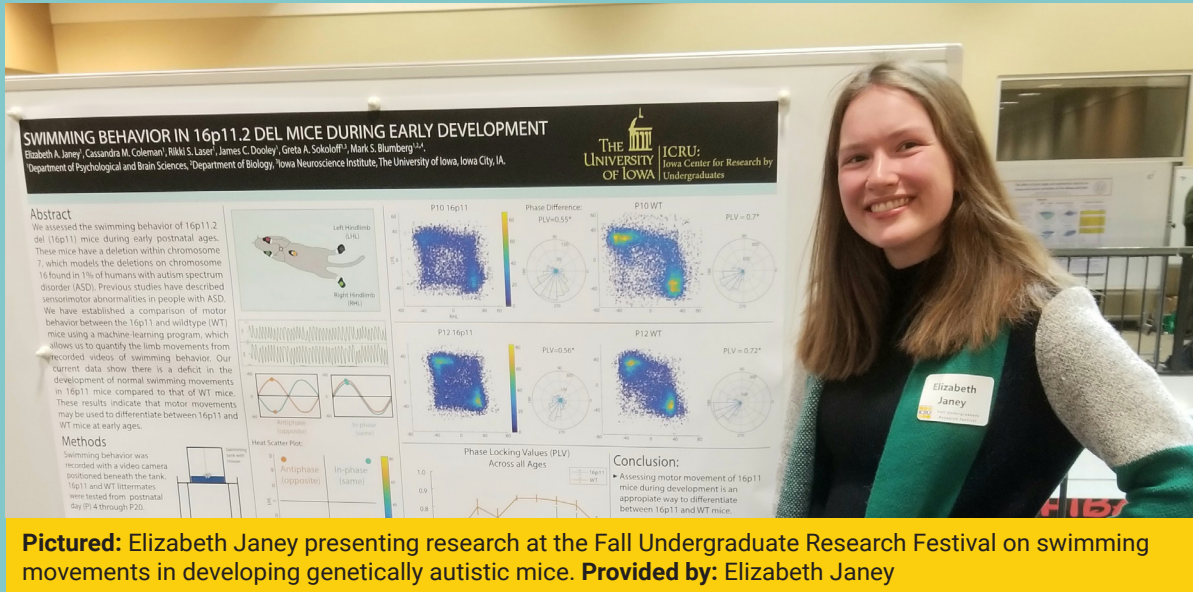
dergraduate research office insists that research is a phenomenal opportunity for all undergraduates. Honors Assessment Manager and Admissions Coordinator Addison Woll expresses that the Honors Program, however, provides “greater scaffolding” in encouraging students to engage in “high-impact” practices like research, and that could explain why we see a greater proportion of honors students researching as undergraduates.

Research, along with other forms of experiential learning, are highly sought-after not only because experiential learning is a requirement for the Honors Program but because it allows for academic and professional skills to be put into action. These opportunities encourage collaboration and mentorship between student and professor and offer learning and career benefits.

Janey remarks, “[Research] gives you a lot of skills. You learn a lot of new things that you are not learning in the classroom which are pertinent to after your undergraduate years.” She lists team cooperation and communication skills as well as her experiences working independently in a professional environment among the ways research has enhanced her education.



Pictured: Elizabeth Janey conducting a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) which is a method scientific labs use to make many copies of short sections of DNA. **Provided by:** Elizabeth Janey



Pictured: Elizabeth Janey presenting research at the Fall Undergraduate Research Festival on swimming movements in developing genetically autistic mice. **Provided by:** Elizabeth Janey

Elizabeth Janey is an undergraduate researcher at the Blumberg lab, which focuses on sleep and its development, neural control, and functional significance. She measures and collects data of REM sleep movements in genetically different mice by attaching measuring instruments to their limbs. She compares mice who have autism to ones that don't to see what relationships may be behind these behavioral processes. Shown in the photo, Janey is conducting a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) which is a method scientific labs use to make many copies of short sections of DNA. Her work in the lab is slightly different now because of the pandemic. Luckily, her subjects of study are not human, which allows her to still conduct her behavioral inquiries. Most of

her work now, since it is data analysis, can be conducted remotely from her laptop. Many research labs are still functioning in this same manner and some students contribute virtually entirely.

