

# WITH HONORS

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## Life in Honors

Want to catch a glimpse of student life in Honors? You can learn about students' travel (including the most recent service-learning trip to Belize), research projects, and social activities by visiting the "Honors Life" blog. Interested Honors students including many Honors Ambassadors, who help out with prospective student visits and other events, chronicle their adventures there. "Honors Life" is online at [honorslife.wordpress.com](http://honorslife.wordpress.com), or you can find the link at the bottom of the ISU Honors webpage at [www.honors.iastate.edu](http://www.honors.iastate.edu). Prefer Facebook? That's at the bottom of the Honors webpage, too!

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## From Honors Students to ISU Faculty Members

Life's adventures take Honors alumni all over – to offices, labs, businesses, and academic life. For a few who chose the latter path, their education brought them full circle – back to campus and to faculty positions at Iowa State.

One Honors alum is Jim Colbert ('78, Biology). He remains engaged with Honors through the undergraduate research, offering Biology 111 for Honors credit, and teaching Honors seminars, including one on cold-weather camping. Now an Associate Professor in Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology, Jim remembers taking Honors seminars on Dylan and on the history of rock and roll. His Honors project on plant anatomy became his first scientific publication – not an "important" paper, he says, "but an excellent learning experience for me."

Jim earned his M.S. and Ph.D. at Wisconsin before returning to Iowa State in 1988. He's widely known as the "admiral" of the Skunk River Navy, a service-learning group that over the years has engaged more than 1500 people in removing multiple tons of trash from Ames' Skunk River and other waterways.

For Mary Wiedenhoef (80, Agronomy), Honors was largely a practical advantage. Her parents encouraged her to join Honors, and she appreciated the chance to register early for classes. Mary had initially planned a career in Extension rather than the classroom, but "because I loved teaching and people, I found myself gravitating toward the job."

Now a Professor in Agronomy, Mary received her M.S. and Ph.D., degrees from Washington State. Her research concerns sustainable agriculture, alternative cropping systems, and education. In addition to being active on the Udall Scholarship Committee,

Mary enjoys the opportunities offered in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to do undergraduate research, both through Honors and through the college's departments. She particularly enjoys working with students who are interested in a senior thesis experience or in developing a research question.

Jon "Matt" Rouse ('94, Civil Engineering), came back to Iowa State not long after receiving his Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from Cornell. Currently an Assistant Professor, he's received a teaching award from the Engineering Student Council. Matt's research in structural analysis and high-performance concrete are attracting attention, particularly in creating a reliable power transmission pole that is easy to install and replace. Recently, he has been part of the Rhodes & Marshall Scholarships Committee.

The most recent addition to the Honors alumni/ISU faculty contingent is Stephanie Hansen ('03, Animal Science), an Assistant Professor in Animal Science. She has fond memories of leading an FHP seminar with her good friend and roommate. She recalls attending three FHP retreats – as a student, a leader, and an undergraduate assistant.

Steph completed her Honors project with Doug Kenealy and, with his supervision, gave two annual lectures for the first-year Animal Science course, beginning a teaching career especially early. On the ISU faculty since 2008, Steph advises first-year and senior Honors students, getting "energy" from working with undergraduates.

As the opening speaker at this year's Symposium on Undergraduate Research and Creative Expression, Steph encouraged curious students to "consider doing research. You ask a question, do some research, and... get 20 more questions!"

## Nobel Winner Dan Shechtman Visits Honors Seminar

Students enrolled in Honors seminars often hear from prominent guest speakers in class. A lucky few this spring had the chance to meet a world famous guest, Nobel Prize winner Dan Shechtman. Professor Shechtman, 2011 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry and Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, visited Larry Genalo's Socrates Café seminar, "Can Engineering Solve the World's Problems?" (See more on these seminars, below.)



*Sarah Sprouse, sophomore in Materials Engineering, listens to Dr. Shechtman.*

Professor Shechtman didn't talk about his prize-winning research on quasi-crystals but on another topic of long-standing interest, "Technological Entrepreneurship," or wedding technical innovation with product development. He began by encouraging students to try to imagine the world in 100 years, asking if we might read holographic books (or any books) by that time. An imaginative view is important for engineers, he said, because in his view technological entrepreneurship is essential to national survival.

