# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word from the Director</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primetime 2013: Life’s Trajectory</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Tyler Lechtenberg</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Profiles</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortar Board</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors First Year Students</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Art in the Blank Honors Center</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Staff</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhodes Dunlap</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Glimpse of the Past</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writer’s Biographies</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donation Page</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thanks to our writers and contributors:

Holly Blosser Yoder  
Art Spisak  
Noah Haessler  
Shaina Tromp  
Emma Husar  
Melanie Slattery  
Arianna Chronis  
Emily Levine

Find the Honors Program on social media!

- Honors At Iowa [
- @HonorsAtIowa [
- HonorsAtIowa [
- University of Iowa Honors Program []
Word from the Director  Art Spisak

My warm greetings for the Fall semester of 2013! We’ve just welcomed our first group of entering Honors students under our new Honors curriculum, with numbers of more than double what we expected – more on that below. In this edition of the newsletter you’ll see that we feature one of our Honors alums – Tyler Lechtenberg – a name that some of you may know. He is now working in Washington, D.C. as a speechwriter for the Obama campaign.

As for that very first class of students under the new Honors curriculum: we had predicted between 400-500 entering high school students for our entering 2013-14 Honors class. By the middle of April we had already surpassed 500, and the number kept rising through the rest of the spring and then through the summer as Honors orientation and registration were taking place. We ended up with nearly 800 students coming from high school. In addition, we had about 125 Honors transfers, and about 300 Honors students who came over from the old Honors program. That totals over 1,300 students under the new Honors curriculum.

Why so many more Honors students than we predicted? Our numbers were based on the percentage of active students we had in the old Honors program as well as on yield rates for a comparable Honors program at another institution. We like to think that the reason was the new Honors curriculum, which seems to have high appeal – a structure that is simple, meaningful, and achievable, but also a flexibility that allows Honors students to individualize their Honors experience. Truth be told, we’re not sure why the numbers were so high. Whatever the reason, we’re pleased that so many qualified students have opted into the new program.

Now that the new Honors curriculum is up and running, we’re turning our attention to forming an Honors advisory board, a group comprised mostly of Honors Program alumni/-ae that will become one of the three Honors Program advisory bodies (the Honors Steering Committee and the Honors Student Advisory Committee are the other two). The Honors Program Advisory Board is expected to be formed by the end of the 2013-14 academic year.

Selection of members of the Board is to represent both Honors Program alumni that were actively engaged in the program while undergraduates, as well as friends of Honors who feel a commitment to the program. Board members will have a desire to give back to the program, which could be done in various ways – e.g.:

- Use of their personal and professional experience to guide the direction and objectives of the Honors Program.
- Using their expertise to instruct and mentor current Honors students.
- Fundraising and monetary support for Honors Program scholarships and initiatives.

Bob and I have been in the process of contacting potential members. If you see yourself as a member of the Honors Program Advisory Board, please contact me or Bob directly to discuss details.

If you are not able to be a Board member but would still like to give back to the Honors Program, please don’t hesitate to contact me. There’s always need, and your contribution in whatever form could change a student’s life. For monetary contributions, please see at http://honors.uiowa.edu/giving-honors. You can give to a general fund, or you can tailor your donation to a specific cause – e.g., scholarships for specific applications, such as to enable study away experiences.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email (art-spisak@uiowa.edu) or phone (319.335.1681) with any comments, questions, or concerns you have about the Honors Program. I’m happy to have such conversations.

Art L. Spisak
Director, UI Honors Program
Primetime 2013: Life’s Trajectory

Honors Primetime is an academic experience provided for incoming first-year Honors students and centers on a new theme each year. Held August 19-22, this year’s focus was on Life’s Trajectories. For the first time, in 2013, students completed a pre-assignment, in which they interviewed a mentor or person whose career accomplishments they admired, and reported on it. A keynote address by Honors alum Andy Stoll and group discussions about the Life’s Trajectories theme led off the three and a half day workshop experience, for which students divided into small groups to explore a wide range of topics with their instructors.

This year’s Primetime offered 16 different workshops. Science workshops included a closer look at previous natural disasters and a genetic engineering focus on making bacteria glow. Another showed students how to design and create a hand-built bicycle. In arts and culture, one class studied the Beatles and the changes they made to the world of music. A group of students explored various aspects of Iowa City, interviewing citizens, taking photographs, and documenting their experience on a blog; another workshop centered on the city’s literary influence.