In 2019, Janey presented research at the Fall Undergraduate Research Festival on swimming movements in developing genetically autistic mice. Janey, having been involved in research since her first year as an undergraduate, explains how she has been able to be involved in more than one aspect of the research. For her presented 2019 research project, Janey says she was there at the beginning when the project was coming into fruition, which allowed her to help develop and follow the hypotheses, methods, and data analysis as they progressed.

To find out more about how undergraduate research can help you explore your interests, the ICRU office is open for in person walk-ins 1:00-5:00 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in Suite 6 of Gilmore Hall. Zoom appointments are available as well.

INTERN-TIPS

The What, Where, and How of Internships

By Jayne Mathis and Mia Knapp

Not sure where to start earning experiential learning credits? Internships might be the perfect option! They provide the unique advantage of gaining experience in an environment different from school or home. However, the process for finding and applying for an internship can look impossibly overwhelming. Never fear! Here are some answers to a few burning questions that come with navigating the world of internships.

What resources do I have at the university?

The university provides many resources to help

you find, gain, and make the most of internships through the Pomerantz Career Center (PCC). Career fairs, which are virtual this year, are helpful tools to discover internships. Alan Boettger, Senior Director of Corporate & Community Outreach at the PCC, says that with the new virtual format, career fairs have adopted a niche focus on specific fields. Despite the adjusted setting, student and employer attendance has not decreased.

The PCC also provides mock interviews. Boettger meets with students individually and helps them practice for upcoming interviews. This one-



Pictured: Pomerantz Career Center. **Photo courtesy:** University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

STEPS TO USING HANDSHAKE

1. PROFILE

Set up your profile by entering your basic information and previous experiences.

2. SEARCH

Use the search feature to look for internships – look for what you want in general, don't worry about the details just yet.

3. SAVE

Save positions that pique your interest.

4. APPLY

Apply for internships!

on-one format means students will get feedback tailored to their specific needs to make a good impression on potential employers.

Big Interview, a free software for students, can be accessed inside the PCC and on its website. The software has a built-in artificial intelligence that listens to and critiques answers in practice interviews, and, as Boettger describes, it “allows you to record your interviews, play them back, and send them to other people to get evaluation from them.”

Career peer advisors are another valuable resource available to students through the PCC. As one career peer advisor, Madelyn Jermier, describes, this system is useful to guide students through setting up resumes, choosing internships to apply for, and navigating tools such as Handshake. As a peer mentor, Jermier helps students find “a broader idea of the kind of internship they are looking for instead of narrowing it down to a company, city and date.” She urges all students not to be too intimidated to come to a peer mentor for help. She says, “We’re willing to sit down with you and help you through it because we’ve all been through it as well.”

What is Handshake, and how do I use it?

Handshake is the primary website the university uses to help connect students to job and intern-

ship openings. Jermier highly recommends Handshake because, she explains, “The university does a good job of organizing it, sometimes it’s difficult to navigate [other] websites, and you at least know on the university website all of the positions on there are trusted.”

I have an interview set up, how can I make a good impression?

Through his experiences with mock interviews, Boettger has created several tips for how to present well when moment arrives. “My biggest advice,” he says, “is to remember that everyone you speak to is interviewing you, from the front desk to a person at the door.” This is especially important to remember in an in-person interview, as simply walking into the building creates opportunities for encounters with employees who won’t be in the interview.

Researching the company you’re applying to before the interview is crucial. Prepare to discuss key points of the job description and describe, in detail, how your experience will help you accomplish those goals. It will also help you ask more in-depth questions about the position, which will set you apart from other candidates and help you know if the job is a good fit for you.

Boettger also has several tips for virtual interviews which have become increasingly common

and will likely continue in the future. His main concerns with virtual formats are “testing the technology, being aware of your surroundings, and trying to remember to have eye contact with the camera that’s on your computer.”

Practicing beforehand is vital. Boettger explains that this could be through mock interviews, software provided by the PCC, or simply with a friend. Practicing will help you prepare for questions you could expect in an interview and avoid mistakes.

How do I get honors experiential learning credit for my internship?

Luckily, registering for honors experiential learning credit for your internship is straightforward! Additional details are laid out on the Honors at Iowa website. You must complete a pre- and post-experience questionnaire and submit a narrative project reflecting on your experience and explain how it helped you grow and expand your self-knowledge.

