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Design Editor

On the cover: Professor Tom Keegan addresses first-year students on the opening night of Honors Primetime.
My greetings for the fall of 2014 to our Honors program students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends.

**ENROLLMENT REPORT**

We’re now in our second academic year of the new honors curriculum. This fall we had over 1,340 students enrolled as part of the new program, with about 870 coming from high school, about 170 as transfer students, and about 300 as Honors students from the old Honors Program who moved into the new program. Judging from enrollment figures we already have for the 2015-16 academic year, we expect to see another increase in the entering class for next fall (2015).

**A CHANGE IN HONORS PROGRAM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

While the recent increases in our honors population are an indication that our curriculum is indeed both meaningful and achievable, we’ve reached a point where we can no longer accommodate the very large number of honors students in the program (over 5,000) with our current resources – both personnel and monetary. This has prompted us to take a close look at our entry requirements. We purposely did not change those requirements when we instituted our new curriculum because we did not want to make too many changes at the same time.

Yet now that we’re in the second year of the new Honors curriculum, we’re able to look at data on the new program in a meaningful way. For example, we’ve noted that the size of our entering freshmen honors class as a percentage of the entire freshmen entering class is very much larger than the honors programs in our peer institutions (400 to 500% larger) and more than double the size of the national standard for honors programs and colleges.

The fact that we’re far larger than our peers and the national mean in itself may not have caused us to raise the entry requirements. Rather, that decision was due to a combination of reasons, with the main reason (in my mind) being that a large percentage of students who came into the program with a 27 through 29 ACT composite score and a high school gpa of at least 3.8 were not making it into the second year of the program (43%). Specifically, after their first year at the university just 57% of students in that cohort had a gpa at or above the 3.33 gpa that’s necessary for continued membership in Honors.

In contrast, entering honors students who had an ACT composite of at least 30 and a high school gpa of at least 3.8 were retained into the second year at the rate of 75%. We thus proposed to our advisory groups and other units that would be affected by the change and just recently got approval from all groups and the Office of the Provost for these new entry requirements for the Honors Program: an ACT composite score of at least 30 and a high school gpa of at least 3.8. We call this the Old Gold (scholarship) standard since students who meet this mark automatically get the University’s Old Gold scholarship. These new entry requirements will take effect for the 2016-17 academic year.

One other change that was part of this package was a raise in the UI gpa from 3.33 to 3.5 for UI students to get invited to be part of the Honors Program. That change will take effect for the 2015-16 academic year. The 3.33 gpa that’s now the minimum to remain in the program will not change.

Note that entering students who are in the 27 -29 ACT range will still be able to appeal to get into the program; they will also be invited to join if and when they achieve a UI gpa of 3.5 or higher.

What will be the effect of these two changes in the entry requirements for the Honors Program? We expect that the new entry requirements will halve the size of our entering class. This will allow us to do more for each honors student with our resources – that is, we’ll be able to increase the quality and impact of the honors experience our students have.

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
Establishing Community in a New Place

By Virginia Davis

Three days before thousands of new students arrived on campus for On Iowa, several hundred honors first-years began their journeys at the University of Iowa with Honors Primetime, an annual pre-semester academic experience specifically for honors students. The event gives students a head start on getting to know the honors and university communities. This year, Primetime reached record enrollment with 525 students, 175 more than the previous year. Students participated in workshops, lectures, and discussions throughout the three and a half day event. Primetime’s theme this year was “Stories of Place,” and Dr. Tom Keegan, a professor in the rhetoric department, welcomed students with a lecture on this topic on Monday night. He talked about moving to Iowa City from within Iowa and from across the globe, sharing insight about how perspectives change as students encounter new places and people.

