

THE Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato HONORS BEACON



LEADERSHIP • RESEARCH • GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Issue VI, Spring 2014



Photography by J Chapman

Where We've Come From, Where We're Going: Honors History

by Rachael Igo, '16 (Creative Writing; Mendota Heights, Minn.)

Honors programs have existed at American colleges and universities for almost a century. Honors programs complement existing university curricula while developing a community of scholars, a cohort of students dedicated to taking risks and modeling intellectual curiosity for others. The story of honors at Minnesota State Mankato goes back almost fifty years, when faculty from the Department of English first promoted their vision across campus. - Christopher Corley

In January of 1966, Dr. Norman Adams (then Chairperson of MSU's English Department) and his new Honors Committee sat down to discuss plans for organizing a campus wide Honors Program. At the time, there were honors courses offered in Economics, English, History, and Music, but no organized program per sé. Dr. Adams had a vision of developing an autonomous

Honors College at what was then called Mankato State College. He wanted to build a community for superior students to learn and grow together. He wanted them to benefit from living together in an honors dormitory, taking classes together where lecture was minimalized and discussion was valued, have special library privileges, and priority consideration for courses, fellowships, and scholarships.

At this time, Dr. Adams made a trip to another MSU -- Michigan State University -- to learn about their Honors Program. After his visit he reported to his team that the development of an Honors Program was a very long and arduous process which required much cooperation within the institution.

In spring of 1966 Adams's committee compiled a list of all students in the college who had a GPA of 3.5 or higher (a total of 109 students) and sent it to

all the departments in the college. Their hope was to spark interest in the Program and get more faculty members on board with the project. Despite the low response rate from departments, Adams continued toward his goal. It wasn't until almost a decade later, in 1974, that a proposal for the Honors Program was approved by the College Curriculum Committee. A new Interim Director, Dr. H. Harold Hartzler, was appointed. At that time, the program functioned as a substitute General Education track for honors students. For the first two years in the Program, each entering student took a multidisciplinary seminar that accommodated all of the general education areas they needed. They read many books from different disciplines and discussed them together in class. Just as Adams had hoped, lecture was minimalized and discussion dominated

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Director's Note


by Ginny Walters, Honors Program Assistant Director

Any time we seize a new opportunity, take on a new challenge, or step outside of our comfort zone, we never know what is going to

happen. We are setting ourselves up for the best or worst experience of our life. Honors faculty and staff consistently encourage our students to challenge themselves within and outside of the classroom. After all, isn't that what Honors is all about? Stepping outside of the box, daring to do something a little bit differently, pushing the envelope, taking advantage of an opportunity – these are characteristics of successful honors students. Mentoring students who dare to take that kind of a chance is what makes working in an Honors Program so exciting.

While we encourage students to take chances with their academic and personal development, it is also exciting when students encourage us to take chances with our own professional development. It is ideal when students and faculty are given the opportunity to engage in a challenging experience together. Four students and I took a chance together over Spring Break and engaged in a service-learning experience in Belize. I taught an Honors

seminar through which students learned about principles of service-learning, applied their new knowledge in real-world experiences, and reflected on their time abroad. I am immensely proud of my students for stretching their minds and opening their hearts through this unique opportunity. Two students have chronicled their experiences in this issue of *The Honors Beacon*.

In the late 1960s, a group of faculty at the university decided to take a chance and create an Honors Program at Minnesota State Mankato. The evolution of our program over the last five decades is the highlight of this issue. History teaches us that people who never knew us can greatly affect our lives, simply because they took a chance and created a program for highly motivated students at our university. Their decision to take a risk enables us to take chances today. Our students continue to take chances today by engaging in undergraduate research projects, participating in service-learning or study abroad, and taking on leadership roles within the community. We commend and thank our students for their continued hard work. We congratulate them for taking chances and we encourage them never to stop doing so, even after they have graduated from the Honors Program and Minnesota State Mankato. 




Editor's Note

by Rachael Igo, '16

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Honors Beacon Newsletter. I hope you notice the improved style of this issue. For

this I owe a big thanks to Aaron Tish from University Printing Services. He helped with the template design and layout of this issue. I also want to thank my talented team of writers who have worked with me this semester. Their writing and dedication brought this issue to life.

In this issue you will find articles relating to this semester's theme: "where we've come from, where we are going." You'll read about how the Honors Program first started out and success stories of students currently in it. Students have reflected on experiences they have had this semester, where they were before their experience, and how that experience has changed them. You will hear from honors alumnae and how the Honors Program has both shaped them as people and helped them in their professional careers. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have enjoyed creating it. Happy reading! 