Thomas Lau

Thomas Lau, a student who participated in a Performing Arts workshop at Primetime, noted, “I decided to join Primetime because it seemed like a fun way to earn Honors credit and meet people.” A Finance and Management major, Lau’s workshop took him deep into an entirely different topic, but one in which he found a great amount of interest. “My favorite part of my workshop was discussing the other cultures and how the music was affected by their histories. The Estonian revolution was something I knew little about coming in, so it was awesome to learn about it and look at music from the revolution,” Lau said. In addition to what he gained from his own workshop, Lau enjoyed learning new information from the final presentations of the other workshop groups.

For his mentor interview, Lau chose to write about Deb Lind – a lawyer and the mother of one of his closest friends. Initially, Lind did not have a clearly defined path for which career she wanted to take in college, reflecting Lau’s own concerns. However, after working as a legal assistant, making the risky decision of quitting her job to return back to school to become a lawyer, and then turning down the opportunity to become a partner, Lind eventually found her most important job – raising her children. While Lau was unsure of what to expect in the interview with Lind, the lesson he learned was affirming.

“I was going into college with the idea that I don’t have to know exactly what I want to do yet but that is okay, and Deb really helped solidify that feeling. I may not be entirely certain of where I want to be in ten years, but I feel comfortable knowing that as long as I work hard it will be okay,” Lau said.
Primetime 2013: Life’s Trajectory continued

Tasnia Iqbal

“As a college student, I have started to contemplate my goals in life and how the next decade of my life should be laid out in order to achieve them,” said Tasnia Iqbal, a participant in this year’s Primetime workshops. The 2013 Honors Primetime theme was “Life’s Trajectory” and as Iqbal noted, she has already begun to ponder this topic.

Iqbal joined Honors Primetime because she saw it as an opportunity to meet new people and as a valuable chance to get her mind focusing on academics. During the Primetime session, Iqbal was involved in the Performing Arts Workshop. Although Iqbal has a strong interest in science, being placed in the Performing Arts Workshop reignited her passion for music. During this choral workshop, the students were able to reflect Primetime’s theme by learning about the Estonian revolution in which the Estonians regained their independence by peacefully singing.

“I thought [the workshop] related to the theme of ‘Life’s Trajectory’ because groups of people were able to change the course of their lives by coming together in a unified manner fighting against authority,” Iqbal said.

Iqbal received another lesson in the paths of life from her mentor, Dr. Siddiq Arab, Iqbal’s doctor for 13 years. “Dr. Arab’s decision to become a doctor was more intuitive, because he spent much of his life believing that he wanted to be a lawyer, yet one incident [seeing a friend’s illness go untreated, with dire consequences] suddenly sparked his desire to become a doctor. I, on the other hand, have wanted to become a doctor my entire life, and have recently come to have occasional second thoughts,” Iqbal said.

This is just one of the many ways how courses of action can change quickly in life and cause feelings of uncertainty. “Ultimately, the most important way for one to know if they have chosen the right career for themselves is if they look at their job as something they get to do, and not something they have to,” Iqbal said.
Primetime 2013: Life’s Trajectory continued

Megan Schlecht

“Ninety percent of the battle is figuring out what you don’t want to do,” said Megan Schlecht, recalling her experience with Honors Primetime. This is what keynote speaker Andy Stoll told the group of new freshman before they set to work in their various workshops.

For her part, Schlecht is still fighting the battle for a clear career direction. But the Primetime experience provided some help along the way. For her mentor interview, Schlecht chose her mother’s best friend, Sandy Erickson.

“Sandy is like a second mom,” Schlecht answered when asked why she chose this particular person as her mentor. “I always really admired her and how determined she was all the time.” In her essay Schlecht writes about Erickson’s struggles to become a nurse and put herself through school. “I found her dedication, determination, and desire to succeed inspiring. I know pursuing one’s dreams is never easy, but with hard work I know I can also succeed,” said Schlecht.

