HONORS AT IOWA

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS | 2015-16

ALUMNI CONNECTION

The University of Iowa
Greetings University of Iowa Honors Program Alumni/ae:

As the current director of the University of Iowa Honors Program (UIHP), I want to reintroduce you to the Honors Program of 2016 and also to the large and accomplished group of people who have graduated from Honors at Iowa. The Honors Program began in 1958 with Professor Rhodes Dunlap as its founder. Since those first years we’ve had over 12,000 graduates, and the Program itself has grown dramatically in size and reach in its nearly sixty year history. For example, as I write this, Honors includes over 3,100 students who are spread across all the undergraduate schools and colleges in the University. See the articles in this issue for more of what the Honors Program looks like today.

What can you expect from these annual newsletters? Many college graduates have had undergraduate experiences that have formed and informed their lives in highly significant ways. Sometimes it’s friendships with other students; sometimes it’s a deep connection with a faculty or staff member. If you’re interested in renewing those connections, either in memory or fact, this newsletter can help. Also, if you’re interested in what Honors students are like today and what the Program is doing for them, this newsletter will be of interest.

I invite your comments and questions on what you read. Your feedback can help our current students because your experiences as part of Honors and thereafter are valuable. We hope you’ll share them with us.

Dr. Art L. Spisak

Director, UI Honors Program
Professor, Classics Department
President, National Collegiate Honors Council

The University Honors Curriculum is designed to allow students to tailor a quality honors education to their own interests and areas of study. This curriculum is comprised of:

12 S.H. HONORS COURSEWORK

12 S.H. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

This approach gives students the ability to make their educational experiences both meaningful and worthwhile.

**In addition to our professional staff members, Honors at Iowa could not operate without the support of our student staff. We proudly employ approximately two dozen part-time student employees each year who assist with administration, programming, and advising.**
HONORS AT IOWA’S STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

HONORS AT IOWA’S TOTAL ENROLLMENT ENCOMPASSES 3,583 STUDENTS, DISTRIBUTED ACROSS A WIDE VARIETY OF COLLEGES AND DISCIPLINES.

COLLEGE DISTRIBUTION

- 66.4% College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- 15.1% College of Engineering
- 14.8% Tippie College of Business
- 3.60% College of Nursing

HONORS IN THE MAJOR

HONORS IN THE MAJOR IS AWARDED TO STUDENTS WHO SHOW SIGNIFICANT UNDERSTANDING OF AND PROVIDE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL FIELDS OF STUDY.

In order to receive Honors in the Major, students must complete an original thesis or project under the direction of a mentor. This is often a beneficial experience for both the mentor and the mentee:

“I love working with honors students because they’re often the hardest working students I see. I value being able to push them to consider new ideas or ways of approaching a problem in an honors thesis. In turn, they push me and give me new ways to consider issues in my field. I’ve been genuinely impressed with the quality of all of the honors theses I directed and have been proud to watch those students get accepted into most of the jobs and graduate schools to which they applied.” — Andrew High, 2016 Thesis Mentor Award Recipient, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies

HONORS IN THE MAJOR FULFILLS THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT FOR OUR STUDENTS. SOME OF THEIR THESSES CAN BE FOUND IN OUR ONLINE REPOSITORY: IR.UIOWA.EDU/HONORS_THESES

61.7% FEMALE

38.1% MALE

57.1% FROM IOWA

42.9% OUT OF STATE
A contingent of Honors professional staff and students went to Seattle, WA, October 12-16, 2016 for the annual National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference. “The theme was ‘Know Yourself,’ with a focus on self-discovery and how Honors staff and faculty can facilitate that for their students,” said Jessica Waldschmidt, Honors at Iowa’s Communications Specialist and Program Coordinator.

The theme is a result of the leadership of Honors’ director, Dr. Spisak, who served as the chair of this year’s conference and recently transitioned into the role of President of the Board of NCHC. “As conference chair, my role was directing the conference planning committee who chose the theme and set up the proposal selection process, deciding who was accepted to present at the conference,” Spisak said.

Author Sherman Alexie was the keynote speaker for the conference. Waldschmidt recalls that the main theme of his speech was to “pursue your hunger for intelligence.” He also spoke about how growing up on a reservation affected his worldview and path through life.

Waldschmidt and student staff member Katie Kiesewetter led a successful talk on “The Power of Online Presence,” including talking points on their recent successes with Honors’ social media pages, the honors website analytics, and the Honorable Messenger listserv, the two communicated “how [these platforms] impact the Honors Program on a greater level,” Waldschmidt said.

Additional presentations were given by Advising Director Holly Blosser-Yoder, Assessment Director Emily Johnson, and Peer Advisors Anastasia Hertz & Ben Ross; the Belin Blank Center’s Education Support Services Manager Dave Gould, Navya Mannengi, and Ben Ross; and Associate Director Bob Kirby with Advisory Board members Pat Rolston and Susan Hagan. Kirby also presented individually on the topic of undergraduate research. Also participating was NCHC student board member Sean Finn, who co-chairs the NCHC Student Affairs Committee.
As an artist and designer, talking about what I do to people outside of the art world has always been difficult. After receiving positive feedback from other university representatives and media specialists, however, I felt confident in my work as well as the collaborative efforts that Jessica and I put forth for our program."

Katie Kiesewetter, English & Studio Art (Graphic Design), Class of 2018

“My experience in Seattle left me thinking about issues of privilege and diversity in gifted and talented education. How are we ensuring that students who need additional support to be successful are being offered it? There are questions that I believe all programs should be considering.”

Ben Ross, Music (Vocal Performance) & Music Education, Class of 2017

Honors at Iowa values its professional connections. That is why we are developing an Alumni Mentoring Program that will allow working professionals to guide our students on their path to careers and opportunities after graduation:

“We launched the Mentorship Program this Spring. The process is basic but powerful. We are building a database of alumni who will be available by means of email, Skype, phone, or in person who wish to mentor interested students. There will be a link via the Honors website allowing the students to match their area of interest with an alumnus by means of a keyword search. Interested alumni will then have the option to engage at the level their schedule allows, connected by means of the portal. This will be a limited launch initially with a select group of students, allowing for a controlled situation and ensuring we grow successfully.” — Pat Rolston, Honors Advisory Board President, Class of 1978

Including Rolston and Spisak, the Honors Advisory Board consists of eighteen diverse working professionals from across the country. Powers and duties of the Honors Advisory Board include providing direction on honors education at Iowa and serving as representatives and advocates of the Honors Program in general. Read more about the members and their duties on our website: honors.uiowa.edu/advisory-board

PROFESSIONAL CONNECTIONS

NCHC’s 2016 Conference gave our students and staff the opportunity to make meaningful connections with the City of Seattle, their peers, and the national honors community.

“The Power of Online Presence” presentation helped Honors at Iowa network with dozens of university representatives in social media and communications from Purdue to the University of Florida.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Ben Ross, Music (Vocal Performance) & Music Education, Class of 2017

Witness our success and don’t forget to check out the website: honors.uiowa.edu
This money was used to cover tuition, travel, and other expenses that students incurred in their pursuit of University Honors.
“The Tyner Award gave me confidence and proved that my academic focus has not gone unnoticed. I entered college wanting to change my study habits and become a better student, and this award [established by alumnus Dr. Richard Tyner] helps to encourage that mentality in all students.”

Eli Bratsch-Prince, Political Science, Class of 2018