Honors Experiential Learning Director Andrew Willard advises students that the word “internship” does not have to appear in your job title for it to qualify as experiential learning. It simply needs to be a position that develops your knowledge and skills in your area of interest.

For the reflection assignment, Willard advises students to give specific examples in the narra-

“[It’s] important for me to give myself more time for self-reflection. It’s always good to understand myself a bit more.”

- Nick Nachtman '24,
Political Science and Sociology

tives. Instead of making a generalized statement about what you learned, offer an example to crystallize your concept in their reader’s mind. Willard says, “It takes a bit more writing, but it strengthens the narrative.”

If you feel overwhelmed or unsure about internships, take some of Willard’s advice: “Value, not vague,” he summarizes. Don’t be afraid to approach someone about an opportunity that you think will help you gain knowledge or skills. Just go for it, and if it doesn’t work out, well, “that’s practice for life.” Hopefully, a few of these tips will put you on track for more success.

“When the pandemic took all of those responsibilities away, like work, it made me reflect on what I do when I don’t have to do anything else. It taught us that we can’t take for granted things that we’ve always had because they can go away for unexpected reasons.”

- Maya Torrez '24, English and Creative Writing

CREATIVITY FOR CREDIT

By Lauren Sanyal & Axel Ohrvall

As a result of the pandemic, honors students lost opportunities to fulfill experiential learning requirements. To remedy this, the University of Iowa Honors Program created the Honors 2020 Summer Project, designed to encourage students to delve deeper into their academic and personal development during a tumultuous time.

Project submissions ranged from written papers to podcasts and audio files. The diversity and creativity of the submissions were a result of the project's flexible requirements.

Honors Experiential Learning Director Andrew Willard, part of the team that constructed the project, said that integral to its creation were "a set of guiding questions and parameters that were sufficiently flexible that any honors students could use them."

The project's main architect, however, was Addison Woll, the assessment manager and admissions coordinator of the Honors Program. Holly Yoder, the Honors Program's advising director, proposed the idea, and Woll ran with it and came up with the project itself.

Woll suggested the Honors Program secure UI librarian Cathy Cranston to help students with the research side of the project and its introspective elements. According to Cranston, the introspective portion of the project was the most important since it gave students a chance to step back from their hectic lives and reflect on their current situations.

Cranston's colleagues who work in the University Archives and Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio worked with the project to ensure that the

student products can be added to what they call "The Covid-19 Stories for the Digital Repository." Cranston said: "100 years from now, if someone wanted to know what the experience of an undergraduate student at Iowa was like, they're going to have a record of that. It's a neat thing to be a part of history, even though it's a challenging time." The records, which house an online archive of student work and stories, can be found at the university libraries website.

One participant, Daniela Rybarczyk, a music performance and business major, wove her fields of study together with her project, which "looked at the economic impact on the orchestra industry right now. While she initially struggled to incorporate a business perspective, a little help from Cranston offered inspiration. "Once I started going and researching, the ball got rolling," she said.

The staff also found themselves benefiting from their efforts. Following a Zoom call with a student that left her emotional, Cranston felt very hopeful about the future, seeing promise in the students she worked with.

Woll felt similarly: "I guess it taught me that, when there's a crisis, people really do pull together and are looking for solutions rather than just trying to point out problems."

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Check out the honors website at honors.iowa.edu

This article was originally published in the 2020 edition of the Alumni Connection.

EXPERIENCING CULTURE: REIMAGINED

How Study Abroad Programs are adapting to newfound challenges

By Julia Fout

Studying abroad is an experience many honors students eagerly await. They excitedly plan when they can fit it into their schedules, where they want to go, and what they expect to learn from the experience. From their travels, they hope to gain new ideas and skills they can apply to their personal, academic, and professional lives. For many honors students, studying abroad is an integral part of being a collegiate scholar. Honors Experiential Learning Director Andrew Willard says, “[it’s] a way to learn about yourself and how you respond to new exposures.”

For junior honors student Hannah Huzzey, being abroad in Rome allowed her to develop interpersonal and adaptive skills. She says, “Studying abroad really forces you to work on your people-skills. You are dropped into this country surrounded by things you don’t know [and] you have to adapt. It is so great for making you learn how to live with change.” For approximately 41% of honors students who participate in international or cross-cultural academic work, their experiences offer perspectives and skills they otherwise might not have received. These skills include adaptability, communication, leadership, and even humility.

