THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Honors Newsletter

SPRING 2015
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Virginia Davis,
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On the cover: From left, Adam Ishola, Rae Corrigan, Monisa Saravanan, and Audrey Wood serve cookies at the peer advisors’ Fall in Love with Honors event.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall
My greetings for the Spring of 2015 to our Honors program students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends.

ENROLLMENT REPORT

Projecting ahead to the third year of the new Honors curriculum (the 2015-16 academic year), it appears we will again have another increase in enrollment—right now the number of students projected to enter the Honors Program in Fall 2016 is about 10 percent larger than it was last year at this time. If that holds, we will have between 950 and 1,000 first-year students entering the Honors Program. This is a very large entering class, and particularly when you see how large a percentage it is—between 20 to 25 percent—of the total number of first-year students that will be entering the University of Iowa next Fall. A figure of 10 percent is much more common.

A CHANGE IN HONORS PROGRAM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

As I outlined in the Winter 2015 Newsletter, the steady increases in our honors population, which was already large, have prompted us to re-examine our program’s entry criteria. Since a large percentage of the student cohort that came into the program with a 27 through 29 ACT composite score were not making it into the second year of our program—specifically, we lost 43 percent of them—we thus decided to raise the Honors at Iowa entry criteria to an ACT composite of at least 30 and a high school GPA of at least 3.8. That change will take effect for the 2016-17 academic year. One other related change is that we will raise 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 2015-15 academic year. The 3.33 GPA that’s now the minimum to remain in the Honors Program will not change.

THE BREADTH OF HONORS EDUCATION AT IOWA

As you’ll see from several articles below, Honors at Iowa encompasses the Office of Scholar Development, directed by Kelly Thornburg, and also the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU for short), which is directed by Dr. Bob Kirby. Dr. Kirby is also the associate director of the Honors Program. Although both the Office of Scholar Development and ICRU serve all students on campus, whether they are part of the Honors Program or not, these offices are well placed as part of Honors at Iowa since they offer opportunities that especially fit the honors population. For example, getting students involved in research is part of the Honors at Iowa mission statement, and over 80 percent of Honors at Iowa students engage in some form of undergraduate research. ICRU offers them financial support to do so, both during the regular academic year, and now increasingly so in the summer.

As for the Office of Scholar Development, which helps students to seek out and apply for national and international awards usually called fellowships (e.g., Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater), most students who are competitive in this process are part of the Honors Program. There’s also a connection here with the Honors at Iowa mission statement objective of self-discovery, in that students who do go through the fellowships application process inevitably learn much about themselves and their goals.

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
Every year for the past ten years, undergraduate researchers from the University of Iowa have joined those from Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa in the state capitol to present their research. This year, the event, which is free and open to the public, took place on March 24. Twenty students from each of the three Iowa public universities presented. As in the past, legislators from the students’ home districts were invited to attend as well as 164 Research in the Capitol alumni.

Presenting their work to state officials and news reporters, students shared how research has enabled them to more fully engage in their educations, their future careers, and their state. Honors student Maddie Bro, a pre-law junior studying journalism and gender and women’s studies, chose to participate in Research in the Capitol, saying, “I was in search of more events at which I could share the research I completed under Stephen Berry and improve my presentation skills.” Having worked as an intern with the Iowa Legislature in the past, Bro was enthusiastic about sharing her research with legislators and Senate research staff members with whom she had worked.

Nathaniel Otjen, a junior in English and Anthropology at the University of Iowa, shared that Research in the Capitol gave him the opportunity to speak about his research on the Peoples’ Weather Map to Iowa lawmakers, including “the ways the project seeks to address and involve Iowans.” He added, “A large part of the project aims to foster conversations among Iowans about ways to proceed in the future within a climatically changing world.”

Lindsay Marshall, assistant director of the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU) and facilitator of Research in the Capitol, said, “The students enjoy meeting with their legislators but also appreciate the opportunity to meet and talk with their peers, which they don’t always get to do in a more formalized way.” A student presenter added, “It is really cool to see the large spectrum of research being done here at the University of Iowa and other schools like Iowa State and the University of Iowa. Even though many of us ranged from hardcore biologists to people interested in the fine arts, we were still intrigued by each other’s work and had mutual respect for one another’s fields.”

