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## Thanks to our writers and contributors:

- Holly Blosser Yoder
- Art Spisak
- Emily Szymanski
- Mackenzie Hasley
- Arianna Chronis
- Emma Husar
- Carter Bell
- Liz Lafferty

## Find the Honors Program on social media!

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Cover image by CJ Winters taken at the Fall Undergraduate Research Festival held in the University Capital Center. Luan Heywood discusses her research with a festival visitor.
Greetings for Spring of 2014! We’ve completed the first semester of the new honors curriculum, and are well on our way. Our numbers were more than double what we expected, but we’ve managed to get enough Honors classes for our population. More on that below. In this Spring edition of the newsletter you’ll see (among other things) an article on the Blank Honors Center – how it came to be built; an article about a new initiative that will bring together honors students from the three Iowa Regent universities; an article that highlights three of our student scholarship winners; and an article welcoming the newest member of the Honors professional staff, Jessica Waldschmidt.

The new Honors curriculum, which was developed over the last several years, went into effect for the Winter 2014 semester. We ended up with nearly 1,400 students coming into the new program. This makes for a very large program, but we’ll have to wait for a few years to get a more accurate picture of numbers. Meanwhile, we’ve been working to make sure there were enough honors classes for the Spring 2014 semester, and we’ve had good cooperation from the departments – particularly the Rhetoric Department, which serves many honors students through Honors Rhetoric, and the Chemistry Department, which has increased the numbers for both Honors Chemistry I and II in order to accommodate higher student demand. We’re very grateful in general to the various faculty and Departmental Executive Officers who have made it possible for us to institute this new Honors curriculum. We also owe many, many thanks to the administrative and staff members across campus who both supported the changes in the Honors curriculum and then helped in various ways to integrate them into the university systems. There were a lot of behind-the-scenes changes that had to be made in order to support the new curriculum.

Now that the new Honors curriculum has been instituted, we’re turning our attention to collecting and tracking data on the students of the new program with an eye to assessing what we’re doing and then to making refinements to the program. First, we want to make sure we’re doing what our mission statement says we do. For example, in our mission statement we prioritize self-discovery. Self-discovery is a normal part of the college experience, but what are we in Honors doing that supplements and expedites the process? In this year’s Honors Primetime, our pre-semester 1 credit hour workshops for our entering honors students, we had an assignment and speaker that were designed to help students to see their own college experience as uniquely self-structured to themselves – i.e., not just a quest to get a diploma and get on the job market as soon as possible. We wanted students to use their college experience, both in and out of the classroom, to find themselves and their passions.

We are also collecting and tracking data on students who are part of the new Honors Program in order to help us tailor the program so that we’re making the best use of our resources and serving our students in the best possible way. What does that mean? A big part of it is making sure we’re delivering what students expect and need for the challenges they’ll face after college. Input from Honors alumni can be especially useful in this regard, and I welcome that feedback. Better still, I invite Honors Program alums to visit and speak with our students about their own after-college experiences. Please contact me to arrange this.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email (artspisak@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
Blank Honors Center: Celebrating 10 Years of Service

While Honors at Iowa is often thought of in the abstract as an intellectual community of high-achieving students and an engaged faculty and staff, the people and ideas that make up Honors at Iowa also have a physical space to call home: the Blank Honors Center. The Blank Honors Center is located east of the Iowa River on the corner of Bloomington Street and the T. Anne Cleary Walkway. However, the Honors Program has not always called the Blank Honors Center home.

“Dr. Colangelo described the designing of the building as a very long and vibrant process.

The Blank Honors Center, or the BHC as it is fondly referred to, currently houses the University of Iowa’s Honors Program. Until the early 2000’s, the Shambaugh House, presently located on Clinton and Fairchild Streets, housed the UI Honors Program. The Shambaugh house was originally a Queen Anne-style private home that paid great attention to woodwork and ornamentation. Nicholas Colangelo is the former director of the Belin Blank Center for Talented and Gifted Education—which is now located on the fifth and sixth floors of the BHC. Dr. Colangelo was instrumental in the planning process of moving the Honors Program from the Shambaugh House to its new location in its own building, the Blank Honors Center.

Dr. Colangelo notes that what students liked most about Shambaugh were the coziness and the homey feelings. Since it was a grand, old house, it provided students with privacy and a student-centered aspect. Alice Haugen, former Honors Program Director and now a professor emeritus, was also involved in the designing process of the BHC. According to Dr. Haugen, the architect for the BHC worked with both her and Dr. Colangelo. Dr. Colangelo described the designing of the building as a very long and vibrant process. Along with Haugen and Colangelo, the Belin-Blank Center personnel, people working for the Honors program, and students all gave their suggestions on the design.
Blank Honors Center: Celebrating 10 Years of Service

of the new building. Students were particularly solicited for their advice on how to best replicate the features they admired most in Shambaugh into the new BHC.