The Spring 2014 Beacon Team

Editor-in-Chief

Rachael Igo

Layout and Photo Copy Editors

Rachael Igo

Trisha Walker

Writers

Rachael Igo

Ginny Walters

Ryan Colakovic

Lisa Miller

Slade Bauman

Zach Petzel

Laura Cattrysse

Margaret Neeck

Yusra S. Hayat

José Lopez Munoz

Lindsey Lancette

Breezetta Etienne

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Honors Alumnae Spotlights

by Rachael Igo, '16

Lisa Beecroft



Lisa Beecroft graduated with Honors from MSU in 1992

with a degree in education, Spanish and French. She then went on to get her masters in International Management with a focus in marketing from the University of St. Thomas. Currently, she is a communications coordinator at the University of Minnesota. She also has professional experience in freelance marketing and project management. From her home town in White Bear Lake Minnesota, she was accepted to Minnesota State and invited into the Honors Program.

The Honors Program taught her thinking, strategic planning, communication, and

global citizenship skills, as well as research methods and team work. She found all of these skills necessary in her professional fields and is grateful that she had the opportunity to practice them through the Honors Program.

One of her favorite memorable experiences as part of the program was her senior class project in 1992 dedicated to Earth day.

“When I look at how the Honors Program has evolved over the years, I am proud that the university continues to build on such a great asset. The learning portfolios, increased communications via newsletter and social media, and numerous activities and social gatherings demonstrate that the Honors Program is dedicated to helping its students become well-rounded, compassionate future leaders.”

Cynthia Bemis Abrams



Cynthia Bemis Abrams graduated from the Honors Program

in 1986 with majors in International Relations and German, and a minor in Scandinavian Studies. She is from Bloomington Minnesota and was one of the first in her family to attend college. While she was still looking into Minnesota State Mankato, she heard of the Honors Program. She was attracted to it because she felt it would be a good next step to follow her talented experiences she had in high school.

In the mid 80's when she went through the program, it was set up as an alternative general education program with a senior paper prior to graduation. Her favorite part of being an honors student

was benefiting from the general education and not being required to take a gym class. One of her favorite memories of her times in the Honors Program was the time when Professor Tony Filipovitch hosted a seminar class session at his house during her upperclassmen years. The challenges she experienced affirmed for her that she is capable of juggling details and doing excellent work.

“Students arrive at MSU from all circumstances and educational experiences. They bring their academic potential and work ethic. Long before there was an understanding of the benefit of learning communities, the Honors Program filled that bill. It funneled the good work of faculty who had experienced other institutions and knew students like us needed special attention.”

Welcome Ashley Kanak

by Ryan Colakovic, '15 (Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences; Mankato, Minn.)



Ashley Kanak is the new Graduate Assistant for the Honors Program.

She started in January 2014 and will be here for two years while pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Leadership.

Ashley comes from Milledgeville, Georgia where she

graduated from Northside High School. She then went to Georgia College and State University, graduating in December 2012 with her major in Exercise Science and minor in Physical Education. While at her University she was the president of her sorority, Delta Zeta. She served as a leader on the executive board in charge of managing her fellow members and coordinating with international and national headquarters. Her original intent when starting college was to become a physical therapist, but she decided she was more inter-

ested in education.

Ashley enjoys working with people and younger generations. Her desire to work in education surfaced when working on her minor in physical education. She then worked at an all-girls camp in the summer (Camp Robin-del) and fell in love with the idea of working in education and leadership. Through other MSU students and staff at camp she was informed and encouraged to apply for the GA position for the Honors Program.

In the Honors Program,

Ashley hopes to bring new perspectives and help the program achieve its strategic goals. She also hopes to grow with the program and develop her own leadership skills by teaching the mentor philosophy class in the near future.


At MSU, Ashley plans to explore her options and develop her career. Ultimately, she would like to become a professor at a university. Ashley looks forward to working with higher achieving students and to further her experience in teaching

class time. For the last two years in the program, students would focus on their major, take honors upper level seminars and do independent studies.

The new program saw its first graduate in May 1977. Cathy Clardy (now Reverend Dr. Cathy Clardy Patterson), a twenty-year-old African-American woman from Burnsville, Minnesota, finished the Honors Program within three years and graduated with Magna Cum Laude honors. A member of the Minnesota State College Student Association, Clardy Patterson was also instrumental in helping Mankato State College gain university status at the state legislature. A model for other honors students, Clardy Patterson went on to earn advanced degrees at George Washington University and Harvard University and developed her career in law and investment banking. She later entered the ministry and now lives and works in Arizona.