Among other things, the lecture addressed a brief assignment Primetime students completed over the summer. The assignment asked each student to interview one person from their hometown and respond, reflecting on the interview, what the interviewee had to say about their hometown, and how that compared to the student’s own perception of their hometown. Dr. Keegan drew from the responses to talk to students about how their attitudes towards their hometowns and their attitudes towards Iowa City will inevitably transform as they grow over the next four years. He also encouraged students to “not be anonymous,” meaning that they should “be aware of the place in which [they] live and through which [they] move and engage with it.”

Alyssa McIntyre said of the lecture, “I really liked how he talked about us being citizens of Iowa City, not just students at the school. It made me view my experience here in a much bigger picture, and made me start to think of this place as a community, not just a school.” To follow-up on Dr. Keegan’s lecture, students participated in discussion sections, during which they shared their thoughts on how place affects their experiences and stories. McIntyre said, “It was cool to discuss where other people came from and how [students’] experiences make their view on Iowa City different.”

Three-day workshop sessions on topics such as Written Persuasion, Volcanic Eruptions, and 3D Printing, each provided students with one semester hour of honors coursework credit before the semester even began. When enrolling for Primetime, participants selected course preferences and were placed accordingly in sections of about twenty students. The courses were tailored to a wide variety of interests including biology, theatre, writing, and politics. Claire Jacobson had this to say of her session: “Once we learned how [the software used for 3D modeling] worked, we used it to design a ring…. We were challenged to think outside the box on our design and make it both artistic and really, really different.”

For many students, however, the most impactful part of Primetime was the personal interaction. Jacobson expressed this, saying, “The most important part for me was meeting the people.” McIntyre added, “I loved moving in early. I already had friends by the time On Iowa started, which made that experience way better…. I feel way more prepared for classes to start!” Ultimately, Honors Primetime prepared students for new experiences at the University of Iowa and in Iowa City while enabling them to become acquainted with peers and faculty in the Honors Program.
Honors Primetime in Pictures

Two brave students build trash-canons for their workshop.

Students check in on the first day of Primetime in the Honors Center atrium.

Participants in the choir workshop perform what they learned at Primetime’s conclusion.

Students summarize findings from their three-day seminars in super brief presentations of a few minutes length.

All Primetime students share their projects and new knowledge with their peers during the last session of the program.
Teaching Assistants (TA) are some of the best classroom resources for students at the University of Iowa. While most TAs are graduate students, some professors recruit qualified undergraduates to serve as undergraduate TAs. Undergraduate Kelly Daniels has been a TA for Introduction to American Foreign Policy taught by Professor Brian Lai and Jenny Chavez Rivera is currently a TA for the same course. Professor Donna Parsons has used undergraduate honors TAs for her course Quest for Enlightenment, her popular honors seminar on Harry Potter. For three semesters, Madison Bennett served as the undergraduate TA for Parsons’ Harry Potter course. During interviews, Donna Parsons and these three undergraduate TAs shared their experiences.

What led you to become a TA?

Chavez: After working really hard in the class I earned a pretty good grade in the course. This led to Professor Lai contacting me and offering me a position as a tutor for his course. My incentive to accept, other than helping out the students in the class, was that I will receive honors credit for it upon completion.

Daniels: I wanted to be a TA because I enjoy helping other students.

Bennett: Donna actually reached out to me the first semester of my sophomore year, which is amazing and unique and sometimes I can’t believe how lucky I got. Second semester of freshman year, I took Donna’s Jane Austen seminar during which she casually mentioned creating a children’s literature seminar. Then she mentioned the class would cover the first Harry Potter book, and I nearly collapsed from excitement. But I couldn’t imagine just reading one Harry Potter book – that would be like eating only one Dorito. So, my classmates and I made a big commotion about an entire Harry Potter class. The next semester, I got an email from Donna asking if I would come on as the TA for the introductory semester of that Harry Potter class, and the rest is history.

What training did you complete before becoming an undergraduate TA?

Chavez: After accepting the offer I enrolled in the Honors Teaching Practicum course on ICON. I then met with Professor Lai and we went over the duties for the position, as well as set up office hours. Finally, we signed an agreement which gets submitted to the Honors Program.

