



Vol. 15

With Honors

Fall 2022

THE IOWA STATE HONORS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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.



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

Re-Imagining an Honors Education

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

continued on page 2

Re-Imagining Honors - Alumni Survey

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.



continued from page 1

both academia and industry. She is teaching an Honors seminar this fall that pilots the concepts of the proposed upper-division curriculum, specifically team-based collaboration. The seminar is modeled on the Blue Science Initiative of Hochschule Ruhr West, a university of applied sciences in Germany. The 12 students enrolled in the seminar are participating in regular virtual exchanges with their German counterparts to discuss a global challenge

Gift Promotes Diversity & Inclusion

The generous financial gifts Honors receives from alumni and friends enable us to create new and meaningful programming. A recent gift from alumnus Stephen Ho will directly benefit Honors students, although its impact is intended to extend to the larger campus community. Mr. Ho ('82 civil engineering) completed his bachelor of science degree at Iowa State as an international student and graduated from the University Honors Program. For the past ten years he has been based in Taiwan and watched from afar as racial unrest erupted across the United States in the summer of 2020. He was particularly moved by a statement Iowa State Alumni Association President Jeff Johnson issued that summer calling on alumni to be more intentional in their work to create unity. Ho, who was at the time a member of the Honors Alumni Board, responded with a gift to the Iowa State University Foundation designated for Honors initiatives that would promote racial harmony on campus. He expressed having fond memories of his time at ISU and is committed to helping preserve the welcoming culture he experienced as a student.

A portion of Mr. Ho's gift is being used to support student research or projects that promote understanding and mutual respect among people of different races, backgrounds, and experiences. The grants prioritize projects that have tangible results and the potential for a recurring impact. The first Chi-Wai Ho grant was made this spring to a team of first-year students working with Professor Gloria Betcher on a research project designed to illuminate the lives of Iowa State's earliest students of color. The biographies extend beyond recognizable names like George Washington Carver and Jack Trice, creating a valuable historical record for the university and one that allows students to draw important connections between past and present experiences.

Honors extends a special thanks to Mr. Ho for his support of student research and initiatives focused on diversity and inclusion. We look forward to announcing more grants and special programming in the months to come.

like climate change or food insecurity. Students draw on their own technical and disciplinary expertise to help the group frame the problem, research potential solutions, and present their conclusions.

Stay tuned for updates on the new curriculum. If you are interested in participating in a future focus group, please reach out to honors@iastate.edu. Former students are also invited to provide their input through an online survey (*see page 1*). The experiences of our alumni and friends are invaluable to the process, and we welcome your thoughts.



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; 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.



Honors is especially grateful to the alumni who participated in this inaugural event: Emily Elveru, '15 journalism & mass communication; Krista Klocke, '16 speech communication; Kyle Miller, '16 materials science; Alexandria Miller, '17 biology and animal ecology; Ashley Ober Arellano, '06 accounting and finance; Rebecca Runyon, '18 agricultural education; Nick Terhall, '15 mechanical engineering; Abhishek Vemuri, '14 electrical engineering; and Claire Wandro Orlando, '11 global resource systems and French.

Honors Salons are Back!

Honors Salons returned this fall after a two-year COVID absence. These Friday afternoon sessions give students a chance to hear from faculty and staff in a small, informal setting, much like the "Fireside Chats" of the Osborn Cottage years.

Professor Dan Thomson from animal science kicked off the semester with a behind-the-scenes look at the beef supply chain, from pasture to plate. He was followed by Honors's own Dr. John Milstead, whose academic background is in nineteenth-century Mexican history. He enticed students with a presentation titled "Goat Trains and Cactus Bugs: Capitalism and Honor in Mexico's Mixtec Region." Professor Ramesh Balayar from sociology wrapped things up with a talk about women's farming initiatives in rural Nepal. He also discussed his work with the UN World Food Programme and his experience traveling to North Korea. Finally, Honors hosted an alumni salon featuring Sam Vande Loo, a 2019 mechanical engineering grad living and working in Melbourne, Australia. Sam joined the group via Zoom to talk about his Iowa State study abroad experience and the recent opportunity to relocate Down Under for his position with the healthcare software company Epic.

Honors salons are one of the many ways Honors brings together students from across campus and integrates research and learning with student life. With a fresh batch of popcorn to snack on and plenty of time for questions and conversation, these events are a great way for students to wrap up their week.

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 the 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 140 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 juniors 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 studies. 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!



With Honors

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!



Iowa State University Honors Program
2130 Jischke Honors Building
603 Farm House Lane
Ames, IA 50011-1057

With Honors