The designing of the third floor of the BHC was particularly important, as it was envisioned as a floor dedicated students. It is indeed a very student-centered space: there are private student rooms, clusters of couches and chairs, a small library, a large study space, and a kitchen. Honors students had the most impact when it came to planning the third floor. Dr. Haugen said that students mentioned several things that they liked from the Shambaugh House: the light, the wood, the porch, the spaces to gather casually, the kitchen. Dr. Haugen also knew that students valued study space, hence the multiple private study rooms. Shambaugh had a very minimal computer lab, so Dr. Haugen and others knew that they needed as big of a computer lab as they could persuade ITS to support. Dr. Haugen and the rest of the planning process team furthermore envisioned having space for several kinds of activities that Shambaugh wouldn’t allow, such as large group meetings, film festivals, and local speakers. Therefore, the larger rooms in the BHC were designed

...the third floor of the BHC truly reflects the values of the students in the Honors program.”

The BHC hosts everything from work spaces for Honors Students, to various summer programs.
Blank Honors Center: Celebrating 10 Years of Service

with these different events in mind. The BHC also makes use of wood in on the third floor in order to reflect the hominess that students felt in the Shambaugh House, according to Dr. Colangelo. Because of all of these features and details, the third floor of the BHC truly reflects the values of the students in the Honors program.

A unique feature of the BHC is its skywalk, which connects to Daum Hall. Honors students who live in Daum have easy access to the private study room, couches, and kitchen that the BHC offers. The third floor of the BHC was intended to be a “connection” between the Honors Center and Daum Residence Hall, or the Honors dorm. Today, students travel between the BHC and Daum with the swipe of a card. However, this was not with dedicated lobbying on behalf of Dr. Haugen, who reports that in the planning process, it was often proposed to cut the pricey feature, but Dr. Haugen knew it would be important to students. She fought tirelessly for it and won.

Today, the Honors students of the University of Iowa can find places to study, to socialize, and to relax in the Blank Honors Center. While it is dedicated to academic achievement, it is the student-centered third floor—a result of careful planning by dedicated faculty such as Dr. Haugen and Dr. Colangelo—that makes the BHC so invaluable to the Honors student experience.

A Glimpse into the Past

7 Years Ago:

The School of Music partnered with the University of Iowa Honors Program to form the Iowa Honors Wind Quintet, the university’s first ensemble that featured honors students majoring in either music performance or music education. As the main mission of this group, this ensemble primarily focused on connecting college students with the community through a series of educational and interactive performances. With a diverse selection of music ranging from classical Mozart to Latin dances, the Iowa Honors Wind Quintet performed at art fairs, senior centers, and even at the University of Iowa Hospitals.

Story by Emily Szymanski
“It’s safe to say that the Honors Program helped connect me to many of the opportunities and experiences that made my University of Iowa experience so memorable,” recalled alumnus Jacek Pruski. A graduate of the class of 2004, he was an active member of the Honors Program and took advantage of the many opportunities it offered.

Pruski graduated with honors in both of his degrees (political science and a self-designed degree in environmental policy), took various honors courses through the years, wrote a senior honors thesis, and worked for the Honors Program as a volunteer coordinator and as a student liaison to the Iowa City Foreign Relations Council. During his freshman year, Pruski also lived in the honors residence hall, Daum; unfortunately for him, this was “before it connected to the fabulous Blank Honors center, which didn’t exist; the Shambaugh House had its charm, though!”

After having been involved in so many different elements of the Honors Program, it is hard for Pruski to choose a favorite. However, he believes that one of its best components is the staff.
Alumni Jacek Pruski: Honors in Iowa City, Department of Justice in Washington D.C.

“They’re dedicated to helping students find and pursue their passions, whatever those passions may be,” Pruski said. “Whether you’re charting your academic direction, trying to get involved on campus, planning summers and beyond, or whatever else, I can’t recommend enough a visit with Honors staff. They’re brimming with ideas!”

During his time at Iowa, Pruski also participated in numerous other activities and groups. He served a year in the University of Iowa Student Government (UISG) and on the CLAS Dean’s Student Advisory Committee, produced concerts for the Campus Activities Board (CAB), served on the Editorial Board at the Daily Iowan, and co-hosted a show on the university’s radio station (KRUI) one summer.

Pruski also left his own mark on Iowa. He co-founded and co-directed The 10,000 Hours Show, a project to recruit and encourage students to volunteer in their communities, culminating annually in a free concert just for volunteers. In the past, these concerts have featured musicians such as Ben Folds, Guster, and Cake. He was also a founding member of The James Gang, a community non-profit organization, and in 2004, Pruski was honored with the University of Iowa Distinguished Student Leader Certificate. This is one of the university’s most prestigious awards.

“After his graduation from the University of Iowa in 2004, Pruski worked across the country as a community organizer for two years before going to graduate school at Stanford University to study law and public policy. During summers in graduate school, he interned with several different organizations, including the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Williams and Connolly (a law firm in Washington, D.C.).

Following law school, Pruski worked as a law clerk on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Since this clerkship, he has worked in Washington, D.C. as an attorney for the United States Department of Justice. Here, Pruski works on cases that generally involve administrative and/or constitutional law issues.

