Thank You to Our Alumni and Friends

Honors would like to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU. Thank you for your ongoing interest in Honors. Thank you for staying engaged with current students as mentors, recruiters, career advisors, and parents. And thank you for your generous financial support. Gifts to Honors create opportunities, inspire innovation, and foster growth. As you read through this newsletter, know that you have helped make the Honors Program a success. This year private gifts supported more than 61 student research grants, more than two dozen social and educational programs, and numerous opportunities for our students to travel and present their research at national conferences. We are grateful for your ongoing support.

In 2020 ISU President Wendy Wintersteen created the “100 Ideas in 100 Days” initiative, a team charged with brainstorming around student success and engagement at Iowa State. Among the team's recommendations was the establishment of an institution-wide Honors curriculum.

The suggestion echoed ongoing conversations about developing a more cohesive upper-division curriculum — one that would complement the First-Year Program, streamline requirements across colleges, and help bolster student retention and graduation rates.

The Office of the Vice President and Provost paved the way for change last spring. In conjunction with Dr. Jan Boyles, an associate professor in the Greenlee School of Journalism and Mass Communication and faculty fellow focused on high-impact practices, Honors staff conducted a series of focus groups with current students, campus stakeholders, and the Honors Alumni Advisory Board. Conversations coalesced around a vision for a new curriculum driven by collaborative, interdisciplinary cultures.

Efforts to develop a framework for the sophomore and junior years in Honors are now underway. The curriculum will apply an inquiry-based learning model in which students tackle complex global issues in interdisciplinary project teams. It will be designed to emphasize critical thinking skills and the process of building effective collaborations.

Honors has engaged a two-year faculty fellow to lead this charge. Dr. Kurt Rosentrater, an associate professor in agricultural and biosystems engineering, began work last month and will help design and develop the structure and pathways of the new curriculum. Dr. Rosentrater has been involved with the Honors Program for more than 10 years, serving as both a research mentor for first-year students and a project advisor for numerous Honors capstone projects. He brings a range of experience with industry, government agencies, and higher education to this endeavor.

In addition to Dr. Rosentrater's work, Verena Paepcke-Hjeltness, an assistant professor of industrial design, has been instrumental in the re-envisioning process. Professor Paepcke-Hjeltness's research focuses on design thinking, and she frequently facilitates workshops on strategic planning in interdisciplinary cultures.

For information on how to support the honors student experience, go to honors.iastate.edu/giving.

We want your input! Honors Program faculty fellow Kurt Rosentrater invites alumni to share their thoughts and personal experiences as part of his work on the curriculum redesign. Use the camera on your smartphone or tablet to scan this QR code to access the survey online.

Re-Imagining Honors - Alumni Survey
Honors by the Numbers

474 Students enrolled in the First-Year Honors Program, a 7% increase from the previous year
13% Growth in underrepresented student participation last academic year

47 Seminars taught, including new offerings like Feminism, Race, and Disability in the Star Trek Franchise; Refugee Resettlement in the United States; Feminism, Race, and Disability in the Star Trek Franchise; Refugee Resettlement in the United States; the Psychology of Learning; and Pollination Ecology

247 Students found a home away from home in Honors housing

317 First-year students who participated in mentored research; they were matched as individuals or in small groups with 143 volunteer faculty mentors

$36,000 Grants awarded in support of undergraduate research

316 Courses contracted to include an Honors component, offering students a deeper, more personalized classroom experience

148 Graduates who joined your ranks as Honors alumni in 2021-22

HSB Hosts Networking & Etiquette Workshop
What fork do I use? That was the question headlining posters around Jischke publicizing the networking and dining etiquette workshop the Honors Student Board hosted last spring. After two years of canceled or virtual programming for job fairs and internships, students were eager to brush up on their professional etiquette in preparation for face-to-face interviews, business meals, and conference networking sessions. Callista Gould of the Culture and Manners Institute led the 90-minute interactive training, during which time students learned how to make introductions, the importance of making others feel comfortable, and of course, which fork to use.

Students who participated in the workshop were subsequently invited to attend a special 4-course dinner at Clouds of Ames, where they had the opportunity to practice their networking skills with Honors alumni and staff.

Nationally Competitive Awards Update
Nationally Competitive Awards staff provide Iowa State students with information and guidance on preparing for competitive national and international fellowship and scholarship opportunities. These awards include funding for undergraduate or graduate study, independent research, and global service work. Coordinator John Milstead has been busy meeting with students throughout the summer. A large portion of this year’s applicants this year unsurprisingly have ties to the University Honors Program, including three of the five talented applicants to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. This is the flagship program for the U.S. Department of State, and it funds up to one year of independent research, graduate study, or an English teaching fellowship in more than 160 countries. Eight of this year’s ten applicants for the prestigious Barry Goldwater Scholarship are Honors students. The highly competitive program supports tuition and related fees for sophomores and seniors who plan to pursue a PhD in a STEM discipline. Honors is also well represented among Iowa State’s fifteen applicants for a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, which offers a generous stipend and a full tuition waiver for three years of graduate study. Students are busy working on applications for a number of other competitions, including the Truman Scholarship, Udall Scholarship, Critical Language Scholarship, Mellon Foundation Fellowship, Ford Foundation Fellowship, and Boren Scholarship. Keep an eye out next spring for news about how the applicants fared.
FHP Retreat Returns to Camp Hantesa

425 first-year students, 18 bus trips, 306 glow sticks, 9 gallons of hot chocolate, 18 new dodge balls, 50 skeins of embroidery floss, 3 months of planning = SO MUCH FUN! It was great to be back at Camp Hantesa!

Stay in the Loop: News & Notes Alumni Edition

Keep in touch with what’s happening with Honors alumni around the world as well as our current students, distinguished faculty, and outstanding staff here on campus. News and Notes Alumni Edition is an electronic newsletter distributed twice a semester. It includes updates, awards, opportunities, and features from our campus communication partners. Scan this code to visit the archive.

Yager Retires

Susan Yager, Morrill Professor of English and former faculty director of the Honors Program, retired in June after 31 years on the ISU faculty. Professor Yager provided curriculum and instruction leadership to Honors for 10 years (2008-18). A generation of students will remember Professor Yager for her Harry Potter seminars, the last of which was offered in fall 2021. Thank you, Susan, for your years of service to Honors and ISU!