Like the Fall and Spring Undergraduate Research Festivals held at the University of Iowa, Research in the Capitol welcomes applications from students doing research in any academic field, but the event especially encourages students from Iowa to participate, as the event is attended by Iowa legislators.
This semester, the Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates (ICRU), the Latham Scientific Engagement Initiative (LSEI), and the Honors Program hosted their first Pitch Your Project research communication competition, which challenges undergraduates to share discoveries or anecdotes regarding their research in three minutes or less. With one slide and this short timeframe, participants must present to a non-expert audience in order to explain why their research matters.

Modeled after the Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, Pitch Your Project is a useful way for undergraduate researchers to practice talking about their projects in a concise, informative, and compelling way. The format of Pitch Your Project helps students develop their communication skills, requiring them to interpret their highly specialized research in a less technical, more accessible way. Participants are then able to share their discoveries anywhere—from graduate school interviews to casual gatherings with friends.

Fifteen students presented at the event, which ICRU plans to hold annually. Participants competed for one of five $500 scholarships, which fund travel and attendance at professional development events, including conferences, performances, exhibits, and workshops. The competition is open to any undergraduate student involved in scholarly or creative work on campus. Biology and Spanish major Maya Amjadi, for example, presented her research on staph bacteria in just one minute and thirty-five seconds. Others presented in fields such as anthropology, psychology, and computer science and on topics such as horror survival video games, cyber bullying, and narcissistic personality disorder. More information regarding this year’s presenters and the event can be found on ICRU’s website.

Honors staff members Kelly Thornburg and Lindsay Marshall as well as Lori Adams, a faculty member and honors adviser in the Biology department, facilitate the event.

Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall

Honors newsletter Story by Virginia Davis

Pitch Your Project A Three-Minute Research Story Competition
Fall in Love with Honors Event Photo Spread

Posing with Honors Program Director Art Spisak and Advising Director Holly Yoder, peer advisors celebrate a successful event.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall

Honors staff members Jessica Waldschmidt, left, and Suzanne Carter Squires enjoy a cup of hot chocolate.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall

Peer advisors Kelly Daniels, left, and Nadia Fayoumi are prepared to answer students’ questions about the Honors Program.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall

To get a cookie, students had to find a peer advisor to talk to and receive a short honors trivia card.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall

Students stopped by the atrium of the Blank Honors Center for cookies and hot chocolate.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall

Posing with Honors Program Director Art Spisak and Advising Director Holly Yoder, peer advisors celebrate a successful event.
Photo credit: Lindsay Marshall
Organizations started by honors students demonstrate how undergraduate students can take their original ideas and turn them into impactful initiatives. The University of Iowa provides its honors students with excellent resources to turn their ideas into realities, and the 10,000 Hours Show and The Global Education in Medicine Initiative are two such organizations.

The 10,000 Hours Show was started in 2002 with a desire to see more young people volunteering and making a difference in the community. Founded by Mike Brooks (Class of 2003), Jacek Pruski (2004), and Amanda West (2003), the 10,000 Hours Show is an effort to “engage young people in volunteer services that culminates in a free concert for which the only admission is 10 or more volunteer hours to local nonprofit organizations.” When asked about the decision to have this kind of incentive, co-founder Amanda West said, “We knew that giving [students] a deadline and easier access to open volunteer opportunities would help them get out there faster. And we wanted to reward those who were already committing their time to help others. Finally, as music lovers, we thought it would feel awesome to be at a concert surrounded by other people who love live music, community, and making the world a better place.”

Since its first concert in 2003, the 10,000 Hours Show has spread to college campuses nationwide, thanks to the help of many dedicated individuals and organizations, especially United Way. Furthermore, by giving the founders access to “advisors, university and community leaders, a network of ambitious students, work and meeting space, and scholarships to conferences,” the University Honors Program, West says, helped the founders take the idea and make it grow, first statewide, and then nationwide. Students interested in joining or learning more about the 10,000 Hours Show can visit its website, www.the10kshow.com.

A more recent organization started by an honors student is The Global Education in Medicine Initiative, started in 2014 by Nicholas McCarty, a second-year Microbiology major. This organization seeks to “connect students with University of Iowa faculty, community leaders, and international cultures in order to create an environment that promotes health education and international public health efforts.” McCarty says he was inspired to start this organization after a trip to Peru, where he spent two weeks volunteering in clinics, helping teach and institute a variety of public health related improvements, such as water purification and proper oral hygiene. Upon returning to the University of Iowa from Peru, McCarty was able to use university resources to build his idea into an organization. Once such resource was The Center for Student Involvement and Leadership, which offered support and advice regarding international and domestic prospects.
McCarty added, “Dr. Mary Aquilino has played a pivotal role in connecting us with different university departments. The students who participate in our events and activities, however, are the true reason for our success.”