Alumnus Jacek Pruski has earned numerous, impressive accomplishments, both during and since his time at the University of Iowa. He has gone on to achieve great success and it all began here. He remembers his time here fondly, recognizing just how beneficial the university’s Honors Program was and the crucial role it played in both his college years and his future. “How didn’t I benefit from Honors?! The unique courses; coffee-fueled chats about my interests with Bob Kirby; scholarships; epic meetings at the Honors building about campus and community projects; the amazing people I met along the way (including lifelong friends); I could go on. It’s safe to say that the Honors Program helped connect me to many of the opportunities and experiences that made my University of Iowa experience so memorable.”
Student Profile: Meet Sophie Amado

Name: Sophie Amado
Major: English-Creative Writing
Year in School: Senior

If you could offer one piece of advice for incoming students, what would it be?
I’m really bad at standardized testing; I work really hard for my grades. My ACT score was sub-par, so I petitioned to get in the honors program and I got in based on writing an essay. The point is I initially didn’t get in I’m grateful that I did get in and they helped me. I work really hard and that shows you that if you don’t initially get into honors, if you’re a freshman and you don’t initially get in it, you can work towards it and that will help you a lot. And it’s encouraging; you’re with people with similar interests and the classes are so cool and concentrated. You’re with engaged students. It all just goes to show you.

Tell us about your favorite moment with the Honors Program.
There are so many; I feel like I live eat and breathe honors sometimes. I lived in Daum and Centerstone and I work as Honors Student Staff. I’m a TA for the Harry Potter Fine Arts Seminar that Donna Parsons teaches. I was able to go with her for the NCHC (National Collegiate Honors Conference) and there was a national convention there with a bunch of students, professors, and faculty members from across the country. I presented my experience about when I was a student doing my honors research project for the class and now I’m a TA for it. But being able to present was one of the best things that happening to me. And getting to check out the city, but also being able to interact with other honors students—not only about the class, but about my work. And getting to hear about their work. It was like “this is what I’ve been working towards since freshman year.”

Tell us about your last “breakthrough” moment? What problem did you solve, what was your idea?
Honestly, just working on my thesis has been so much better than I thought it would be. And I’ve had a couple moments of epiphany just being in the workshop. It’s all been really encouraging, and so have my classmates been. They’ve liked my submissions and it’s really cool when we exchange samples of our work. It’s then when I can see myself as an MFA student—moments like that.

And again when I was at the conference, after we did our presentation a couple students came up to me and asked me to send them the paper that I wrote, I just had this moment where I was like “This is what I want to do and I want to travel and meet other people and talk about writing.”

So you’re about to graduate. Look back to your freshman year, starting college here. What’s something about yourself now, that would drastically surprise the person you were then?
I think I’m the same and different which is such a stupid thing to say but I really think freshman year of college I was like really shy and like so engrossed in studies and studies, which are so important, but it was really when I started working at Honors, and I had coworkers, and I was at the desk exposed to different honors students and I started recognizing people and they started recognizing me...And I really think starting at my jobs at honors and branching into specific English major things like the creative writing track and building those kind of communities—making small communities within a Big Ten college made me more outgoing, and made me more focused on what I want to do and who I want to be with and I just think overall I became more outgoing as a person so I think that would surprise freshman year me. 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 John Hartnett

Name: John Hartnett
Major: Human Physiology
Year in School: Senior

What, in particular have you been involved in through the honors program. Any other cool university/Iowa city things you’ve been apart of?
I lived on Honors Nexus in my first year, which was a very good experience. I’ve been a summer ambassador and peer advisor, and I serve on the Honors Student Advisory Committee.

My other experiences of note are my fraternity, Pi Alpha Phi, tutoring chemistry and biology through CDE, and studying abroad in India last winter.

What has been your favorite honors activity or memory?
In spring ’12, I was roped into a student government campaign by Sunny Kothari and Nick Rolston. The #Party consisted mostly of honors students and we didn't win the election but I had a lot of fun campaigning and built some great friendships.

How do you balance school, work and extracurricular activities? How would you advise students to successfully balance college life?
If you’re looking to increase your productivity then you have to challenge yourself. That means overloading your schedule with responsibilities of all types and refusing to back down.
It never goes perfectly but you’d be surprised how much you can accomplish if you assume you can do everything.

What advice would you give to a student thinking about taking an Honors class or graduating with Honors?
You get to set your own standards. Why would you not set them high?

So you’re about to graduate. Look back to your freshman year, starting college here. What’s something about yourself now, that would drastically surprise the person you were then?
The freshman me would be surprised by how idealistic I am.

Tell us about your last “breakthrough” moment? What problem did you solve, what was your idea?
I realized that I can Chromecast a fireplace video onto the TV in my living room. It wasn’t really a problem but I like the ambiance.

What’s next?
I’m enrolling at the Carver College of Medicine this fall.

Who would you most like and least like to be trapped in an elevator with?
James May and Bill O’Riely, respectively.

After food, water, and shelter are accounted for, what is the minimum you think you need to be happy?
A fellow snarky person, something with an engine, and some work that requires problem-solving.

If you could go back and witness one moment in history what would you witness?
The bombing of Hiroshima.

You can wake up and be an expert/prodigy in one thing; what do you choose?
Jazz piano.
“An Honor Society is an organization that recognizes academic excellence among peers, and acknowledges those outstanding students who value and dedicate their time to furthering their educational goals,” Omicron Delta Kappa’s president Dora Grote said.

“However, an Honor Society means more than just academia,” Grote continued. “It means integrity, honesty, and community service. It develops leadership skills and grows a bond between the members because all of the members have a similar interest or understanding about what they want to achieve while in college and beyond.”