Overall, through Primetime, Schlecht was able to gain a lot of information and helpful advice from the other students and professors. To describe her experience, Schlect sums it up by stating, “You get to be there first, move in early, and get a chance to meet other people and professors you otherwise wouldn’t. It was a good start to making friends and building in the Honors Program.”
Alumni Tyler Lechtenberg: Writer for the White House

From his hometown of Strawberry Point in Northeast Iowa and then to the White House, alumnus Tyler Lechtenberg has shown that sometimes our paths in life can be pleasantly surprising. Currently a speechwriter for First Lady Michelle Obama, Lechtenberg affirms that “I never thought it would actually happen. I joined the campaign because I believed in the President and I just wanted to do whatever I could to help him get elected and make progress for the country... But I always loved to write, and wanted to get back to it, and so I’m incredibly thankful – and lucky – to have the opportunity to help the President and First Lady as a speechwriter.”

After graduating from Starmont High School in 2000, Lechtenberg proceeded to the University of Iowa where he majored in Journalism and Mass Communications and minored in Health and Sports Studies. During his time at Iowa, Lechtenberg especially loved his involvement with the university’s Honors Program.

Following his graduation in December of 2003, Lechtenberg worked as a sportswriter for The Gazette, covering Iowa football and basketball, as well as high school sports. In 2006, he served as Iowa Executive Director for The 10,000 Hours Show, a project started by UI Honors students to encourage their peers across the state to volunteer in their communities. The group put on concerts for volunteers featuring musicians such as Ben Folds, Guster, and Cake.

After moving to Portland, Oregon and working briefly as a marketing writer for Portland Community College, Lechtenberg joined...
the Obama campaign in July of 2007 as a Field Organizer in Marshalltown, Iowa. During the primaries, he traveled frequently, working in Iowa, New Mexico, Ohio, and Kentucky. But for the general election, he was back in Iowa as a Regional Field Director.

When the election was over, Lechtenberg moved to Washington D.C. to work on the Inauguration. There, he interviewed for a job as the First Lady’s Director of Correspondence and started work in the East Wing a couple days after the Inauguration. A year and a half later, Lechtenberg asked if he could start writing speeches for the First Lady in his spare time and was soon hired as an Assistant Speechwriter on the President’s team, where he conducted research and wrote primarily for Mrs. Obama.

Later, Lechtenberg was promoted to full-time speechwriter and while the majority of his speeches are for the First Lady, he occasionally writes for President Obama, such as when sports teams visit the White House, a speech to veterans and military families, and a back-to-school speech for students across the country.

Surprisingly, there was no real “training” that Lechtenberg was required to undergo. “Every speech is a training of its own—we’re constantly improving,” he explains. “That’s how I’ve learned—simply by writing and rewriting and rewriting again, and getting a lot of feedback from the folks I work with...really, all of my ‘training’ has come from my boss here and from the First Lady herself.”

When asked about his typical speech-writing process, Lechtenberg explained that he starts by sitting down with the First Lady and understanding what she would like to say for each speech. Then he writes a draft based on her input, and people from around the White House respond with suggestions. Once the staff is satisfied, the draft is given to the First Lady and the process is repeated until they arrive at a finished product.

“The First Lady is very involved in the process,” said Lechtenberg. “And time and time again, all the best ideas and suggestions or comments I’ll receive come from her...she has a really incredible sense for what works and what doesn’t in a speech.”

With all of these accomplishments under his belt in the ten year since his graduation from the University of Iowa, Tyler Lechtenberg still remembers his experience in the Honors Program fondly. “I loved my time with the Honors Program,” he remarks. “I lived on an Honors floor my freshman year and met many of my best friends there -- and not just ‘college’ friends, either. The friends I made through the Honors Program are some of my best friends to this day.”
Student Profile: Meet Nick Rolston

Name: Nick Rolston
Majors: Physics, Math
Year in School: Senior
Hometown: Cedar Rapids, IA

If you could offer one piece of advice for incoming students, what would it be?
Step out of your comfort zone. It sounds cliché, but there are so many opportunities in college that you’ll never have the chance to do later in life. Go on an alternative spring break trip. Start a student organization. Run for UISG President. Attend a cultural event that is completely unfamiliar to you. Sit with a random person at Burge.