Twelve of the organization’s ninety-five members recently took a trip to Alajuelita, Costa Rica to learn about a unique healthcare system, shadow local doctors, and help run clinics for the poor. McCarty hopes that The Global Education in Medicine Initiative can grow into “an inclusive, welcoming organization that places an emphasis on understanding the diverse opportunities that exist in international public health and education.” Students interested in joining or learning more about The Global Education in Medicine Initiative can email GEMIuiowa@gmail.com.
Bonjour from Montpellier! With March quickly passing by and April on its way, I can’t believe that my yearlong adventure in France is almost over and my junior year is coming to a close. Although I have been studying French since high school, I decided to study abroad for two semesters so as to really get the feel for the language. Being here for seven months has tremendously improved my French comprehension and speaking, and I’m actually starting to get a lot of compliments from the natives on my diminishing American accent.

There are so many places to go and see here and so many activities and festivals to take part in. It’s been a great experience to explore the nearby areas with friends and my host family, and I am hoping that these last two months will be a great end to my stay.

In regard to my host family, I have been incredibly lucky. My host parents are the funniest people I have met in France, and they have really taken me in, letting me join all the family events and holidays. We love to play board games together and go on hikes in various towns, and I am really grateful that I was placed into such a loving home for my nine months abroad.

My academic experience here has been quite a transition. The classes I have been taking at the university are more laid back and the professors do not typically provide much guidance, so it has been interesting to be a part of a different educational system. Second semester has gone by more smoothly, and I have been able to take integrated classes with French students. This has been not only a good way to challenge myself and really improve my oral comprehension skills, but also a great way to make friends. While most of the French students prefer to keep to themselves, I have met some really nice people that are enthused to help me learn their language. I also started playing badminton at the gym this semester, which has helped with a whole new set of vocabulary (and maybe a *gros mot* or two to say when you foolishly miss the bird with your racket).
As part of the study abroad program, I applied for an internship for the fall semester and it was a really beneficial experience. I was stationed at the local environmental agency and I edited various documents in English and then translated other texts from French into English as well. Professionally speaking, this experience has been one of the most helpful things I have ever done. I learned a lot about the French working world as well as the line of work that I want to get into (editing and translation). Most importantly, this gave me the opportunity to become more comfortable with asking questions and verifying things with my supervisor and also knowing when to take creative liberties or when to stick to a certain format. I feel like this internship gave me a bit of a look at the career path I want to follow, and it has definitely encouraged me to keep pursuing that goal since I really enjoyed the translation and revision work.

Looking back to my sendoff at the end of August feels extremely bizarre—I’ve grown so much, and I have experienced so many cool new things since then. At times, living here seems unreal, but the thought of going home feels that way, too. Leaving is going to be very bittersweet once May rolls around, and I don’t think I’ll be entirely ready to give up my life here. But I will have many great memories to look back on this once-and-a-lifetime experience, and once I get back, I plan on finding a way to bring North America closer to France.

The Honors Program began to transition to what is now the Blank Honors Center. The program was previously housed in the Shambaugh House, which was moved three blocks north during this time in order to make room for the new center and which now houses the International Writing Program. Awaiting the completion of construction on the Blank Honors Center in 2003, the Honors Program was temporarily located in the Jefferson Building, once the Jefferson Hotel, where John F. Kennedy briefly stayed in the 1960’s. The previous homes of The Honors Program are rich in history, and the Blank Honors Center, named in honor of Myron and Jacqueline Blank, benefactors of the building, continues to thrive on that legacy.
Donna Parsons is a familiar name to those involved in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Many students and faculty know her from her World of the Beatles class, and of course the ever-popular Harry Potter and the Quest for Enlightenment. But fewer honors students may be aware of the Issues in Popular Music: Women Who Rock class also taught by Parsons.

Last fall, I was looking to take a class that would satisfy both a general education requirement and an honors credit, and Parsons’ Women Who Rock was just what I was looking for. It is a three-semester hour class offered during the fall and satisfies the Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts general education requirement. With stimulating discussions and the many video clips we watched, the class always seemed to fly by. The class size was about 30 students, which was large enough to hear a wide range of opinions, yet small enough to make for an intimate environment.

This is a fascinating class especially for those whose music interests reach into the past, or for those who wish to expand their existing music library. The material covered in class went back to the music our grandparents listened to and up to the popular musicians of today. Discussions were lively. Sophomore Nicole Tabatabai commented, “I really liked how laid back Donna was. She was very organized with her notes but would still allow the class discussion to go in different directions. We would always get into small debates, which kept the class interesting.”