Study Abroad Advisor and Program Coordinator

Ryan Ourada says, “It’s a great way for students to challenge themselves but also to get global experience of working with other cultures. It’s imperative to understand that they have different attitudes and beliefs, not only in their personal lives but also in their work environments.” Ourada works with students to discern which programs suit their needs. He advises students who go abroad to France, Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. He is also a program coordinator for the India Winterim program.

The pandemic, however, has impeded these opportunities for students. In early 2020, University of Iowa Honors Program students in countries all over the world had to pack up their belongings and bid farewell to the lives they had explored in different cultures.

Huzzey was among the many who were abruptly sent home. She was abroad in Rome for the 2019-2020 academic year studying Ancient Roman Architecture. Huzzey’s Roman life was cut short by two whole months. “One Monday, I’m interning at the Coliseum...One week later, I’m on a plane back to the states. There was really no way to prepare,” she says. It was devastating for students like Huzzey who had grown roots in a new country to

say goodbye so suddenly, leaving behind instructors, friends, and host families who made their time abroad so memorable.

Under current circumstances, students are not able to live or breathe the air of other countries. So, the University of Iowa, understanding how meaningful these opportunities are for students, has come up with alternative ways for students to receive these international and multicultural experiences. Currently, the university is offering online international courses and internships in a variety of subjects. There are language, health, and entrepreneurship courses taught from professors all across the globe. Faculty-led programs range from business to medicine, and numerous internships are being offered as well. India Winterim is launching a virtual medicine program this year in which students follow physicians on their rounds and help assess patients virtually. Faculty are also striving to implement cultural experiences outside of what each program focuses on so students can still experience life in another culture, albeit virtually.

“Given that most students are online learning, [virtual study abroad programs] give them the option to do something different, to learn about topics that the UI maybe does not offer. It’s a challenge to prepare yourself for life outside of the university,” Ourada says. The burning question, however, is whether these online environments offer similar opportunities for growth in global cultural awareness and experience.

Honors student Claire Kopesky completed one of these online internships during the summer. She took on teaching English from a school in Italy through this new virtual format of education. She says, “This internship was such a unique experience.” While creating curriculum for the internship, she was still able to exchange and learn from different cultural perspectives.

Kopesky feels her internship allowed her to develop professional and international skills that will stick with her forever. She says, “I also think that having it online teaches other skills...like how to work virtually and internationally because those are skills that, if current conditions prevail after I



Pictured: Hannah Huzzey standing on a bridge over a river in Venice. **Provided by:** Hannah Huzzey

graduate, I’m really glad to have and develop.”

Citing their accessibility, Kopesky recommends these programs for students who have an interest in interning abroad. Programs are easy to find, and students can pick according to their interests, pay at a lower cost, and apply for scholarships.

Although these programs will not replace the physical experiences students receive while studying abroad, they still offer international educational benefits and connections. Willard agrees that these opportunities “[are] not worse or better, they are just different but absolutely [have] the potential for self-growth and discovery.”

UI students and faculty are working together to adapt to the new circumstances when it comes to studying abroad. The University of Iowa Study Abroad Office is reimagining what possibilities it can offer students during such a trying time. Future programs are still to be determined based on future effects of the pandemic, but through perseverance and adaptability, the UI is still making international experiences accessible and enriching to allow for students’ growth and discovery.



STUDENT LIFE

Photo courtesy: University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

AFTER THE VOTE

Election Inspires Engagement

By Casey Huettman and Axel Ohrvall

For honors students, voting in the 2020 election was a breeze thanks to a number of campus-wide organizations. Hawk the Vote, an organization dedicated to civic engagement and the democratic process, was especially prominent. It was founded two years ago by honors student Jocelyn Roof and is entirely free of partisan association.

"When I came to the University of Iowa, I knew I wanted to be more involved in political things," Roof said. "I've always been interested in volunteer work and advocacy work. I'd done some legislative advocacy at the state capital, and I really enjoyed it." Roof credits professionals in the University of Iowa's Division of Student Life for supporting her efforts to build the organization.

The purpose of Hawk the Vote is to educate the Hawkeye community about the voting process and encourage community members to get out and be civically active. Students who showed an interest in being a part of the organization were recruited as Voting Ambassadors. Their goal was to share voting information with their friends and

peers through social media and community outreach.