What qualifications should a student have to be a good undergraduate TA?

Bennett: It’s hard to find balance as an undergraduate TA because you’re a peer, but most importantly, you’re learning how to function in a teaching role. With this, undergraduate TAs need to possess two qualities: intelligence and humility. You need to basically master your subject. At the same time, you need to be humble because you’re all the same age. So many times I saw Harry Potter students outside of class, walking on T. Anne Cleary and waiting in line at Starbucks. It was awesome because we had a great rapport in class and mutual respect for one another.

Parsons: I am looking for honors students who have an extensive knowledge of the course topic and a passion for studying all aspects of it. I want students who are emotionally mature, reliable, and who not only enjoy working with students but possess an ability to listen objectively to their ideas and offer feedback.

What are the responsibilities of an undergraduate TA?

Chavez: I hold one physical office hour a week and two virtual office hours each week. Students use these office hours for help on class materials or assignments. As
well as leading two exam review sessions, one before each of the two exams, I also assist the professor by helping him prepare the exams by submitting test questions and evaluating it before it gets handed out. Another component of the duties will be giving feedback on student outlines for their final papers and helping them with any troubles they have in regards to it. Finally, I will lead one discussion section during the semester.

Daniels: I held office hours, hosted exam review sessions, and critiqued and graded outlines for the semester paper.

Bennett: My responsibilities involved facilitating class discussions and creating weekly trivia teasers that tested students’ knowledge of each week's readings.

Parsons: Every student has their own unique talents, and it is important to utilize the strengths they can bring to the class. For example, Madison Bennett possessed a deep knowledge of the Harry Potter series. Each week she created a highly popular reading teaser. These were ungraded quizzes that helped us gage how closely students were reading, and oftentimes a question or two generated further class discussion. When I first offered the Harry Potter course, we had 28 students enroll. Students worked in small discussion groups, and while I walked one way around the room to check in with groups and offer suggestions, Madison walked the other way. Students genuinely respected her knowledge of the series and welcomed her ideas and supportive ear.

Madison was the TA for 3 semesters, so with each new class her responsibilities changed. She went from giving presentations explaining the differences between the British and American editions and the art of writing with quills to leading class discussions on topics that were of particular interest to her. At the beginning of each semester we decided what her responsibilities were and when she would do a particular presentation or lead a class activity.

What has been your most memorable experience as a TA?

Daniels: Hearing students say they feel more prepared for the exam after attending our review sessions was a memorable experience for me.

If another student was interested in becoming an undergraduate TA, what advice would you give them?

Chavez: I never thought I would be a tutor, or “TA type”, but I would tell them to definitely go for it. I would encourage students to step out of their comfort zone and give it a shot!

Daniels: I would recommend doing well in that class and visiting the professor during office hours. Later or after the semester, ask the professor about undergraduate TA openings. Hopefully you can work something out!

Bennett: Find a class you love, and do it!

Parsons: If there is a class that you thoroughly enjoyed, go and talk with your professor about becoming a TA for the following semester or the next time the course is offered. Share your enthusiasm for the topic with your professor and give them information about the Honors Teaching Practicum. If you or they are unsure about the logistics, then talk with Suzanne Carter Squires.
NEW HONORS BRANDING
Distinguishing Honors at Iowa and Across Nation

By Megan Bowman

A logo is an emblem, a symbol designed to represent in simple graphic form, an object, concept, or organization, and if the logo is done well, it is easily recognized. In the past few years, the Honors Program has undergone a re- visioning of their logo.

Honors Assessment Director and Program Coordinator Suzanne Carter Squires plays a key role in facilitating outreach for the University of Iowa Honors Program. She and her team work to ensure that Honors at Iowa maintains a distinct image and brand.

“We want students looking at colleges to receive an envelope from us and say, ‘Hey, it’s Honors at Iowa.’ We want Honors at Iowa to be nationally recognizable,” said Squires.