Sophomore Shelby Shull explained, “I really enjoyed the big artist research fanzine assignment my class did. I got to research an artist that I really enjoyed, Florence and the Machine, learn more about her music, and appreciate more of her songs that weren’t only on mainstream radio. It was really cool to create something rather than just write a paper on her.”

In “Women Who Rock,” students engage with music in a deeper way, learning about the struggles and triumphs of women musicians in a male-dominated industry.

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In “Women Who Rock,” students engage with music in a deeper way, learning about the struggles and triumphs of women musicians in a male-dominated industry. On how this impacted her life, Tabatabai says, “I had never really studied what women had to struggle through before this class. I am a lot more thankful for everything that I am able to do. Many of the iconic women in the history of music stood up for their rights, and in turn, I now have rights as well. I do not take my education or rights for granted anymore.”

The class was highly populated by women. This isn’t to say, though, that male students would not enjoy it. Sophomore Nicole Tabatabai pointed out, “If you enjoy good music, no matter who you are, you will enjoy this class.”
Enrolling in honors courses at Iowa is a great way to engage in deeper learning of a particular subject, but many courses do not have honors sections. Fortunately, the Honors Program has a solution to this problem: honors contracts.

Honors students here at Iowa have the option to designate any non-honors course as an honors contract course by speaking with their professor and mutually deciding on an extra assignment or project for the student to complete. The student and professor must then fill out and sign the honors contract form and submit it to the Honors Program. If the student completes the extra assignment and receives a B- or higher in that course, they will receive honors credit for the course they contracted.

There are other benefits to contracting courses on top of receiving that “H” on one’s transcript. Maddie Welter, a senior double-majoring in international relations and ethics and public policy, says that her experiences with contracting courses gave her some necessary skills that she can take with her to graduate school and beyond.

Maddie’s favorite contract assignment was for International Politics: History of Present taught by Professor Michaela Hoenicke-Moore. Her extra project consisted of completing short writing assignments on the New York Times international news section twice a week, and she believes that the skills she learned through that project ultimately helped her lay a foundation for writing her honors thesis. According to Welter, “Understanding history is an absolutely crucial part of international relations. That assignment put me in the habit of thinking about the reasons why certain events happen and why certain relationships between countries are the way they are. My thesis project is looking at how a certain phenomenon (euroskepticism) is going to affect the future of the European Union.”

In addition to building skills for future study and career pathways, contract courses can also help students explore their majors and make connections with their professors. Katie Hitchcock, a second-year student majoring in English, contracted Introduction to Linguistics with Professor Orfitelli.

After conducting an experiment that examined the second language acquisition of the French language in native English speakers and writing a paper about her findings, Katie decided that linguistics—one of the majors she was considering—was not necessarily for her. Hitchcock said of the project, “That’s not to say that I had a bad experience. On the contrary, I am very glad that I did because I got to know my professor on a personal level. She was a really fun professor, and we actually had certain things in common that I wouldn’t have known had I not spent extra time with her outside of class working on this project. Our mutual interest in music led to a discussion on how linguistics has been applied to music, which I found fascinating.”

Contracting courses is also a way to further understand an otherwise unfamiliar subject. Rebecca Paras, a freshman double-majoring in business management and economics, is currently working on her extra project for a class on Vinyasa Yoga—a subject completely unrelated to her fields of study. Rebecca’s course, Movement: Special Topics, is taught by
Fannie Hungerford, an adjunct yoga instructor in the theater department. Rebecca’s extra project consists of reading a book called Living Your Yoga by Judith Lasater and applying some of Lasater’s mantras and tips to her daily life. She is then required to journal about her findings throughout the semester. Paras described the project by saying, “I have always been really interested in yoga, and I thought that this would be a great opportunity to not only practice the physical aspects of yoga but dive deeper into the spiritual and philosophical nature that I may not be able to do in just the class. Even in just the first week I could already see a difference in my life, and the strategies and suggestions that Lasater provides have made an impact.”

In addition to building skills for future study and career pathways, contract courses can also help students choose their majors and make connections with their professors.