These are exactly the types of skills and experiences that the members of University of Iowa’s honors society Omicron Delta Kappa are cultivating. ODK brings together the most representative students in all phases of collegiate life, particularly those who have attained a high standard of efficiency in collegiate activities and who inspire others to strive for conspicuous attainments along similar lines. This society also brings together members of the faculty and student body of the institution, as well as other ODK members, on a basis of mutual interest, understanding and helpfulness.

A very important part of ODK is the Dad of the Year Award, presented at family weekend during the halftime of the football game every year. However, this is not the only award that the honors society is involved with.

In addition, ODK presents awards to UI faculty, such as the Marion L. Huit Faculty

ODK representative Amy Holtz, right, presented the Huit Faculty Award to Gregory Friestad at the 2013 Finkbine Dinner
Omicron Delta Kappa: Honors Society Spotlight

Award which was established in 1978 in recognition of the late M.L. Huit’s outstanding dedication and service to the students of the University during his tenure as Dean of Students. This award is given each spring to the UI tenured faculty member who best characterizes Dean Huit’s contributions to the university and community life.

Another award that ODK is responsible for is the James N Murray Faculty Award, established in 1985. Named after the late James N. Murray, former professor of political science, this award recognizes those that share Murray’s exceptional devotion to the development of younger faculty members at the University. Nominees for each award must be members of the UI faculty.

Although ODK is one of the smaller honors societies at the University of Iowa, the eight juniors and seniors that make up this organization are dedicated to their main areas of concern: volunteering, friendship, and service to the community. As one of their most recent service experiences, ODK volunteered at the Homeless Children’s Trust Party in December where the members helped to watch the children, worked in the kitchen, and served lunch.

While ODK will continue administering the service awards and volunteering within the community, there are other plans in store for this society in the future. “The ODK group is very small and has not been incredibly active in the past few years, but we are trying hard this year to get the group up and running,” Grote said. One of the plans that Grote has in mind is restarting their involvement with various professors on campus as had been done in the past.

For those looking to become involved with Omicron Delta Kappa, students must be either a junior or senior and meet these five qualifications: exemplary character, responsible leadership and service in campus or community life, superior scholarship, genuine fellowship, and consecration to democratic ideals. Applications can be filled out on the society’s website where they will be reviewed before induction in the spring.

Meet the Members:

Dora Grote: Dora is a junior at the University of Iowa and the president of Omicron Delta Kappa, studying journalism/mass communications and political science. She is a native Iowan, and graduated from Coon Rapids-Bayard High School in 2011. At Iowa, she has held various roles with The Daily Iowan, including reporting and writing, TV producing, designing, and editing, and is currently the managing editor. She also interns for the University of Iowa College of Law and works for the University of Iowa College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as an editorial assistant. Aside from her studies, Dora participates in Dance Club, has been involved in Dance Marathon, plays piano, enjoys running, and loves cheering on the Hawkeyes.
A 2013 graduate with an honors B.A. in Political Science and a B.A. in French originally from West Des Moines, Iowa, **Audrey Williams** was awarded the Herbert Scoville, Jr. Peace Fellowship. Williams is currently working at the Stimson Center at the Managing Across Boundaries Initiative where she is bringing her background in nuclear nonproliferation and counterterrorism.

Iowa City’s very own **Zach Wahls** is the winner of the 2013 Truman Scholarship. Working towards an interdepartmental BA in Sustainability Studies, Wahls has strong interests in renewable energy and other sustainability-related ventures. As Wahls continues to make strides in his studies, he is looking forward to the honoring what it means to be a Truman Scholar.

Having left North Branch, Minnesota to study at Iowa, **Onalee Yousey** has finished her studies here in Iowa City in December. On top of her diploma, Yousey has also been awarded as the 2013 Critical Language Scholar. Now that she has graduated with a BS in Political Science and a BA in International Studies, Yousey plans to join AmeriCorps, working in the inner city of St. Louis in community development.

"...you realize that all your hard work has paid off, that you had accomplished your dream...even if it’s only one step..."

"I know I couldn’t have done it without the help of friends, family and the Honors department."

"I was really nervous, but also excited. I had no idea if I had a good chance of winning,"

Story by Emily Szymanski
Audrey Williams (cont.)

As Williams was previously interested in working in a think tank and had interned with the Stanley Foundation prior to her graduation, this fellowship is allowing her to expand her knowledge not only on think tanks, but also how seemingly divergent issues (such as counterterrorism, poaching, mental health, and illiteracy) all weave together to create dynamic challenges that require dynamic policy approaches.

Looking back on the application process, Williams’ nerves had been shaken when she applied. She stated, “Like with any application, you never know what the right combination of effort, experiences, and talent will be.”

Williams recognizes how difficult it is to strategize for an application, particularly because what worked for one person may not necessarily work for another, based on their own background and experiences. When it comes down to the basic components of an application, Williams said: “Finally, timing and luck are part of any scholarship or fellowship competition, and these are completely out of an applicant’s control.”