Editor's note: Special thanks to University Archives and Lass Center staff Daardi Sizemore and Anne Stenzel. Dr. Clardy Patterson's biography is located online at <http://www.positivelypowerful.com/Insights/2011/03/rev-dr-cathy-clardy-patterson-positively-powerful-woman-award-for-spiritual-leadership>.

According to sources located in the University Archives, big changes marked the Honors Program in the first decade of the new millennium. According to an honors pamphlet from 2004, the program's philosophy statement was "enhanced undergraduate experience designed for students who want to pursue active learning." The design of the program at that time was similar to today's; it was flexible so that students could use it to supplement their field of study. It also had an honors portfolio, smaller class sizes, and competencies, then called "areas of outcome." At the time, the outcomes were focused on civic engagement, critical and creative thinking, lifelong learning, as well as self and other. A community was built among the students through activities and events put on by the Honors Club, a program that encouraged social growth. Events consisted of trips to cultural centers, recreational, and community events.

At the request of administration and faculty, the Program underwent revisions starting in 2007-2008. After two years of planning, the university asked Dr. Chris Corley to direct a revised curriculum focused on the development of leadership, research, and global citizenships skills. With the assistance from faculty and staff throughout the university, Corley encouraged student involvement in shaping, developing and maintaining the program that exists today. Nine students started the journey under the revised curriculum in the Fall semester of 2009, and the program has grown to over 120 students today. Over thirty different faculty have taught program courses since 2009, and dozens more faculty and staff have contributed to its success in many other ways. Faculty, students, and staff continue to advocate for a meaningful Honors Program, a program with dreams similar to those Dr. Norman Adams so strongly advocated for years ago. 

Honors Research and Information Literacy Seminar is a Success


by Lisa Miller, '14 (Law Enforcement and Corrections; Lino Lakes, Minn.)

As a senior majoring in Law Enforcement and Corrections, I wanted to enhance my learning experience and develop a research project through the Law Enforcement program. In order to help me with this process I decided to take the *Honors Research and Information Literacy* seminar during the Fall 2013 semester. Though I had already begun the research process, I felt that this course would help me create a more comprehensive foundation for my study and would take my research skills to the next level.

Before taking this course I had already decided that I wanted to study the effect organizational stressors have on female law enforcement officers. At the time, I was preparing to apply to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to get my study approved and begin collecting data. I felt that I still had little idea of what I was doing. *Research and Information Literacy* aimed to help students "effectively find, evaluate, and synthesize information" and to prepare students for completing undergradu-

ate research. I felt this was exactly the course I needed to refine my skills and apply them to my own field of study. I signed up immediately.

The Honors research seminar helped me to develop better information gathering techniques, to solidify a strong research question, and allowed me to create a more in-depth literature review of the issues surrounding my research topic. Dr. Justine Martin taught us how to sift through information more effectively to find the most scholarly and relevant material to utilize in our own research. For me, the best aspect of the course was that each week I could focus completely on my own research. In other classes topics are usually given to me, or the course is not related to my field of study or interests and therefore does not provide me with any relevant research opportunities. In this course, Dr. Martin was careful to tailor each student's learning experience to their field of study. I felt more engaged in what I was doing and was able to apply class information to my own field.

After completing this course I was able to collaborate with my faculty mentor, Prof. Christian Dobratz, to create a strong application for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to allow me to begin my research. I am examining which organizational stressors contribute most to female police officer stress, and whether female officers experience more stress from administrative issues or from not experiencing fair and equitable treatment in the workplace. With the knowledge I have gained from this honors course, I feel that my research experience is greatly enhanced, and I have the ability to conduct research that could impact female law enforcement officers in my future career field. My IRB application has been approved, and I have to believe that taking this course helped me accomplish this. I strongly suggest that students consider taking this course (it is going to be offered again in the fall of 2015) especially if they are just starting out in the research world. 



Service Learning in Belize

by: Slade Baumann, '14 (Computer Information Technology; Mankato, Minn.) and Zach Petzel, '16 (Math Education; Arlington, Minn.)

As part of the honors course *Service-Learning in Belize* taught by Ginny Walters, we had the awesome opportunity to travel to San Pedro, Belize for a week of service-learning over Spring Break. Along with Lauren Bach and Julia Hamann, we spent the first half of the semester studying and discussing different aspects of service-learning as well as the culture of Belize. In Belize, we were able to apply our acquired knowledge through our service in the schools. Through this experience, we each learned a lot about ourselves and together we made an impact on the schools and the community of San Pedro.