The logo, which has been in use for a little over a year, features a stylized version of the Blank Honors Center in the primary colors of the Honors Program, brown and slate gray. It also includes the words, “Honors at Iowa,” and the tagline, “Make Your Connection.” It was first used to top the Honors Program Newsletter in the fall of 2013.

It all comes down to consistency. Squires explained that for the past five years, the Honors Program has worked to present itself with a consistent image. To establish a distinct identity, consistency is important. Giving the Honors Program its own logo, colors, and fonts helps people recognize the Honors Program as a distinct presence at the University of Iowa. Squires anticipates that this will not only increase the awareness of the Honors Program on campus, but will also help the program achieve recognition on a larger, national scale.

Honors staff members Lindsay Marshall, Suzanne Carter Squires, and Jessica Waldschmidt model apparel with the new Honors logo.
Immersed in Dublin’s Literary History

My Summer Abroad

By Stephanie Smith

This past summer, I studied in Dublin, Ireland, attending the Irish Writing Program with several other University of Iowa students. Between the intensive writing workshops, literature courses, and program-sponsored events, it was a wonderful experience.

“Dublin and Iowa City have a special relationship, as they are both UNESCO cities of literature.”

In addition to its rich literary history, Dublin is known for its theatres. As part of the Irish Drama course, students attended plays including The Importance of Being Earnest at the Gate Theatre and Brian Friel’s Aristocrats at the Abbey Theatre. Drama instructor Gavin Kostick, the Literary Officer of Fishamble: The New Play Company, was especially knowledgeable when it came to the process of accepting or rejecting scripts. At the end of the 6-week program, students were treated to Swing, a play co-written by Kostick at the historic Bewley’s Café.

Both of the writing instructors were published authors. Martin Roper, the director of the program, has recently published the novel Gone. Katy Hayes has published novels, plays, short stories, articles, and reviews. They each held workshops with distinctly different styles. Katy Hayes’ workshop focused on crafting a 2000-word story, after writing a pitch and a 600-word preview. Martin Roper focused on writing something new every day, making sure that students could make their passion into a daily habit.

Though the coursework was rigorous, there was time to explore the surrounding country. Bus passes enabled students to explore the city of Dublin. The curriculum also included a weekend trip to Galway; outside of the curriculum, students planned trips to nearby places like Howth and Sandycove and more distant places such as Belfast, Northern Ireland.

I loved the abundance of events and sites related to James Joyce. The program happened to fall on Bloomsday, which celebrates Joyce’s Ulysses with readings and exhibitions in Dublin. I caught a reading at a plaza in Temple Bar, which included excerpts from chapters of Ulysses, music from Ulysses, and personal anecdotes about how James Joyce related to modern Irishmen. There was also an exhibit in Dublin Castle featuring art dedicated to specific chapters in Ulysses. Plaques in the sidewalk, much like the ones in Iowa City, featured quotes from Joyce. The suburb of Sandycove holds the Martello Tower where Joyce lived and The Forty-Foot, a promontory on the southern tip of Dublin Bay, where he and other Irishmen used to bathe. Something as nebulous as “culture” may be hard to grasp, but the program provided ample exposure to Ireland and Irish identity, offering opportunity for both self discovery and cultural discovery.

Stephanie Smith finds Irish Writing Program a perfect fit.

“Dublin and Iowa City have a special relationship, as they are both UNESCO cities of literature.”
Dr. James Ankrum
Sharing Advice on Scholarship and Fellowship Applications
By Melia Dunbar

When James Ankrum graduated from the University of Iowa in 2007 with a B.S.E in biomedical engineering, he was a Goldwater Scholar, a National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellow, and the first Churchill Scholar from the UI. With the financial and scholar development support he received from these opportunities, Ankrum was able to pursue graduate degrees at the University of Cambridge, and through the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology. This year he returned to the University of Iowa as a faculty member in the College of Engineering. In September, Ankrum offered us an exclusive look at how the challenge of applying for campus scholarships and national fellowships changed his personal and professional life.