When applying for the fellowship, Williams had a set plan in mind. As the Scoville fellowship gives young professionals an opportunity to work in Washington DC at organizations dealing with peace and security issues, Williams knew that this was an experience that she could not pass up. As she applied, Williams noted: “I felt a mix of confidence (knowing I had done all I could in undergrad to be prepared for this opportunity) as well as nervousness (knowing that this was the opportunity I most wanted).”

As far as Williams’ own circumstances were concerned, she felt that she had done everything that she could in order to be prepared for this fellowship. She stated, “I had done well in classes, interned at a think tank, attended international security workshops, and done research abroad.”

However, despite all of her experience, Williams was fully aware of how competitive this fellowship is, saying, “While I felt that I had done all I could, I was still very nervous and thought that it would be very fortunate for me to make it as a finalist, much less as a Scoville fellow.”

Once her application had been submitted, Williams says that waiting for a response was the hardest part because at this point, she knew that she had done everything that she could. Williams beautifully stated:

“In the lead-up to college and during our studies, we talk often of our “dreams and goals.” And yet sometimes these discussions seem very abstract, as we wonder whether these dreams will really come to fruition, or whether we’ll go down a different path, forgetting them a little bit each subsequent day. When you get the call that you’ve succeeded in your efforts, the first thing you feel is a wave of relief. Then it sinks in: you realize that all your hard work has paid off, that you have, in a sense, accomplished your dream, even if it’s only one step of your dream. That feeling is amazing, and it can be described as nothing less than pure elation.”

With all the new experience and knowledge that Williams has been gaining in her fellowship, she has discovered a new interest. As she has concentrated her time learning about countries in the Middle East and North Africa, she has decided that she would like her expertise to focus on Turkey as she has, as she states, “fallen in love” with their culture, country, and language. For her future, she explained: “Whether I’ll live there for a few years or for the rest of my life is still yet to be decided, but I know that I want to spend the rest of my career traveling back and forth between the US and Turkish policy and think tank communities.”

Having been awarded this fellowship, Williams is fully aware of how important this opportunity is. When asked what it means to her, she stated: “It means that many people have put their trust in me and have decided to expend time, resources, and guidance to help me become a part of the next generation of international security thinkers and experts. That’s a lot of responsibility, and I want to use my fellowship in ways that will help me live up to that responsibility.”

As Audrey Williams continues with her fellowship, the experiences that she encounters will help decide her next steps in life, particularly her education, perhaps continuing on to a master’s degree or a doctorate, or both.
Scholarship Winners continued

Zach Wahls (cont.)

Before being awarded the scholarship, Wahls recalls that the application process was daunting. But through all the paperwork and nerves, Wahls appreciates all of the help that he had along the way. He stated, “It was an honor to advance and to win, and I know I couldn’t have done it without the help of friends, family and the Honors department.”

Wahls never lets himself forget how much of an honor that this award is. Since becoming a Truman Scholar, Wahls has been able to take advantage of many opportunities that he had not necessarily expected, these opportunities ranging from graduate school to professional interests.

When Wahls was asked to define what this scholarship means to him, he said, “As the Truman Scholarship is the living memorial to our nation’s 33rd President, Harry Truman, it requires its winners to spend time in service to the public. To be honored and charged with that means a lot.”

While Wahls was aware of the service aspect that comes along with being a Truman Scholar, he is now familiar with another element that makes up this scholarship. “I’ve also gotten to know the other folks in my Truman class,” Wahls said. “The peer group is absolutely phenomenal—it feels like family.”

Onalee Yousey (cont.)

As Yousey has had internships which allowed her to work on urban projects to alleviate poverty, she intends to follow this passion of hers and work with refugees and immigrants, particularly using her Arabic skills to teach English as a Second Language.

The Critical Language Scholarship was a perfect match for Yousey. As the CLS represents the United States government’s commitment to educating Americans about other cultures, this strongly empowered Yousey. Having been previously a part of the program, Yousey spent time abroad that gave her a greater understanding of Moroccan culture and at the same time allowed her to build friendships with students from across the United States. In regards to Yousey’s experience with the CLS, she stated: “The CLS also represents a deep personal commitment I have to learning about Arab culture and the Middle East—learning Arabic is a challenging and rewarding experience.”

Now when Yousey looks back, she shares similar feelings with her peers in regards to the scholarship application process, viewing it as a challenged and daunting task. “The essay questions are direct and require full answers in a limited amount of space,” Yousey recalled. However, despite the initial frustration of applying, Yousey managed to keep a positive attitude throughout the process.

“I was really nervous, but also excited. I had no idea if I had a good chance of winning,” Yousey said. “My attitude was that it was worth the work to apply even if I had just a small chance of winning!”

Now that Yousey has been awarded this scholarship, she has been incorporating the experiences that she has learned from it into various aspects of her life. Yousey used the Arabic that she learned from her time spent in the CLS program in her Honors Thesis, in which she researched Jordanian politics and attitudes toward women in their society. One of the ways that Yousey utilized her skills was that she was able to translate many of her sources for her final paper from Arabic into English.

“It was especially helpful to be able to read news articles and political slogans/platforms in Arabic,” Yousey stated. “[Particularly because] many political parties in the Middle East (Jordan, specifically) do not have English websites.”