In addition to the Honors Program, what other organizations have you been involved in?
UISG, Associated Centerstone Empire, Dean’s Student Advisory Committee, President’s Leadership Society, Dance Marathon, STAT Ambassadors, Alpha Phi Omega, LeaderShape, Bridging Domestic and Global Diversity

What has been your biggest challenge in college and how did you conquer it?
Growing semiconductor nanowires. My failures in the lab are never in short supply. They are also brutal, usually involving tendrils of yellow vapors erupting from a mixture or flashes of semiconductors reacting at thousands of degrees. I began conducting research at the University of Iowa in my first semester with Dr. John Prineas, a solid-state physicist who uses molecular beam epitaxy to grow compound III-V semiconductors. The project immediately appealed to me because it challenged me to push against my intellectual limits and to expand the boundaries of our scientific knowledge. I spent the first two years failing over and over again. I discovered hundreds of ways to not grow a nanowire. But as Einstein once said, “you never truly fail until you stop trying.”

How do you balance school, work and extracurricular activities? How would you advise students to successfully balance college life?
I go to the gym to clear my head, play volleyball with friends, and make ridiculous quantities of bacon-based meals in an attempt to mimic Epic Mealtime. In other words, find a way to get away from the stress of school. Also, stop wasting your time doing meaningless activities like Facebook, YouTube, incessant texting, etc. You’ll be surprised how productive you can be if you dedicate the working hours of each day (not before 10 AM in my book) focusing on your studies.

What advice would you give to a student thinking about taking an Honors class or graduating with Honors?
Do it. Period. Don’t think twice about it, don’t worry about the “curve” (Honors courses aren’t curved and my GPA is actually higher in Honors classes). Chances are more than likely that you will be more involved and experience a more creative environment. Oh, and take Donna Parsons’ Harry Potter class.

Any additional comments you would like to make, advice you would like to give, or questions you wish had been asked?
I challenge you to meet all of the staff members in the Honors Program. They aren’t scary at all. Introduce yourself to Art. Talk to Kelly about applying for a fellowship. Query Andy about a service learning internship and how you can get credit to work in your field anywhere on the planet. Plan your honors path and coursework with Holly. Ask Lindsay about ICRU and how it can help you. Ask Bob for advice on research.
**Student Profile: Meet Aly Olson**

**Name:** Aly Olson  
**Major:** Vocal Performance  
**Year in School:** Junior  
**Hometown:** Des Moines, IA

If you could offer one piece of advice for incoming students, what would it be?  
Sleep now. Also, start drinking coffee. Then you can spend more of your day doing awesome stuff.

In addition to the Honors Program, what other organizations have you been involved in?  
Student Philanthropy Group with the University of Iowa Foundation; Opera Productions cast member; Take Note A Cappella; Presidential Leadership Society; Dance Marathon; 10,000 Hour Show; Miss Iowa Scholarship Program; LeaderShape 2012 Graduate; Habitat for Humanity; Study abroad in Brazil in January of 2013.

How do you balance school, work and extracurricular activities? How would you advise students to successfully balance college life?  
I live by a daily to-do list—actually two: one on my phone and another in a planner. Aside from relying on these devices, I try not to beat myself up too severely when I am not as productive or efficient as I think is possible. I also learned that quitting something isn’t an egregious sin, but a necessity when one overcommits.

**How did you get involved in the Honors Program, and how has it helped you?**  
Initially, I wasn’t sure I wanted to live in Daum, the Honors Residence Hall, my first year, but Daum proved me wrong. Being surrounded by creative, passionate students was exactly the community that I needed to belong to in order to be successful at Iowa. Now, as a Living Learning Community Programmer for the Honors and Honors Research communities, I have the opportunity to foster a similar sense of community for honors students in the residence halls.

**What has been your favorite Honors activity or memory?**  
I started my time at Iowa with Primetime and it has truly set the tone for how I interact with my peers ever since. During Primetime, I bonded with other honors students over our special seminars and nerdy passions. I have built upon these initial relationships and continue to seek a similar bond with the new people I meet every year.

What advice would you give to a student thinking about taking an Honors class or graduating with Honors?  
If you pursue honors recognition just to spruce up your resume or transcript, you’re missing the main point of the Honors Program. I encourage students to look at how the Honors Program can make their academic and career ambitions become a reality through the resources and insight provided by the Honors Program.