An anonymous voting ambassador and third-year honors student who has been involved with Hawk the Vote for two years commented on Hawk the Vote's strong relationship with the Hon-ors Program. He spoke of the connections established between the two communities during the 2020 Iowa Caucus informational sessions. "It's great to see so many honors students involved in the program."

This year presented many unique challenges, which required a shift in how Hawk the Vote engaged in community outreach. Joseph Verry, who has been with Hawk the Vote since its inception, commented on these challenges. "This year, we did two things we didn't do strongly last year. We put a lot of effort and time into our social media, and by focusing on Instagram and Twitter, we increased our viewership. We then trained more voting ambassadors and gave them the skills to have meaningful [one-on-one] conversations about

"What goes on in Des Moines, or Washington DC, or even just your county courthouse does affect you, whether that be a major way or a minor one, and if you don't like what's going on around you, it is possible for you to be involved in the process of changing it."

- Allison Beckner

MORE ONLINE

To learn more about the voting process and other civic duties, visit vote.uiowa.edu.

Voting Ambassadors handled a select group of jobs and opportunities every week through email. They contacted a number of people with questions pertaining to the civic process behind voting, beginning with: "Are you registered to vote?" From there, questions about how one planned to vote, where one planned to vote, and if one's ballot had already been cast followed. Verry described the progress the organization made in the months leading up to the election. "We have reached out to more than twenty-four hundred individuals on campus. Along the way, we've had presentations



Pictured: Joseph Verry, founding member and associate director of Hawk the Vote.

Provided by: Joseph Verry

and workshops whose cumulative attendance has numbered around five hundred."

However, civic engagement is something to be participated in all year long, even outside of the election cycle. Allison Beckner is a voting ambassador with Hawk the Vote and the Events Coordinator for the Hawkeye Caucus. When asked about the importance of being civilly engaged, she said, "What goes on in Des Moines, or Washington DC, or even just your county courthouse does affect you, whether that be a major way or a minor one, and if you don't like what's going on around you, it is possible for you to be involved in the process of changing it."

She encourages students to start with a general knowledge of civic affairs and then choose which issues are important to them, followed by reaching out to organizers (who are always looking for volunteers). She also emphasizes the importance of simply signing petitions and donating money to causes for change.

At the University of Iowa, there are several campus organizations available to students looking to become civically active. University of Iowa Student Government, the Hawkeye Caucus, University Democrats, College Republicans, March for our Lives, and Student Advocates for Planned Parenthood are just a few of the many organizations available to students. Phone-banking for off-campus organizations, writing to state legislators, signing petitions, and donating money are also options.

In a time so politically and morally charged, it is important for student voices to be heard. Honors students at the University of Iowa have a notable opportunity to lean into the challenges of modern politics and engage in their civic responsibility before, during, and after an election.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMS BUILD COMMUNITY

How the Honors Program is Keeping Its Students Engaged and Collected This Year

By Seth Foster & Olivia Tonelli

The University of Iowa Honors Program is always exploring new ways to offer interesting learning experiences to honors students, and just this semester, they have launched a few new programs for students to engage in. New and old, all programs are intended to academically and emotionally build up students and provide them with a healthy, friendly learning environment and community. Honors Assistant Director Emily Hill emphasized the importance of having safe social events during a pandemic: "I think it's a way for students to make a connection. From what I've heard from students when I've talked to them one-on-one, there seems to be a general sentiment—especially if they are first-year students—that it's really hard to make connections right now on campus."

While newer groups are designed to fit in a virtual environment, older ones have had to modify their traditional structure. One such group is Book-ish Club, an honors organization centered around the joys of group reading and literature appreciation outside of typical class assignments. Students now meet online to analyze and appreciate the merits of a chosen book each month.

"This year especially," says Mishma Nixon, current head of the club and an Honors Peer Mentor, "We've been conscious of the fact that students do not have many ways to unplug because of Covid and all events being on Zoom. Just to have

another way of people being engaged...that is the idea for this year."

Both in regards to enjoyment and community-building, the club has proven successful, with Nixon saying that the club's consistently present and tight-knit group of 20-odd honors students

"The Honors Admin Team and I are constantly brainstorming creative ways we can connect with Honors Program students. I thought piloting a 'Lunch and Learn' series during our virtual times would be a great way to connect with honors students."