Understanding that there are more benefits to honors contract courses than an impressive addition to one’s transcript is crucial. Delving deeply into a subject, building skills for career pathways, and connecting with a professor are three of the benefits contract courses afford. Students are able—and highly encouraged—to contract as many courses as they want. One thing to keep in mind, however, is that only one contract course counts towards the 12 s.h. requirement of honors coursework for most students. More information about honors contracts and deadlines can be found on the Honors at Iowa website under the “Academics” tab.
Allison Kindig, a graduating senior from Cedar Rapids, Iowa has been awarded a 2015 Gates Cambridge Scholarship. The Gates Cambridge Scholarship program, which supports one of the most prestigious fellowships available to U.S. students, was established in 2001 through a $210 million donation to the University of Cambridge from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The scholarship’s rigorous application and interview process is designed to identify and reward individuals who demonstrate extraordinary intellectual ability, great leadership potential and a genuine commitment to improving the lives of others.

Kindig, a Presidential Scholar and an active member of the University of Iowa Honors Program, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial engineering, as well as a minor in business administration and a certificate in global health studies. As an ICRU Fellow, UI College of Engineering Grand Challenge Scholar and an early recipient of a Stanley Award for International Research, Kindig conducted independent research on alternative cooking technologies in rural India and Cameroon in collaboration with Dr. H.S. Udaykumar, a professor of mechanical and industrial engineering at the University of Iowa. Udaykumar offered his perspective on Allison’s success, saying, “She has been passionate about doing good things since her freshman year here; she went on the India Winterim trip to Rajasthan immediately after she got to Iowa. She is a highly committed, single-minded, independent and self-driven student. I am fortunate to have been part of Allison’s educational experience here at Iowa. She is the type of student that makes a faculty member’s job meaningful.”

Kindig plans to continue her exploration of sustainable product design in the University of Cambridge’s Engineering for Sustainable Development program. On why she chose this program and how it felt to win the award, Kindig said, “I chose the MPhil in Engineering for Sustainable Development to learn how to integrate the principles and practices of sustainable development into my work as an engineer. My goal is to be a part of the process of developing cost-effective solutions to help communities achieve energy and food security. I am so thankful to be a Gates Cambridge Scholar and look forward to learning from my fellow scholars and to sharing my own experiences as an inventor, designer, and athlete.”

Kindig worked closely with UI Honors Program Director of Scholar Development Kelly Thornburg, and a community of faculty and research mentors during the development of her application materials and in preparation for her finalist interview. Her mentors had this to say of Allison’s success: “We are excited for Allison and impressed by her purposeful investment in this competition. She went looking for her next challenge and she definitely found it.”

The 2015 Gates Cambridge Scholars were chosen from a field of 755 graduating seniors, graduate students and recent alumni supported by a diverse range of public and private institutions. The twenty-five women, and fifteen men who will enter the University of Cambridge in the fall of 2015 will pursue graduate degrees from an impressive spectrum of disciplines, which includes research and coursework in Polar Studies, Biological Anthropology, Neuroscience, Pure Mathematics, World History, Public Health and Classics.
What has been your favorite honors activity or memory?

My favorite honors activity was attending a stargazing trip sophomore year. It was a great way to escape campus, enjoy nature, and learn about the world of stars.

How did you get involved in the Honors Program, and how has it helped you?

I started my honors experience by attending Honors Primetime, where I met my roommate of the past two years, and working in a first-year seminar about wind energy. While I enjoyed these classes, I experienced the greatest connection to the Honors Program as a peer advisor. Being able to talk with prospective and current students enabled me to get to know and help a variety of people on campus. It is nice being able to walk around campus and recognize people outside my majors. Overall, the Honors Program provides opportunities for good conversations, which help establish a wide network of friends with a variety of interests.

In addition to the Honors Program, what other organizations have you been involved in?

Among other organizations and several honors societies, I am involved in the Hawkinson Institute of Business Finance and the University of Iowa Sailing Club and Race Team. I started sailing during the summer before sophomore year. I joined Iowa’s race team the following semester and competed at various regattas in the Midwest. I saw an email about the club and wanted to try something new, and I really enjoyed it. I highly recommend trying new activities because you never know what Iowa has to offer.

What advice would you give to a student thinking about taking an honors class or graduating with honors?

Take honors classes if they fit in your schedule. The people you meet and work with in the honors sections make the class experience unique. If a professor and class really interest you, approach the professor and try to deepen your learning in the class by conducting an extra project. Not only do you get to know your professor better, but you also get a chance to apply what you have been learning in class.

What has been your biggest challenge in college and how did you conquer it?

My biggest challenge in college so far was applying for the Goldwater scholarship. The process took more than a dozen drafts and required a significant amount of soul searching. I worked closely with Kelly Thornburg, the Director of Scholar Development at Honors, in developing my application and discovering more about myself. Her guidance helped me survive the application process.