Any additional comments you would like to make, advice you would like to give, or questions you wish had been asked?  
Being involved in Honors at Iowa is all about looking deeper into the classes you take, the career experiences you seek, and the connections with people you make. Deciding to add “honors” in front of many of my experiences has pushed me to work harder and evaluate my choices more carefully. Discovering what you want to do or not do is useful and the Honors Program will help with this process.
The Honors Program is proud to advise five different honor societies at the University of Iowa, each of them offering a variety of opportunities for the students that are invited to become members. Four are local chapters of national societies: Phi Eta Sigma, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Omicron Delta Kappa, and Mortar Board. The fifth, Associated Iowa Honors Students, is unique to Iowa. While all of the societies strongly support academics, each organization has a separate focus. In this issue and each of the next four, we will feature one of these societies.

Mortar Board is an organization exclusively for college seniors in which members work closely with the Honors Program on several projects throughout the year. While academics are a high priority, this society also focuses on the three pillars that are used to select new members: service, scholarship, and leadership.

Serving the University of Iowa since 1926, this society (named the Staff and Circle) was installed as the 35th Mortar Board chapter in the United States by the National Vice President Gertrude Wilharm. Twelve women were initiated in this chapter’s first year, and the society still maintains a close relationship among its members 87 years later. The current membership includes 22 students.

To maintain the service aspect of the society, the members continually plan events throughout the year. These events, ranging from literacy drives to litter cleanup, are designed to engage the members of the society, the Iowa Honors Program, fellow students, and the public of Iowa City. In collaboration with a fellow honor society Omicron Delta Kappa, members organize the Mom and Dad of the Year Award, honoring two of the many outstanding parents of students here at the University of Iowa on the football field during Family Weekend. Other upcoming events that the Staff and Circle have planned for this year include writing cards to the troops serving overseas, Habitat for Humanity builds, volunteering at the hospital, and food drives.

For students involved with this honor society, Mortar Board offers a variety of advantages for its members. This prestigious organization is recognized by employers and the society offers additional employment, discounts, and scholarships to the members.

While new members are contacted in the spring via email to join the society, perspective students can prepare for Mortar Board in their senior year by engaging in scholarship, leadership, and service activities.

About the members:

President: Jeralyn Westercamp is a senior and an Iowa native majoring in management and marketing from the Tippie College of Business and political science from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. She is also pursuing a certificate in leadership studies and a minor in music. After graduating in May, she plans to attend graduate school to earn an MHA/MBA degree.

Vice President: Ridhi Madia is a senior who is double majoring in political science and international studies and also minoring in English. After graduating in May, she plans to attend law school or work. She loves to travel and watch “Friends”.

Story by Emily Szymanski
Looking Forward  First Year Students Engage

The Honors community has played a key part of my education here at Iowa, in so many ways - academically (of course), socially, and extra-curricularly. As a senior honors student moving on and out of the program, it is important to keep in touch with the new honors students here on campus, for they are the future of the wonderful program we have here. I sat down with a few first year honors students to talk to them about why they chose to be a part of Honors at Iowa, their first honors experiences, and what they would like the Honors Program to be for them in the future.

Sara Provost is a Nursing Major, from Wheaton, Illinois. In high school, her interests included Key Club, French Honors, the Tennis team, and several orchestras; so far on campus, she is a part of the symphony orchestra and 24:7, and hopes to start volunteering at the hospital. In her free time she likes to swim, babysit her niece and nephew, and watch movies.

Richard Su is from Burlington, Iowa and is majoring in Engineering and Violin Performance. Orchestra, Band, Chorus, Track and Field, Soccer, and Student Council were among his high school interests. On campus, he sings a cappella and plays in the symphony orchestra. He loves competing in athletics and listening to and playing music for fun.

Waverly Johnston is majoring in Journalism and is from Minnetonka, Minnesota. Her high school interests included Film Club, National Honors Society, piano and several orchestras, and figure skating. Cru, orchestra, and Fashion Management have been her interests here at Iowa so far. When she has time, Waverly enjoys reading, writing, shopping, and spending time with her family.
Looking Forward continued

Q: Why did you decide to come to Iowa? Why did you decide to have the Honors Program play a role in your education here?

Waverly: Iowa is very well known for writing, so it was one of my first choices. The Honors Program here offers so many opportunities to make connections in your field of study, and it’s easy to become friends with honors kids since I live in Daum.