The key to success in this area, Professor Shechtman said, is to take risks; risk means possible failure, but the true entrepreneur simply starts over, with the benefit of experience. "Then, you have a scar here – hopefully just one – and if you fail again, you will have two scars," he said philosophically. He used a story of pomegranate sellers in China to illustrate his point: farmers offered fresh pomegranates to a group of bus-riding tourists, who, due to the inherent messiness of the fruit, did not buy. None thought to sell pomegranate juice, or to package the fruit in a container with a spoon. "Not one was thinking differently, or sideways," like an entrepreneur.

The lessons of technological entrepreneurship don't apply only to developing countries, according to Professor Shechtman. Iowa, like many developing countries, sells a large amount of raw materials rather than finished products. "Maybe we should sell soybean flakes," he suggested, smiling, "Perhaps they are very delicious?"

Students in the seminar were enthusiastic about the visit. Rob Hanson, a junior in Mechanical Engineering and Spanish, said, "I definitely enjoyed class the day that Professor Shechtman visited. As a student, I've heard 'it's okay to fail' many times, but his way of stating it was very calming. What we gained from that experience will help us to succeed in the future."

Kelly Markham, junior in Chemical Engineering, added that seeing "how passionate he was about entrepreneurship" helped her focus on the significance of entrepreneurship as well as innovation in engineering. "I knew I was being handed an opportunity. We tend to focus on innovation in classes, but skip out on the entrepreneurship aspect. I never realized how important it was." A senior in Chemical Engineering, Matt Thompson, said, "I wouldn't get experiences like these without being a part of the Honors Program. I appreciate the opportunity listen to Dr. Shechtman in a small-group setting and the Honors Program made it happen."



## Medallions Distinguish Honors Students

For the first time this year, graduates of the Honors Program received pendant medallions to wear at commencement in honor of their achievement. The medallion replaces the white Honors cords that graduates previously received for commencement. One reason for the change was that other programs also use cords of different colors, and Honors sought a new way to recognize our graduates.

## Socrates Café Seminars

In spring 2012, students in six Honors seminars stretched their minds to define and answer pressing social issues in "Socrates Café" seminars. These seminars, modeled on the inquiry-driven book of the same title by Christopher Phillips, were funded by a Miller Grant. Honors Administrative Director Laurie Fiegel pioneered the "Socrates Café" seminar format after hearing a speech by Phillips, and a visit by the author to the First-Year Honors students boosted students' interest in inquiry-based learning.

The spring's seminars featured in-depth discussions and challenged students to discern and defend their opinions on fundamental questions and problems. In addition to engineering, this spring's Socrates Café-style seminars explored health care, poverty and nutrition, aging, ethics and leadership, and self-awareness.



## Alumni Board Visits at VEISHEA

Six new members have joined the Honors Alumni Board, which expanded this year to include several representatives from recent graduating classes. New members are Nancy Bohl Bormann ('04, Ag and Life Sciences Education), Carol Brumwell ('77, Math), Cecilia Carey ('89, Elementary Education), Kristin Doerder ('04, Accounting), Keegan Kautzky ('04, Political Science), and Trent Preszler ('98, International Studies). Only Carol and Trent of this new group were not on hand for the Board's meeting on VEISHEA weekend (Trent was in fact taking a doctoral exam).

These new members join Board founders Mark Law ('81, Computer Engineering) and his wife Alison, former Honors Director Liz Beck ('74, History), Brent

Carlson ('81, Computer Engineering), Gregor Dougal ('78, Physics), and Bev Madden ('60, Home Economics Education).

The April 20 meeting of the Board included a welcome to new members, a student poster session and student guests at lunch, and discussion of Honors curriculum, development, and directions for growth. On hand for the morning poster session was Michael Crow ('77, Political Science and Environmental Studies), currently president of Arizona State University, who was in town to receive a Distinguished Alumnus Award from the ISU Alumni Association. A good time, and quite a few cherry pies, were had by all.

## Cereal Visitors

One of Krista Thompson's ('03, Management of Information Systems) tasks at General Mills is to recruit students for internships and employment. This past September, Krista brought to ISU a recruiting team that included Honors alumni Jason Stoeker ('06, Computer Engineering and Computer Science) and Bryan Schutte ('07, Management of Information Systems). The team visited several sections of Honors 121, the first-year seminar. Seeking to give something back to Honors, Krista wanted to let students know that "when we are on campus hiring for that following summer, we're also searching for students who we

want to keep an eye on" for the future. Many companies, she added, like to make early connections with students.