Honors at Iowa: How would you describe your experience with the UI Honors Department?

Ankrum: Coming in as an undergrad from a small town, the Honors Program quickly became my new home. I lived in the Honors Learning Community the year the BHC was finished. It was an exciting time for Honors at Iowa and having the new space fostered an outstanding community. Through the Honors Program, I met a great group of people that are dear friends to this day (including my wife).

Being a part of the Honors Program helped me set goals for myself and provided a support system to help me realize them. This included writing fellowship and scholarship applications, and in the process learning how to write effectively.

Honors at Iowa: What was it like to apply for fellowships? How would you describe the process?

Ankrum: Applying for fellowships is intimidating. Every award has its own reputation and it is easy to think they aren’t for you. Don’t rule yourself out before you really know what the opportunity could mean for you. The process is a lot of work and requires a good deal of planning, but support is available and it gives you a head start on graduate school and job applications. Approaching faculty for letters of recommendation, building a clear, comprehensive CV, and writing a strong personal statement essay – all of these things take time. Planning ahead is key.

Honors at Iowa: How has your life trajectory been shaped by your experiences as a Goldwater and Churchill scholar?

Ankrum: The Goldwater was my first successful external application, but the learning process began in my second year, when I started working with Sarah Prineas (Honors’ fellowships advisor) on my essays for a handful of scholarships offered by Honors and the College of Engineering. While my first few applications didn’t lead to awards, I went back to Sarah for more feedback on my writing, and eventually received a thousand dollar scholarship for my efforts. While that particular award was relatively small, the experience made me a more effective writer and showed me I could be competitive.

In my third year, I received the Goldwater Scholarship, a national fellowship awarded to outstanding undergraduates who intend to pursue research careers in mathematics, computer science, the biological or physical sciences, and engineering. Being recognized at that level was particularly important to me because it validated my potential as a researcher. I wanted to run my own lab someday and winning the Goldwater made me feel like that wasn’t just a crazy dream. This award was a signal to graduate schools and fellowship committees that said I

“While everyone wants to win, there is a lot to be gained from the process. It forces you to reach out to your network, to ask for feedback. It demands self-reflection, forces you to answer questions about who you are, who you want to become, and how you plan to get there.”
was serious about research and significantly increased my viability in other competitions. It was a key experience that motivated me to apply for the Churchill Scholarship and the NSF GRFP in 2007.

“Going to Cambridge as a Churchill Scholar was a transformative experience. It was the first time I lived outside of Iowa and the first time I would sit amongst Nobel Laureates and Knights.”

More valuable than my studies was the experience of being a part of Cambridge’s rigorous and diverse intellectual environment. Nightly discussions at the Churchill College pub ranging from geopolitics to stem cell therapy with folks from all over the world were part of our every day. These conversations challenged my thinking and strengthened my appreciation for and knowledge of different cultures and disciplines.

Honors at Iowa: How has the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship helped you pursue your interests?

Ankrum: The NSF Fellowship for me was my ticket to do what I wanted to do. Because of financial support from the fellowship I was able to explore early stage ideas that were not yet supported by grants. It also enabled me to join the lab of my choice. As I came without a price tag, I was a low risk investment to principle investigators who may not have been able to offer me funding on their own.

Honors at Iowa: What is the most difficult part of applying for a grant or fellowship?