Sara: I chose Iowa because I was admitted into the Early Decision Program for Nursing, and I loved the campus! I wanted to be apart of the Honors Program because I knew I would meet great people who share my value in school, and also I knew it would bring great opportunities for the future.

Q: What are some of the first positive experiences you have had with the Honors Program?

Richard: I participated in Honors Primetime, and it was a lot of fun. I got to move in early, meet other honors students, and get acclimated to Iowa before the rush.

Sara: I also was involved in the Honors Primetime program, and that was a great experience for me! It was a great opportunity to meet amazing friends and get the chance to move in early before the normal day.

Q: If you live in an Honors Living Learning or in the Honors House, why did you choose to do so? How has it made your residence hall experience better or more interesting? How has it been so far?

Waverly: I figured that Daum was a good choice because other honors kids would want to be quiet for study time just like me! I also think it’s nice living with honors kids because we have something drawing us together. We have something in common, and it helps you make good friends.

Sara: I chose to live in the Honors House because I wanted to live in an environment with other people who share my dedication to school and also having fun. I have met a lot of great people on my floor and we frequently have study parties and it is a great motivator to get things done when all of my friends are being productive. I have loved the Honors House so far!

Q: Are you taking any honors classes right now? If you are, has the honors experience been what you hoped it would be? Is the honors section different than you had expected a college course to be?

Richard: I am currently taking Honors Rhetoric. We discuss much further into detail than a typical rhetoric class, which helps me engage with the topic more. This type of class is definitely way different from the 500+ student lectures I envisioned before coming to Iowa.

Waverly: I am taking a few honors classes. I think the classes move at a good pace, and it is really nice that my big lecture is led by a professor as opposed to a TA or something. It’s also a lot more fun because the other students actually want to succeed and learn!
Looking Forward continued

Q: Are you planning on turning any of your courses as honors in the future, or trying to graduate with honors four years from now?

Waverly: I am planning on making my classes honors! The Honors Program makes the process pretty easy for you, and it’s a nice resource honors students are able to take advantage of.

Sara: I definitely want to graduate with honors four years from now! I think it looks great for future job applications and will be a great experience for me overall.

Richard: I also plan to graduate with honors, whether it’s just honors in general or within my field(s) of study.

Q: Have you taken advantage of some of the Honors Program’s facilities yet this year? If not, do you plan to?

Richard: Sometimes I’ll head over to the Blank Honors Center. It’s a good quiet place to study, and I use the computer facility to print papers.

Sara: I frequently use the Blank Honors Center for studying — it is a great asset for me. Since I live in Daum, I literally can just walk down the stairs into an awesome study lounge.

Q: What role do you see the Honors Program playing in your college experience this year?

Waverly: I think that it will be very helpful because the staff is open to my questions, and if I ever need help, they are more than willing to talk with me.

Sara: Also, just the people I have met so far in the Honors Program generally have already made an impact on my year in a positive way.

Q: What role do you see the Honors Program playing in your college experience over the next four years? Where would you like to see the program go as a student?

Richard: I think the Honors Program will help me learn more about my field(s) of study than the typical student. This will help down the road when I apply for jobs; I have to get a leg up on the competition, and now is the time to do it.

Waverly: I would like to see more of a push for Primetime. It really gets the kids going, and the friends you make there can become some of your best friends later in the year. I think the program should really promote Primetime more.

Q: What do you hope to get out of the honors community here at Iowa now? Into the future?

Sara: I hope to get friends who share my work ethic, and also a community of people who I look up to and aspire to be like.

Richard: As an Honors community, we understand each other and the higher workload we each bear. We’ll study together, help others when they’re in need, and stay connected long after our time at Iowa.
The Blank Honors Center has been home to the Honors Program and its students for nine years. By providing space for study, honors advising, events, and classes, the BHC has allowed the Honors Program to evolve and grow. As a consequence of such hustle and bustle throughout the building, its physical appearance has been glossed over. Honors Director Art Spisak and Associate Director Bob Kirby sought out artwork by local artist, Marcia Wegmen, to brighten up the space.

Walking in on the first floor and looking through the glass walls provides all the visitors a nice view of the walkway between the BHC and the Chemistry Building, but other than the outdoor view, gray dominates the color of the walls, doors, and elevators. White takes the lead as the most common color on floors two through five.