With graduation less than two weeks behind her, Onalee Yousey will be making sure to use all of her experiences gained from CLS in her future and will no doubt be met with success.
Two University of Iowa parents were the center of attention Oct. 26 during the Family Weekend game day breakfast and prior to kickoff of the Hawkeye football game, when they were honored as UI’s Mom and Dad of the Year. The 2013 Mom of the Year is Tammy Taylor of Callender, Iowa, nominated by her sons, Travis, a graduate student in rehabilitation and mental health counseling in the College of Education, and Brayton, a sophomore studying finance and entrepreneurship in the Tippie College of Business. She also has a third son.

They shared in their nomination that their mother has served as the “glue” of their family, especially during difficult times. When Travis became a quadriplegic in 2010, she offered steadfast support.

Travis wrote, “My mom stood by my side throughout the whole process, encouraging me along the wild roller coaster ride. There were many ups and downs, and throughout each down she was right there to guide me along the right track.”

When tragedy struck again with the death of Tammy’s husband and the students’ father, Tammy remained faithful and gave her family the courage and strength it needed to deal with the loss.

The 2013 Dad of the Year is Willie Delfs of Sioux City, Iowa, nominated by his daughter, Jennifer Streeter, a 2004 UI graduate and current medical and doctoral student. Delfs endured a difficult childhood due to having a father with mental illness, but persevered to help shepherd to adulthood his five siblings and, later, his own five children. He was a hands-on father who imparted valuable life lessons: “the importance of working hard, spending time with family, and helping others,” Streeter wrote.

Among his varied community service work is serving as president of Siouxland Habitat for Humanity, which builds houses for families in need, and volunteering as event coordinator for Siouxland Sleep Out, an organization that raises funds and awareness to help eradicate homelessness.

Mom and Dad of the Year are sponsored by the UI Parents Association, with support from the UI Athletics Department and the Iowa Hawk Shop/University Bookstore. Honorees are chosen by two student honors societies, Mortar Board and Omicron Delta Kappa, based on personal achievements and dedication to family. Any student can nominate a parent for an award.
The UI Honors Program is proud and honored to welcome their newest staff member, Jessica Waldschmidt. Waldschmidt will be taking over Mary Uhl’s previous position as the Honors Program’s Administrative Services Coordinator, a position in which Uhl has diligently worked in for approximately 10 years.

As the new coordinator, Waldschmidt will be taking on numerous tasks, including answering any phone or walk-in inquiries, assisting the Honors’ Student Staff, and even filing and finalizing policy and deadline forms. Essentially, she serves as a liaison to both professional and student staff members to ensure that all Honors and University policies and procedures are enacted correctly. Furthermore, she manages the UI’s general catalog as she enters classes into the system, and serves as an “administrative backend” for teachers and enrollment purposes.

Before Waldschmidt joined UI’s professional staff, she was a student at the University of Northern Iowa. Waldschmidt graduated from UNI with a bachelor’s degree in Graphic Communications, or as it is currently referred to as Graphic Technologies. Previously to employment in the Honors Center, Waldschmidt worked at Hills Bank & Trust Company for two years directly after college. The young graduate worked in the Electronics Services Department within the retail services and commercial side of transactions. As Waldschmidt says, she served as a “go-to for online banking, transaction processing, and ATM machine issues.”

After her two years at Hills Bank & Trust Company, Waldschmidt became a full-time faculty member of UI’s staff. Her first position at the University was within the Administration Office in the Main Library. Under this position, she aided in administratively managing all of UI’s libraries, excluding the Law and Hospital Libraries. Waldschmidt enjoyed her position for over two years before taking on her current career path with the Honors Program.

Waldschmidt jokes that her new administrative job is “a different side of things from the library and banking end.” Yet, she is truly looking forward to delving into a new work setting.

“I’m really enjoying the connections I’ve made thus far,” Waldschmidt stated. She is also interested in learning from, and continually helping, her professional and undergraduate staff.

As an Iowa native, Waldschmidt enjoys the fact that she was born and raised in Iowa. Waldschmidt also finds great satisfaction by remaining active within her community. “I pick a charity every year to be involved with and support,” Waldschmidt said. In fact, Waldschmidt has been a proud and continual supporter of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County for several years.

Waldschmidt’s passion and enthusiasm for her administrative position and life in Iowa City is both clear and inspiring. While the Honors Program is saddened to say farewell to the friendly face of Mary Uhl, they are proud to integrate Waldschmidt into a new division of UI’s faculty.
Honors Takes New Orleans

Before the clocks were changed and before the Mardi Gras festivities kicked in, some of our Honors staff and students found themselves in the warm streets of New Orleans for their trip to the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference this past November.

The National Collegiate Honors Council is a professional association of undergraduate honors programs across the nation that works on improving various aspects of each college’s program, ranging from curriculum development to internships. At this year’s conference, the blazing Louisiana sun heated up discussion panels and committee meetings that have brought new ideas back to heat up Honors at Iowa.

One of our very own honorables that traveled into the heat only a few months ago revealed her enlightening and exciting experience. Hannah Philgreen, an Honors Ambassador, was one of the students to make the trip and stimulate the minds and hearts of the scholastic elites of the nation. Amongst numerous discussions, committee meetings, and presentations, Philgreen recalls, “I was initially overwhelmed with the conference and the sheer number of people that were there.”