Ankrum: Time and vulnerability. Committing the time to put together a competitive application. Fellowship essays are not like class papers. The goal is not to reach the page limit and turn it in. No -- fellowship essays are your only opportunity to tell your story. Figuring out what that is and then how to tell it takes time. Applying for any award -- a campus scholarship or a national research grant -- is a risk. There is always a chance that you will be rejected. Applying for grants and fellowships makes you vulnerable to rejection. What if you do get rejected? What if your story or your ideas aren’t good enough? Well, there’s only one way to find out -- apply, learn, and apply again!
Dr. Blaine Greteman is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Iowa, where his research and teaching focus on the literature and culture of the 17th Century, including courses on the works of Shakespeare and Milton. His book, The Poetics and Politics of Youth in Milton’s England was published by Cambridge University Press in 2013. Professor Greteman’s most recent contributions to Honors at Iowa include teaching his first Primetime workshop and co-chairing the University of Iowa’s Undergraduate Fellowships Committee.

From a Rhodes scholarship to his experience in humanities research, Professor Blaine Greteman of the English Department has a lot of insight to impart to honors students. He began his college career at Oklahoma State University, where he was not initially involved with the honors program. When he heard how much fun his friends’ honors courses were, he decided to try one for himself. Finding a new “level of stimulation and conversation,” he decided to stay connected to the program, forming relationships with honors faculty that he still maintains today. Greteman has opted to take advantage of opportunities with Honors here at Iowa because he sees a lot of positive overlap between the experience of students at the University of Iowa and his own at Oklahoma State. With both programs invested in creating a close knit community within the context of larger research institutions and a commitment to offering students a more rigorous academic experience, Greteman sees the possibility for students to engage with their education in ways that are typically associated with small liberal arts colleges or Oxford-style tutorials.

“Be yourself. Do what you find interesting... I’m a believer in trying out interesting, different classes. Find what excites you and follow it.”

Professor Greteman’s honors experiences as an undergrad led him to apply for a Rhodes scholarship, a nationally competitive fellowship that fully funds graduate study at the University of Oxford. The process of applying taught him “more about what [he] wanted to do.” As a student, he was not particularly career oriented—he just liked learning. Developing the application forced him to consider his intellectual history and to explore the meaning and motivation behind his academic and personal interests. As he puts it, the experience was “really useful, clarifying, and important.”

After completing the Rhodes’ famously difficult application process and making it through an intense interview process, Professor Greteman was rewarded with the prestigious scholarship in 1998. The two years he spent at Oxford completing his Masters of Philosophy in English Studies changed his life. To this day, Greteman says he has “never been in a place with a richer intellectual environment.” The discourse may have started in the classroom, but it didn’t end there. Instead of rehashing parties or football matches, it was more likely that his fellow scholars would dig into Sartre over drinks at the pub.

The intellectual rigor of Oxford prepared Greteman for the diverse spectrum of work he found after leaving England, including research on nuclear power and water quality for the World Nuclear Association, political reporting for Time Magazine, or teaching as a professor of English. As he says, “receiving a fellowship like the Rhodes is a transformative experience. It opens up a lot of doors.”
To Oxford and Beyond!

Continued...

Greteman believes that even the process of applying for a national fellowship can be important for a lot of students. Putting yourself down on paper in this way creates “a period of reflection and preparation” that asks you to really think about how you might contribute to your discipline, to your community. It can help students broaden their focus beyond getting a job or earning a paycheck. It challenges them to “figure out their place in the world and discover how to live a meaningful life.” The self-assessment and self-reflection of the application process focuses students on their own goals and values and guides them to ways of enriching their lives.

To prospective applicants, he has this advice: “Be yourself. Do what you find interesting. Don’t try to make yourself into the sort of person who wins a prestigious fellowship. I’m a believer in trying out interesting, different classes. Find what excites you and follow it.”

A Glimpse into the Past

49 Years Ago... By Virginia Davis

The Honors Program started a weekly radio presentation, “Honors Seminar,” an hour of airtime during which three or four honors students chose and discussed a subject of particular interest. These conversations were taped on Fridays and aired on Tuesdays at 9 a.m. Conversations covered a range of topics—from ideas they were exploring in their honors classes to current events, local and global. Students wishing to participate were advised that “a strong background in the subject being discussed can never do any harm, but the only real requirements are ideas and a desire to air them.” Of the programs aired during October 1965, “Studying for the Space Race” was one.
Em Levine Experiences Community from Iowa City to Tel Aviv

By Erin Marshall

Travelling abroad, writing a senior thesis, and interning at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum—Em Levine has done it all.