Going with neutral tones is an obvious choice for most academic buildings, but in specific regards to the BHC, Bob Kirby comments, “It has a dark look; there’s nothing that makes it look too exciting.”

In general, it was time to brighten up the walls and stairwells and further provide inspiration for studying students.

The third floor, which holds most study areas for students, is probably the most exciting floor in the building. Lighting on this floor is designed to bring attention to the walls, where honors students may display their artwork, individual research, posters about summer internship experiences, and various other successes there for other students and faculty to see.

“We needed a broader perspective on how to bring artwork into the program,” said Kirby.

Wegman is a local Iowan artist who is inspired to use pastels to paint the Midwest landscape. A triptych work of hers is displayed above the reception desk on the fourth floor, immediately catching the eye of visitors with its great display of Iowa’s beautiful sun shining across the valley. As shown through her illuminating paintings of Iowa landscapes, Marcia Wegman believes that “Iowa is anything but boring,” and the same is true for the BHC (marciawegman.com).

Wegman’s work will be installed in the stairwells, the lobby areas, and activity areas throughout the building, bringing a little more color and scenery to hardworking honors students to brighten their study experience and provide an even more welcoming home.
Saying Goodbye and Saying Hello

Honors Staff

Story by Emma Husar

With the new school year coming in, everyone is experiencing various types of change associated with a new semester. For former honors staff LaShelle Christensen, this means branching out from her long-time position with the Honors Program to start a new degree program, while for new honors staff member Suzanne Carer, this means returning back to a familiar environment.

Before deciding to pursue a doctorate degree, Christensen was part of the honors staff for nine consecutive years and was heavily involved with promoting student initiative and involvement in the Honors Program.

“I worked with a staff of between ten and twenty students that developed, implemented, and worked with other honors students on campus for educational programming,” Christensen states, describing her previous position with the Honors Program’s staff. Christensen especially enjoyed aspects of her job in which her work helped to stimulate minds and spirits of students: “[When students] had more active learning, they were more engaged in the process.”

This enthusiasm for education that Christensen saw in her students is one of the reasons why she plans on continuing with education in her doctoral degree in Psychology. Down the road, she would like to teach student development style work, focusing on how students learn by teaching one another.

As Christensen moves on to pursue another degree, new staff member Suzanne Carter has returned to her alma mater to offer her knowledge of success through the Honors Program to ambitious undergraduates.

In her fifth week on the Honors Staff, Carter is excited to extend a helping hand to students with her new job as Academic Coordinator and Assessment Director, which she describes as “a mish-mash of different things.” Carter is a front-line resource for students who have questions about classes, while also coming up with surveys and different ways to measure the success of the Honors Program.

Carter enjoys working in this position that allows her to utilize her background in math and physics as well as continue her extensive involvement in the Honors Program. “I’m the hard core math geek, with the perspective of an undergrad student who graduated really recently. It will be helpful having first-hand experience,” says Carter.

Having lived in Daum for two years, served on the Honors Student Staff for two years, been an Honors Peer Advisor for three years, and spent four years on the Honors Student Advisory Committee, Carter is well qualified to help honors students with any questions they might have. Carter intends to bring her positive outlook and enthusiasm to the honors staff, and says that “It’s really nice to have more power to help [the students].”

With the changes that have recently been made to the Honors Program, Carter relates that this new program is complete with new requirements that reward students for all of their involvement and give members the opportunity for honors recognition on their diplomas.

“It’s neat to see how [the Honors Program] has evolved,” Carter says. “Change is always exciting. Now the students will have more chance to take advantage of Honors opportunities.”

While the Honors Program must say goodbye to LaShelle Christensen as she pursues her doctoral degree, the program is excited to welcome back Suzanne Carter, this time as a staff member. Carter, who says she is now “getting to connect with students again,” will be a great addition to the Honors Program’s staff in pursuit of a bright future, recognizing honors students for all their hard work.
Honors Program at Iowa Owes Much to Its Founder

From its beginning in 1958 until 1981, the Honors Program at the University of Iowa was directed by its founder, Samuel Rhodes Dunlap. Dunlap first came to the University of Iowa in 1938 as a professor of English, a post which he held until 1957 when his career turned to instituting and directing the Honors Program. Prior to embarking on his illustrious career, Dunlap received his bachelor’s degree from Rice University, and then earned his PhD as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, England.