- Heidi Schmitt

have enjoyed their time together thus far.

This semester, the Honors Program introduced new events including the “Lunch and Learn” series: a monthly virtual event featuring staff members from the Honors Program and other departments. Honors Program Coordinator Heidi Schmitt created this series with suggestions from this semester’s honors admin team—the honors student staff who carry out a variety of administrative and programming tasks. “The Honors Admin Team and I are constantly brainstorming creative ways we can connect with Honors Program students,” Schmitt comments. “I thought piloting a ‘Lunch and Learn’ series during our virtual times would be a great way to connect with honors students.” According to Schmitt, the goal for the series is to have a new speaker each month who can “provide students with resources, engaging workshops, and more.”

“I wanted to enter the workshop just for a chance to get involved in something else, as I feel like I haven’t done a lot of that this semester so far,” said first-year student Ryan McLerran when reflecting on the absence of in-person events this semester.



Pictured: Heidi Schmitt in front of a gray backdrop
Provided by: Heidi Schmitt

“This year we [the honors community] have definitely made a more conscious effort to include more events...for honors students to be a bit more **engaged.**”

- Mishma Nixon

McLerran found the session to be informative and interesting.

Schmitt also helps promote Honors Roadshows, a series of frequently occurring online meetings hosted by various honors staff and students to discuss course and career options for certain fields. One of these Roadshows, which took place early in November, discussed mental health, offering both clarity and guidance regarding the topic. By offering information that ranged from defining mental disorders to suggesting appropriate ways to cope, like making use of the University Clinical Service’s (UCS) private emotional counseling, this Roadshow in particular helped students clear their heads and find help when needed. Future Roadshows will provide other forms of assistance, such as guidance for students on the pre-medicine and pre-law tracks and tips on how to manage workloads as finals week approaches.

One final program that has been implemented this semester has been the group sessions offered by Honors Peer Mentors. By breaking the traditional format of one-on-one advising, group peer mentoring sessions offer like-minded and like-careered students the opportunity to gain clarity and assurance in the face of course and career-related choices. Discussions in these sessions range from course options to special-

izations within students' fields of study. These efforts to offer assistance are often appreciated by students who can benefit from talking through their ideas and struggles with their peers.

The Honors Program's numerous outreach efforts this year have been successfully fostering a community with a strongly helpful and positive attitude. "This year we [the honors community]

have definitely made a more conscious effort to include more events...for honors students to be a bit more engaged," Nixon points out. As the year progresses, the Honors Program will continue to host roadshows, the "Lunch and Learn" series, and many other events that allow its students to engage with each other in a setting outside of class.

EXCERPT

LUNCH AND LEARN WITH LIBRARIAN TIM ARNOLD

By Olivia Tonelli

For October's "Lunch and Learn" event, Honors Librarian Tim Arnold led an informative workshop on an important skill that often goes overlooked: information literacy and critical reading strategies. With a computer screen separating all of the workshop attendees, the necessity to carefully navigate online information has never been more apparent.

Using an orange as a metaphor, Arnold began the workshop by highlighting the differences between biases and disinformation. To define bias, Arnold explained, "Because I don't like oranges, I am telling you that they're really unhealthy because of a selection of facts." Arnold then made a statement that the orange is square, highlighting

how an author can often be the cause of dishonest information. Additionally, Arnold provided evidence for the destructive nature of disinformation in relation to government systems:

"Disinformation is particularly problematic in democracies because in a democracy we have popular sovereignty, and if disinformation can create so much confusion that it leads to apathy, ultimately the public will become disengaged in their own governance."

After mapping out the various problems that biases and disinformation create, Arnold moved towards offering tools to help students not fall victim to these types of sources—the main tool being lateral reading. Lateral reading involves ver-

"I feel like sometimes we get caught up thinking about what society expects of us, and I realized more and more that there are certain things I don't need or want, and that I'm proud of myself for where I am and what I'm doing."

- Mitch Winterlin '24, Psychology and Education



Pictured: Information Literacy and Honors Librarian
Tim Arnold
Provided by: Tim Arnold

ifying information by consulting a variety of sources, rather than simply trusting one source. "When lateral reading, you should always have these two questions in mind: who is behind this information, and what do other sources say?" Arnold explained. Arnold then led the workshop through multiple practice scenarios to put their literacy

skills to the test and sharing that education on information literacy may be the best hope there is in fighting the disinformation crisis that the world faces. Currently, Arnold is working on a research project to develop a curriculum that is "based on the Stanford Lateral Reading study" and parses the "different kinds of problematic information that we can find online."