After graduating from high school in Maryland just outside of Washington DC, Levine came to the University of Iowa to study violin performance and English. Although her family has ties to the University of Iowa, she was initially unsure about coming to school in Iowa. But after visiting campus, making connections with her violin professor, and receiving scholarships from the Honors Program, Levine decided to move to Iowa City.

“Even though I am halfway across the country from my family, and turned down a whole bunch of other smaller, private schools to come to Iowa, I wouldn’t change my liberal arts education here for anything,” she said.

The honors scholarships Levine received were only the beginning of her long-term success with the Honors Program.

“Honors really has been at the core of my success here at Iowa, both socially and academically. I am not kidding when I say Honors House and Honors Primetime my freshman year really shaped my whole undergraduate career—I still have friends that I made during Primetime and I am still best friends with two people I met in Daum (Honors House) my first semester,” Levine said.

In addition to helping her find lifelong friends, honors classes have given Levine a chance to engage with and learn new concepts during her time at Iowa. Levine has also served as an Honors Ambassador for the past three summers.

Over the past summer, Levine also vacationed in Israel. She went to Tel Aviv to visit her friend who had recently finished serving in the army. “It was a blast—until the conflict started,” Levine said.

Though the conflict began two weeks after her arrival, she got used to the changes and precautions she had to take. “I learned to keep clothes by the side of the bed in case there was an alarm in the night. I learned to hug my friends a little tighter each time I said bye to them,” she added. “Those weeks were an insight into a life which we Americans only see from afar, so it was a really enlightening and enriching experience.”

After returning to Iowa and beginning her senior year, Levine started writing her senior thesis. “I am writing an academic nonfiction paper about the effects of music manuscripts on 17th century poetry dissemination,” she said.

In addition, she is serving as a curatorial intern at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum in West Branch. “I do a whole host of things, from pulling things from the stacks to accessions, to research and brainstorming for upcoming exhibits to database work,” Levine said. She will also give tours of the museum, assist with an exhibit on the dresses of the Presidential first ladies, and curate a Shakespeare exhibit and an Iowa baseball exhibit.

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Em Levine will graduate in December with degrees in violin performance and English as well as a Latin minor. She will travel to South America and Europe before returning to the US in the fall to attend graduate school. “The long-term goal is to eventually work in a museum and move abroad—perhaps to Israel or Europe,” Levine said.

Em Levine visits Jerusalem, a trip she took prior to her visit to Tel Aviv.
Jeffrey Ding, a political science, economics, and Chinese major in his third year at the University of Iowa, had an exciting summer. An Iowa City native, Ding accepted an internship in Hong Kong through the Tippie Global Internships Program. While there, Ding worked closely with Hong Kong’s Legislative Council, through which he was able to observe the intense political situation in the city as well as write articles, news stories, and policy proposals. Ding experienced a heated political climate while in Hong Kong, and he said of this, “I sat in on a meeting during which a Legislative Councilor threw a piece of glass at Hong Kong’s Chief Executive, the leader of the city.” He added, “I got to march with hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong people for universal suffrage and genuine democracy.” Witnessing this environment impacted Ding immensely, providing invaluable experience to support his areas of study and his desire to work in public service.

An internship in Hong Kong is just one of the many ways Ding has engaged in the opportunities the University of Iowa offers. He is, most notably, the University of Iowa Student Government Vice President, a position he acquired after having served as a freshman senator and later as the student government’s sustainability liaison. Ding enjoyed his journey as a student government candidate, saying, “My favorite part of the election process was the opportunity to help write a comprehensive platform on a range of campus issues including safety, sustainability, diversity, affordability, and advocacy.” Now, as Vice President, he says the role is “rewarding yet demanding.” The position requires him to send a lot of emails, but he also gets to collaborate with organizations like the International Student Advisory Board and Ideas at Iowa.