Samuel Rhodes Dunlap introduced the Honors Program at the University of Iowa in response to the U.S. Government’s call for better, more competitive education. It was his intention to ensure the University of Iowa’s position as a leader in research and learning. In the beginning, the Honors Program had fewer than 100 students from ten departments; however, Dunlap worked with several university departments to get them involved and excited about the Honors Program. During his tenure as Program Director, Dunlap proved to be instrumental in increasing both the number of departments and the number of students within the Honors Program. His final year as Director saw over 1,000 students enrolled in the Honors Program.

Dunlap was also heavily involved with Honors on the national level, attending several conferences and seminars across the country to promote Honors Programs.

Despite his tireless work, Dunlap managed to always focus on the importance of serving individual students. Upon his retirement he stated that he never lost sight of his main goal of “enlarging opportunities for the most able students” (Honors newsletter Oct. 1981: vol.22, no.10). Needless to say, the Honors Program at the University of Iowa is forever indebted to the work of Samuel Rhodes Dunlap.

Upon his retirement, a scholarship in Dunlap’s name was established. The May 1982 edition of the Honors Newsletter names Mark Wix as the sole recipient of this scholarship. Today several Samuel Rhodes Dunlap Scholarships in the amount of $2,000 are awarded annually to undergraduates in The Colleges of Business, Education, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Nursing, and Pharmacy for outstanding academic achievement.
A Glimpse of the Past

20 Years Ago:
In the fall of 1993, when the University of Iowa Honors Program was located at the Shambaugh House, the house had been added to the National Register of Historical Places. At that point in time, the house was over 93 years old. Before belonging to the Honors Program, the house had been previously owned by the first head of the Political Science Department at the University of Iowa and creator of the department’s graduate program, Benjamin F. and wife Bertha M. Horack Shambaugh, who was both a photographer and an author.

7 Years Ago:
Honors students created an award to recognize an honors faculty member that made great contributions to the education of the honors students at the University of Iowa. Honors students were asked to nominate faculty members, which were then voted on by the members of the Honors Advisory Committee. Rhetoric professor and the co-director of the Writing Fellows program, Carol Severino, was the first recipient of this award.
Em Levine is currently a junior, majoring in Violin Performance and English with a Latin Minor. As a freshman, she got her start in the Honors Program as Daum Hall President, and has served as an Honors Ambassador for Honors Orientation. She is from Washington D.C., and spent this last summer interning at the Music Special Collections in the Library of Congress. In her free time, she likes to knit, read, and cuddle with her cat Orpheus.

Shaina Tromp is a junior majoring in Journalism with a double major in English. After graduation she hopes to either become an editor for a magazine corporation or to possibly write a novel, or both! She really enjoys staying active and challenging herself, which is why she likes to rock climb and put together articles for various writing mediums.

Emma Husar is a sophomore, majoring in English and Spanish. She is enthusiastic to have the opportunity to write for the Honors Newsletter since she has just recently fallen in love with journalism. She hopes to continue investigating, writing and fine-tuning her skills with each issue of the newsletter.

Noah Haessler is a non-traditional student who is a 39 year old father of three. He just transferred to the University of Iowa this fall as a junior, having earned an Associate’s Degree over the last two years from Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa. In his previous life he was a carpenter and organic fruit and vegetable producer. He is a double major in English and History and intends to pursue an advanced degree upon graduating.

Arianna Chronis is a sophomore from Palos Park, Illinois. She is majoring in English and minoring in French although she plans to attend medical school after graduation to pursue a career as a forensic pathologist. Arianna is also an active member of the UI Dance Club and the UI Swing Dance Club.

Katie Skinner is a junior Dance and English major at Iowa. Whenever she is not rehearsing for Dance Gala 2013 (which all should venture out to see!), she is reading, writing, or researching.

Emily Szymanski is a sophomore majoring in both English and French, and is co-editor of the Honors Newsletter. She has hopes of becoming a book editor, spending several years living in France, and collaborating on a musical.
Donate Today!

Would you like to give back to Honors at Iowa?

There are many ways you can support our program, including scholarships to students, funding for students to present at professional conferences, and stipends for Honors study abroad. It’s easy to give back – just click “DONATE TODAY” to visit our Foundation website!