Reflecting on the event, McLerran said, "The most significant thing that I learned from the workshop was to research the source before getting too deep into an article because I would tend to do it after reading, if at all, and by the time I was done with the article I sometimes didn't really care enough to do the research."

Similarly, Honors Admin Mason Koelm went into the event already "familiar with some tactics to avoid mis- and dis-information" but also left having learned new skills. "Arnold's presentation did a fantastic job of addressing the blurred lines between bias and disinformation. Just because a source may have a bias does not mean the information is incorrect," Koelm said.

Given the gravity of disinformation campaigns, the skills that these students left the workshop with are undeniably important. Thanks to the Honors Program's "Lunch and Learn" series, honors students can continue to have access to information like this throughout the semester.

This article was originally published in the 2020 edition of the Alumni Connection.

PANDAUMIC

Life in the Honors Dorm

By Miah Clark & Maggie Winegar

The newest class of honors students learned to expect the unexpected in 2020. Many current University of Iowa first-year students had their high school senior years cut short. They missed out on senior proms, graduations, and the last season of the sport they worked so hard for.

The traditional routine for college preparation was reinvented due to the effects of the pandemic. Summer orientation delivered information to students remotely, classes became a mix of face-to-face and virtual instruction, and dorm life has been altered to benefit the health and safety of students on campus.

It can be easy to simply focus on the negativity in the world, especially in the midst of a global pandemic. But as life goes on, many students have embraced the idea that their experiences are what they make of them.

Ellie Shaver, a freshman and current resident of Daum Residence Hall, did not initially plan to live on campus, but she is "happy though with how things worked out" and embraces the community and friends that Daum has given her.

"We eat meals together, go for walks, play games, and sometimes go to the gym together," Shaver said.

Life in Daum is, of course, not all that it used to be, due to restrictions and regulations applied for the safety of this year's residents. Eleanor Hildebrandt, a second-year honors student and previous Daum resident, gave insight as to how dorm life has changed. In previous years, she explained, "You could end up standing in the hallway for a half-hour just because you ran into someone you

hadn't seen in a few weeks because everyone knew one another."

Now a resident of Stanley Residence Hall, she has felt the pandemic's effects on her on-campus living situation. "You can't just keep your door open anymore and invite people in when they stroll by. You can't have five or six people in your room, and you can't have larger gatherings. I hope everyone is still able to make long-lasting connections over the two semesters they live there," Hildebrandt said.

Isaac Johnson, a resident assistant (RA) in Daum, is another example of someone working hard to make this year great, despite the circumstances. He noted the inherent challenges of "creating and maintaining a community like that of a

"You could end up standing in the hallway for a half-hour just because you ran into someone you hadn't seen in a few weeks because everyone knew one another."

- Eleanor Hildebrandt

non-Covid year.”

As an RA, Johnson’s role is a little different this year. To continue fostering an inclusive and connected environment, Johnson has been offering weekly Zoom trivia sessions for any resident living in Daum.

“I’ve found that Daum residents have come together during this time to find other ways to get engaged and connect,” Johnson said.

Although this is not a traditional year, Daum residents, like Shaver, will move forward with a positive first-year experience. And, as Hildebrandt concludes, “Everything is different this year because of coronavirus, but we’re all figuring it out together.”

“I’ve found that Daum residents have come together during this time to find other ways to get engaged and connect.”

- Isaac Johnson



Pictured: Daum Residence Hall

Photo courtesy: University of Iowa Office of Strategic Communication

MEET THE WRITERS



Sonia Beltz

Sonia is a second-year from the Dayton, Ohio, area. She is majoring in English and creative writing on the publishing track with a minor in religious studies. While at the University of Iowa, she hopes to develop her skills as an editor and writer.



Miah Clark

Miah Clark is from Overland Park, Kansas. She is a second-year student at the University of Iowa studying English and creative writing, as well as pursuing a writing certificate. She hopes to improve her writing and academic involvement through her work with Honors Publications.



Thomas Duong

Thomas is a second-year student from Iowa City, Iowa. He is an open major on the pre-medical track and is a design editor for the Honors Newsletter. Besides his studies, Thomas is president of UNICEF Iowa and is an undergraduate researcher. He enjoys sports, playing drums, and traveling.