Krista and her team came prepared not only with information about career opportunities at General Mills but also with boxes of cereal – always popular with hungry undergraduates! Remembering her own days as an FHP leader, Krista wanted to encourage first-year students to attend career fairs and think early on about their resumes. In the future, Krista may work with alumni at other companies to provide a panel about recruitment and career preparation.

## A Banner Year for High-Profile Awards

All the university's candidates for major scholarships this year earned national recognition as finalists, Honorable Mention, or as winners, and all but one of these was an Honors student. Samson Condon, senior in BBMB, is a 2012 Goldwater Scholar. Sam spent spring semester studying in Japan. In addition, senior Prasad Raman, in Aerospace Engineering, received honorable mention in this highly prestigious competition, which supports students pursuing careers in STEM fields.

Casey Fangmann, a senior in Industrial Engineering, was named a 2012 Udall

Scholar. Up to 80 Udall scholarships annually support sophomores and juniors planning careers related to the environment, tribal public policy, or Native American health care. This was Iowa State's third Udall award in as many years, a remarkable achievement.

Carl Kirpes, senior in Industrial Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, and Nate Looker, senior in Agronomy and Global Resource Systems, were national finalists for the Marshall Scholarship, with Carl being named as an alternate in the competition. Only 15 percent of candidates nominated for the Marshall are

## Don't Forget the Family Book

Please keep in touch with us via the Honors Family Book. This annual compilation of news, notes, life events and accomplishments of Honors alumni is now online and available via password to all donors. If you are not currently a donor, a printed version of the Honors Family Book is available for \$5. To post items, please go to the Honors webpage ([www.honors.iastate.edu](http://www.honors.iastate.edu)) and look in the left column under Alumni. If you have questions about the Honors Family Book, please contact Linda Young at [lindakay@iastate.edu](mailto:lindakay@iastate.edu).



Judy Hayes Cosimini ('85, Business and Sociology) visited Jischke this winter. Her Honors project, a stained glass window created with Ruth Scholey ('84, Biochemistry) adorns the building's stairwell.

named finalists. Of the thirteen Marshall candidates at Iowa schools, only two were selected as finalists, both from ISU.

Jared Knight, junior in Political Science, was a national finalist for the Truman Scholarship for juniors who demonstrate leadership and are committed to careers in public service. In addition, Rebecca Ehlers, sophomore in math education, received the Robert Noyce Scholarship for students aspiring to teach secondary school math. The Noyce award provides \$10,000 for both the junior and senior year, and requires the recipient to teach in schools with higher needs.

# News from Jischke

■ **Honors Students Lead GSB - Again.** Junior Jared Knight (Political Science) and sophomore Katie Brown (History) were elected this spring as President and Vice President of the Government of the Student Body (GSB). As an Undergraduate Assistant in Honors this year, Katie is following in Jared's footsteps. Last year, he was also a UA, and also elected to the GSB Vice Presidency. This is at least the third year running for Honors students to serve in GSB executive positions.

■ **Honors Receives Grant.** The Honors Program has received an internal grant of nearly \$29,000 to update the Jischke computer lab and the media equipment in the large Jischke classroom. The classroom will be refurbished this summer with state-of-the-art equipment, including flat screens that will enable students to view screens clearly when rooms are being used for large-class presentations. This equipment will enhance Honors seminars and permit easy distance communication with Honors alumni and other off-site speakers.

■ **Honors Students Complete Boston Marathon.** Finishing senior year and graduating in Honors can seem like quite a marathon, but for two Honors seniors, spring term included a real marathon, the one in Boston. Sam Bird, Global Resource Systems and Economics, and Claire Steinweg, Environmental Science and International Studies, were among more than 21,000 athletes to complete the Boston Marathon in April. It was the first Boston Marathon for both, and both completed the course – Sam in just over 3 hours, 21 minutes, and Claire in just over 4:18. Several other ISU students and employees competed in Boston on a day so warm that qualifiers were offered the chance to defer participating for a year.

■ **Leath Comes to Dinner.** The Honors Student Board organizes meals with professors each year, but none bigger than a dinner welcoming Iowa State's new president, Steven Leath, to Jischke in February. President Leath shared his vision with about 25 Honors students, who in turn described aspects of the Honors Program and asked him questions about his work and his plans for the university.



*ISU President Steven Leath shares a story with Emily Eulberg, junior in Animal Science.*

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