However, over the three days of the conference, Philgreen overcame all the intimidation of the convention.

“I’d engage in conversation with people that I had never met as though we were old friends,” Philgreen said.

Philgreen continued to say that the locals to New Orleans were equally as friendly and open to “Iowans” like her. This familiar, friendly atmosphere was keen on encouraging a good and supportive environment, a key component in inspiring new plans for the honors programs.

Some important topics discussed at the conference centered on how incoming students are integrated into college, specifically how they transition into the new and unfamiliar world of independence.

It was this last November that these esteemed UIowa representatives shared, discussed, debated and defied the ways and interworkings of honors programs across the United States, and found that there are new innovations across the board...
Honors Takes New Orleans

As the University of Iowa is a Research I University, students at any point in their academic career here have the advantage of getting involved with research in any of their fields of interest. This gives students the opportunity to work closer with U Iowa faculty and build connections within their areas of study, all the while exploring topics that they are passionate about. In December, the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduate (ICRU) celebrated its 4th annual Fall Undergraduate Research Festival (FURF), and in April, the Spring Undergraduate Research Festival (SURF) marked 10 years. One hundred presenters, from 30 different departments and majors, first-years through seniors presented at SURF April 9 on the second floor of the Old Capital Mall. A somewhat smaller number presented at FURF in December.

Philgreen participated in while on the trip, ranging from “City as Text” to the National World War II Museum, these honorables built up their experience with the Honors Program on a national level to improve that of the Hawkeye Nation’s.

All in all, in the warmth of the New Orleans, the UI representatives were able to bring the heat of innovative education back to the slushy streets of Iowa City to continuously make improvements to our program.

What the University of Iowa was able to bring to the table in Louisiana focused on our very innovative program, Honors Primetime. This one credit hour program introduces first-year students to college life, balancing a stimulating education with well-needed comforts of a social life during the rickety transition from high school to college.

On the importance of this program, Philgreen noted: “Without a program such as Primetime on large campuses where there are many orientation dates, it can be difficult to foster the same sense of camaraderie that Honors students at smaller colleges have.”

During the NCHC Conference, Philgreen, along with her the UIowa colleagues and peers, were able to spread this inspiring idea to other institutions, potentially sparking this program in other colleges as well.

From the several activities that Philgreen participated in while on the trip, ranging from “City as Text” to the National World War II Museum, these honorables built up their experience with the Honors Program on a national level to improve that of the Hawkeye Nation’s.

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FURF and SURF: Showcasing Student Research

Story by Emma Szymanski

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(From Left) Andre DeGroot, Mingyu Ma, and Dzevida Pandzic showcase their work
For senior Tommy Wisniewski, research was his way of getting more involved with his honors thesis in History, a process which he started over a year ago. “As the thesis is an in-depth examination of some topic in history, I chose to look into sports diplomacy between the US and USSR during the early period of the Cold War,” Wisniewski said. “As far as how I got involved with the research fair, my thesis professor had suggested it and I thought it would be an interesting way to display my work as well as improve it through the comments of others.”

Although participating in a research festival was not originally on Wisniewski’s agenda, he was glad that he was able to take advantage of the opportunity. “I really was surprised by how well the fair went,” he stated. “I enjoyed how much people actually cared about what I was doing and the impact further research could have.”

Another student, Vida Pandzic, had a similar experience. After taking one of the biology courses required for her Neurobiology and Human Physiology majors, she became really interested in plants. “I wanted to gain in-depth knowledge on the topic,” Pandzic said. “That’s why I got involved in plant biology research. Every day I am challenged, stretched, and made to think in new ways. Overall, it has been quite the beneficial experience.”

After the research, Pandzic found that the research festival was a nice way to celebrate the projects being done on campus. “My favorite parts about the research festival were sharing my research and seeing what other people were doing research on,” Pandzic said. “I enjoyed sharing my hard work with others, as well as learning new things from them.”

As ICRU’s mission is serve students, staff, and faculty by promoting undergraduate involvement in research and creative projects, this festival is a way for the students to show the university and the community all they could use improvement in talking about it, giving them helpful suggestions that will enhance their presentation skills for the next research festival. “What doesn’t get talked about often enough is the importance of being able to actually talk about the research you do, once you’re involved,” Assistant Director of ICRU Lindsay Marshall said. “This is a skill - something that anyone who is involved in any kind of research, scholarly, or creative work at any level, beginner or expert, needs to develop.”

As she was highly involved with research in both her undergrad and graduate career, Marshall knows how crucial it is to be able to effectively articulate why and what there researchers are doing, especially with people outside of their field. “ICRU’s research festivals are one way to start learning this skill in a relatively low-stress environment, as poster presentations aren’t necessarily “formal” presentations, but rather short conversations with interested visitors (using the poster as a nice visual aid),” Marshall said. “I would encourage ANY and EVERY student involved in research, scholarly, or creative work at the University of Iowa to present at least once during their time here and start practicing telling their research story.”