How do you balance school, work and extracurricular activities? How would you advise students to successfully balance college life?

I balance my schedule of activities best by engaging in stress reducing activities throughout the week. Whether it be taking a fitness class at the Rec or going to Lake McBride to sail, these activities make it easier to focus on homework, work, and clubs. Part of college is enjoying life and growing as an individual.
How did you get involved in the Honors Program, and how has it helped you?

While I was part of the Honors Program since I matriculated at the University of Iowa, it was only after I became an honors peer advisor my sophomore year that I became heavily involved in the Honors Program. Since then, the program has helped me in my development both intellectually and experientially through coursework and research support.

What has been your favorite honors activity or memory?

My first two college summers were spent in Iowa City as an ICRU (Iowa Center for Research by Undergraduates) research fellow, and I couldn’t have asked for better experiences both years. Diligently working in the lab, I was able to accomplish more than I could have imagined during the academic year. And the beautiful aura of Iowa City during the summer, its festive and relaxed culture, helped me establish a palate for enjoying the subtler moments of life.

In addition to the Honors Program, what other organizations have you been involved in?

I’ve been an executive member for the University of Iowa’s Colleges Against Cancer, a standardized patient for the Performance Based Assessment Program at the Carver College of Medicine, and an undergraduate research assistant in Professor Chris Cheatum’s lab for the past three years. This last year, I was fortunate enough to have been in two productions at the University of Iowa through the theatre department.

What advice would you give to a student thinking about taking an honors class or graduating with honors?

Take advantage of all the opportunities the Honors Program provides, for there are many. The courses are fun and provide a very stimulating atmosphere, and all of the members on the professional staff are robust and more than willing to help with finding courses to take, research opportunities, supporting scholarship endeavors, and more.

What has been your biggest challenge in college and how did you conquer it?

College is very much a time to discover who are and find your identity, but that being said, it isn’t necessarily easy to do so. I came into college with a bad case of tunnel vision in regards to who I was and my future, and it’s been a challenge to rid myself of that. So the past year, I’ve been taking the time to enjoy the present and explore the interests I’ve always had such as theatre and writing.

How do you balance school, work and extracurricular activities? How would you advise students to successfully balance college life?

It’s hard. I think the biggest thing to realize is that while ambition is great, it can also be damaging. Learning how to prioritize and seek the endeavors that you are truly passionate about will help you establish a natural rhythm and balance to college life.
Get to Know Our Contributors  Writer Biographies

Emily Szymanski is currently spending her junior year in Montpellier, France. She is studying English literature and French language in the pursuit of becoming a copy-editor and translator. When on campus, she is a board member of the Swing Dance Club, a volunteer for the Iowa Youth Writing Project, and a frequent visitor of Molly’s Cupcakes. The first thing she will do once she returns on American soil will be cuddling with her dog and then going out to eat a burrito.

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 Honors Newsletter editor, she is also an Honors Student Staff member, Writing Fellow, and writing tutor.

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.

Lindsey Menard is a sophomore and an early admit nursing student. She also plans on obtaining a minor in Spanish. Lindsey grew up in Downers Grove, IL, a suburb of Chicago. During her free time she loves to run, listen to music, read, and volunteer at Mercy hospital in Iowa City. Next summer she plans on studying abroad in Seville, Spain to immerse herself in the Spanish culture and improve her Spanish-speaking skills. After obtaining her BSN at the university, she plans to move back to the Chicago area and begin her career as a nurse.

Katie Kiesewetter is a freshman from Farmington, Illinois. She is currently majoring in English and Studio Art with a minor in Art History. In the future, she hopes to pursue a career as an art director or editor at a publishing company, while continuing to write and create. Aside from the Honors Newsletter, Katie is involved on campus this year with the UI Knitting Club and the undergraduate literary magazine, Ink Lit.

Calley Mangum is a sophomore English major from Raleigh, North Carolina. She enjoys creative writing, cooking, watching hockey and basketball games, and reading, especially her favorite author, Jane Austen. She also loves spending time with her family when she can manage to make it home to Raleigh. After graduating from the University of Iowa, she plans to attend graduate school for either English or Creative Writing. Her dream is to be a published author.
We Put Our Students First

The financial support we receive from our alums and friends is given back directly to our students in the form of scholarships, professional development, and stipends for students to study abroad. Your gift directly affects the lives and careers of Honors students.

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