Sam Eliassen

Sam is a first-year student studying English and creative writing on the publishing and pre-med tracks. He is from LeClaire, Iowa, and is excited to work with university honors to find intersections between fields in science and communications. He loves reading and writing and is also involved in InkLit Magazine, U of I's freshman literature and culture journal.



Seth Foster

Seth is a freshman of the computer science program at the University of Iowa. He hails from Mason City, Iowa, and he intends to earn either a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Computer Science with an emphasis on game design to set himself up for a career in that field.



Julia Fout

Julia is from Moline, Illinois, and is a second-year student at the University of Iowa. She is studying for a major in both French and psychology with a minor in rhetoric and persuasion. Outside of class, she enjoys biking, going to local bakeries, and practicing French.



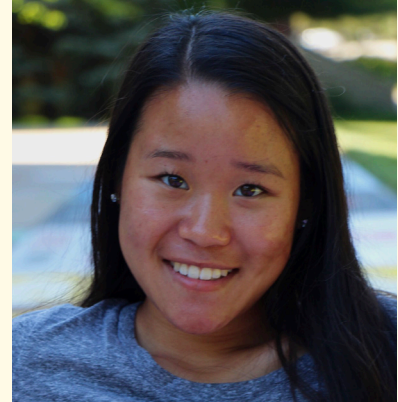
Lydia Guo

Lydia is a second-year student studying biomedical sciences and is a design editor for the Honors Newsletter. She works as an undergraduate research assistant focusing on cystic fibrosis and volunteers at the UIHC. In her free time, Lydia enjoys oil painting at her local art studio.



Casey Huettman

Casey is from Peosta, Iowa, and is a first-year at the University of Iowa. She is pursuing majors in international studies and chemistry, and when she is not in school, she enjoys roller skating around campus and reading anything she can get her hands on.



Mia Knapp

Mia is a second-year from Lisbon, Iowa, studying journalism and mass communication with a business minor. Aside from her studies, Mia is involved in the Salt Company and Her Campus. In her free time, she enjoys baking and spending time with her friends.



Jayne Mathis

Jayne is a second-year from Ankeny, Iowa, majoring in English and creative writing. Along with writing, she also enjoys playing the trumpet, rotating through four very specific music playlists, and laughing at her own jokes.



Airiana Mohr

Airiana is a second-year neuroscience major from Machesney Park, Illinois, with minors in Spanish, chemistry, and psychology. Aside from her studies, Airiana is a member of numerous groups on campus including USG, Homecoming Executive Council, and SiR. In her free time, Airiana enjoys reading and spending time with her friends.



Axel Ohrvall

Axel is a second-year from Bolingbrook, Illinois, studying creative writing and journalism. An avid writer of stories, poetry, and fanfiction, he is currently working on the third draft of a novel he wishes to publish next year. He reads sci-fi novels and practices fencing in his free time.



Jacob Sammon

Jacob is from Urbandale, Iowa, and is a second-year student at the University of Iowa. He is pursuing a major in English and creative writing, a minor in communication studies, and is on the publishing track. He hopes to continue developing his skills as a writer by learning from his dedicated peers and the City of Literature's culture.



Lauren Sanyal

Lauren Sanyal is from San Diego, California, and is a first-year student at the University of Iowa. She is double-majoring in English and creative writing (publishing track) and screenwriting. She is excited to become part of the amazing writing community that Iowa City offers through getting involved in as many ways as she can.



Olivia Tonelli

Olivia Tonelli is a second-year student from Joliet, Illinois, studying English and creative writing on the publishing track. Through her academic pursuits and collaboration among her peers, she hopes to refine her artistic voice as a writer and elevate her skill set as an editor.



James Transue

James is from Rochester, Illinois, and is a first-year student at the University of Iowa. He is currently pursuing a double-major in journalism and creative writing. James hopes to spend his time at college honing his writing craft and making connections among his peers and the university faculty.



Maggie Winegar

Maggie is from Jefferson City, Missouri, and is currently a second-year at the University of Iowa. She is pursuing a major in journalism and mass communications with minors in both Spanish and business administration. Maggie is passionate about environmental sustainability and strives to continue learning every day.

GIVING TO HONORS



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