While FURF and SURF might be over for the 2013-2014 school year, there are still opportunities for students to present their work again next year. More details about FURF and SURF, including a full program, can be found on the ICRU website.
Outreach Team: Helping Students Make Their Connection

Now that the school year has settled in, the Honors Program has kicked off one of their newest departments – the Outreach Team. Run by student staff workers Eric Bundy, Ryan Smaha, and Laura Wang, this group is designed to promote Honors events and manage the various social media accounts for the Honors Program, like Facebook, Twitter, and the blog on Tumblr.

“Up until this year, the position was called the Marketing Coordinator, and was just one individual managing the various accounts,” Smaha said. On top of the three student staff workers, this newly-designed department is also backed by the Honors professional staff as well, all working together to promote the various events and seminars happening within the Honors Program.

Now with a team of this support, the Honors Program is reaching out to students in new and creative ways. All of the social media run by the Outreach Team advertises unique opportunities for the students to take advantage of, whether it be screening films like “V for Vendetta” and afterwards discussing the different themes and ethics of the movie, by posting the Honors courses offered for the Spring 2014 semester, or by listing the best places to study on campus.

These various outlets of social media are not limited to solely providing information about the Honors events within the university. For those who can use a bit of a break when midterms and finals roll around, the Blog also offers its followers a variety of different visuals to relieve stress, like breathtaking pictures taken of the scenery on campus, and interesting articles on various topics not necessarily related to academics.

But soon the Outreach Team will be adding yet another tool of social media to make the Honors Program more widespread to the students.

“The presence of these social media outlets have helped student and professional staff focus more on developing awesome events, and less on the marketing of specific events.”

“Next semester, we plan on starting a YouTube channel,” Smaha said. “This will add a new dimension to the ability of UIHP to reach out to not only current students, but alumni and prospective students.”

One plan in particular for the YouTube channel involves interviewing various students in the program to show how different people are making their connections with UIowa’s Honors Program.
Although this department has only been running for a few months, they have already been met with a large amount of success, with the goal of reaching out to more students in the Honors Program.

“We have started a blog (honorsatiowa.tumblr.com), have increased the amount of “Likes” on Facebook by about 150 people, and tripled our Twitter followership,” Smaha said. “The presence of these social media outlets have helped student and professional staff focus more on developing awesome events, and less on the marketing of specific events. It makes everything much more efficient.” The Outreach Team will continue to promote the events and services available to those involved in the Honors Program, all the while coming up with new means of reaching out to the students.

For those interested in having their Honors event advertised, email Eric Bundy, Ryan Smaha, or Laura Wang with a description of the event and look for the promotion on the Honor Program’s Facebook, Twitter, or Blog account.

Meet the staff workers:

**Ryan Smaha**

Ryan is a junior Finance and Management and Organizations (Leadership track) major, also pursuing a certificate in Leadership Studies. This is his first year working on the student staff for UIHP. He has been involved in Honors since coming to Iowa, and has been key in developing relationships with the Pomerantz Career Center and the Honors Program, starting a program that provides networking opportunities for UIHP students. In addition to Honors, Ryan is a third-year Board Member of the Tippie College of Business Judicial Board, member of Students to Assist Recruitment (where he hosts prospective Honors Students), and the Assistant Administrative Director of KRUI Radio. He also represented the University of Iowa at the Eller Ethics Case Competition at the University of Arizona in October, and is an active proponent of ethical conduct at the University of Iowa. In his free time, Ryan loves to watch sports, go fishing, and spend time with his friends and family.

**Laura Wang**

Laura is a sophomore studying English and Chinese. She is an Outreach Coordinator for the Honors Student Staff and helps write and edit the Honors blog. Some of her best memories of college are owed to the Honors Program, whether they were meeting and living her best friends in Daum or debating Dumbledore’s ethics in the Harry Potter seminar. Outside of Honors, Laura is also involved in Alpha Phi Omega, Student Philanthropy Group, French Culture Club, Campus Activities Board, and the University of Iowa Press. She devotes most of her free time to napping, eating, Pinterest, and Netflix. She loves any board game and could spend hours singing in the shower.

Story by Emily Szymanski
Writer Biographies

Emma Husar, avidly jealous of the representatives of Honors trekking the globe in New Orleans, dreams of travel and to write about the world and all its awaiting adventure. She is currently a sophomore in the Honors Program majoring in English with a minor in Spanish that she will use living in America next year, South America to be exact. After her cherished time in Iowa is up, she cannot wait to nose-dive into the mysterious expanse of the globe!

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.

Liz Lafferty is a senior Communication Studies major from Johnsburg, Illinois. Liz anticipates her graduation in May 2014, and will also be receiving certificates in Entrepreneurial Management and Fundraising and Philanthropy Communication. After graduation, she hopes to work for a PR or marketing firm, and aspires to continue on with

Mackenzie Hasley is a junior majoring in International Studies and Creative Writing, minorng in Spanish, Philosophy and Political Science, and pursuing an International Business Certificate. After years of saving money, Mackenzie plans to travel the world for a year after graduation. Eventually, she hopes to hopes to get her MBA and pursue a career in Nonprofit Management.

Carter Bell is a sophomore from Waukee, Iowa. She is majoring in Political Science and pursuing a certificate in Fundraising and Philanthropy Communication. She is involved in student government and University Democrats. Carter got her start in Honors by living in Daum her freshman year. She would like to pursue a career in public service.

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