Ding is also an active student in the Honors Program, his involvement beginning after he presented at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in New Orleans with Dr. Tom Keegan. Following this experience, he chose to become an honors peer advisor. He also works with the Presidential Scholars Program. Beyond honors, Ding has spearheaded awareness initiatives like the Green Initiatives Fund and a campaign to inform students about mental health issues in the Asian community.

In the midst of his successes so far at Iowa, Ding says his greatest accomplishment is a spoken word poem he performed at a Hawkeye InterVarsity Expressions of Faith event last year. Through the piece, which he titled “Who I Am,” Ding was able to share self-reflections and discoveries with others. The piece was very personal, and Ding says, “Reactions I got from people who were impacted by my piece would make this my greatest accomplishment so far at the University.”

As someone who has actively participated in the University and the honors communities, Ding gives excellent advice for new students: “Show up. Show up to class on time and everyday, prepared to engage in the learning environment. Show up to student organization meetings, informational meetings, office hours with professors, and meetings with advisors.” Finally, like the Honors Program tagline, Ding encourages students to form their community, saying, “Don’t forget to make your connection.”
Scoops for Scholars
Peer Advisors Offer Info with Ice Cream

Honors Peer Advisors Tom Rigg and Samantha Westphal welcome students to the annual fall ice cream event, Scoops for Scholars.

Honors Associate Director Bob Kirby converses with students in the Blank Honors Center atrium during Scoops for Scholars.

Honors Peer Advisor and undergraduate researcher Maya Amjadi advises students about opportunities for experiential learning.

Honors Peer Advisor Samantha Ellingson scoops ice cream for honors students.

Cindy Kilgo, a graduate student working for the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates, greets a student inquiring about research opportunities.
**Writer Biographies**

Originally from Urbandale, Iowa, Megan Bowman is a third-year English Major at the University of Iowa. She currently works for the Bookstacks Department at the Main Library on campus, and she also participates in Iowa Andhi, a Bollywood-fusion dance team. After graduation, Megan plans to attend graduate school and study English Literature, where she hopes to one day earn her doctorate.

Christina Crowley is a junior from Des Moines, Iowa, majoring in English and minoring in French. Her favorite activities on campus include being a member of the Hawkeye Marching Band, the Campus Activities Board, and being an ICRU Fellow for the 2014-2015 school year. She is a Fellowships Assistant with the Honors Program and an English Program Ambassador. She loves anything to do with Shakespeare, musicals, or sports. Go Hawks!

Arianna Chronis is a Pre-Law junior from Palos Park, Illinois who is majoring in English with a certificate in Medieval Studies. This year, she is also Marketing Executive Advisor of the UI Dance Club and Membership Chair of the Swing Dance Club.

Stephanie Smith is an English major in the creative writing track, with a minor in cinema. She will be graduating in December, and hopes to go into marketing, public relations, or journalism. In five years she hopes to have published two short stories in venues recognized by the Science Fiction Writers of America, and one day she hopes to publish a book.

Erin Marshall is a senior studying English on the Creative Writing Track. Raised in Minnesota, Erin has enjoyed the rich literary community in Iowa City as well as the slightly less snowy winters. In her free time, Erin enjoys running, eating peanut butter, and reading plays.

Virginia Davis is a senior from Orange City, Iowa. She is studying English and American Studies and is currently working on her senior thesis. In addition to the Honors Newsletter, she also edits and writes for Iconic, a student-run magazine. She is an Honors Student Staff member, a Writing Fellow, and a writing tutor.

Melia Dunbar is a third-year student who studies biology and English. She participates in Honors at Iowa as a student staff member. She hopes to eventually pursue a career in science writing or public health.
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