Zach: Through past experiences, I thought service-learning consisted mostly of volunteering my time to help others and possibly learning a little about myself in the process. After this course, my perspective has changed since I now view service-learning as an investment in someone's future. The work I did in Belize will have a lasting impact on the people with whom I interacted because I was able to make a difference in their lives.

Slade: Before I started this course I thought that service-learning was simply going to volunteer with people of a different culture than my own. It didn't seem very complicated. Through the discussions in class and experience in Belize, my idea of service-learning has greatly changed. It is not just about serving others, but also includes learn-


ing about other cultures and one's self. Service-learning is an effort to benefit not only the receiver of the service, but also the giver. We both learned that service-learning might not always go as planned, but it's all about how someone learns from their experiences and how that individual adapts to the needs of themselves and others.

While in Belize, we had many different cultural experiences that changed our perspectives. Both of us helped in San Pedro High School throughout our week in Belize. Our class ran a college preparation workshop for some of the seniors at the high school. In it, the group discussed the goals and dreams of the students. We also talked about our experiences in college in order to help the students feel more prepared for their own collegiate journey. Together with our classmates, we were able to start a mentorship program at Holy Cross elementary school. We mentor eighth grade students by talking with them regularly about their transition to high school, our different cultures, and life in general.

Zach: Working with the math department at the high school was a great opportunity for me to take what I have learned from years of studying and sitting in classrooms and finally apply it to real-life situations. As a math education major, not only was I able to use my talents and knowledge through tutoring students and teaching lessons, but I actually learned a lot myself by

interacting with the students. By talking with students as well as other locals, I was able to get a better understanding of the Belizean culture and lifestyle. It is one thing to read about culture from a textbook, but it is an entirely different experience traveling to another country and immersing myself in their culture.

Slade: As an IT major, I was able to use my computer abilities to help students in the IT classroom at San Pedro High School. I sat in on classes and helped students who were behind or needed additional help. During this process, I met very interesting students. I learned about life from their point of view, about how each sees the United States and their island, and about how each of them perceives their future. It was truly a moving experience to compare what I thought about life and opportunity in the U.S. to what each of these students thought about their own lives and opportunities in San Pedro. This experience taught me that there is so much more to see in the world than just what can be taught in a classroom.

We both strongly encourage other students to explore opportunities to travel or study abroad since our service-learning experience in Belize will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on each of our lives. We feel incredibly blessed to have been given this opportunity to make a difference in another country while learning a lot about ourselves at the same time. 

Lauren Bach looks ahead to her first meeting as a Student Board Member of the National Collegiate Honors Council

by Laura Cattryse, '16 (English; Mankato, Minn.)



As an honors student at Minnesota State University Mankato, many opportunities arise that are instrumental in growing as a person. One of our members, Lauren Bach, was recently elected to be a student member of the board of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Bach, a member of the Honors Program for

three years, is a junior this year at Minnesota State. She grew up in New York Mills, Minnesota, and she is seeking a major in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. She was chosen from a large number of nominees to represent NCHC because of her excitement to be a part of the decision-making process and because of her excellent leadership and speaking skills.

Her position as a board member of NCHC hinges on her ability to lead and she explained that without learning about leadership as an important competency, she most likely would not have sought a national leadership position with NCHC, which was founded to aid university Honors Programs across the United States in developing


and implementing new program ideas.

"[The MSU Honors Program] has provided opportunities to reflect on leadership styles and skills and to build them. [It] has taught me leadership skills times ten," Bach stated. "I'm excited to help students at a national level through NCHC." She pursued the opportunity with NCHC because she wants to help honors students more broadly and she also wants to build on her leadership competency even more. NCHC is made up of numerous committees and is represented by students, alumni, and faculty from universities with Honors Programs across the United States. Bach was asked to be the co-chair of the Student Affairs Committee, and her goals as a

part of that committee are to connect honors students nationwide and to provide opportunities and knowledge about Honors Programs for college students as well.

Over the summer, Bach looks forward to getting involved with NCHC and seeing what it's all about. She will attend a conference in Chicago over the summer and the annual NCHC conference in Denver this fall.

"I'm excited to finally get going and learn more about NCHC and what it does and what I can do as a part of it," said Bach.

To learn more about NCHC and other opportunities available to students, visit www.nchchonors.org or call the main office at (402) 472-9150. 

Honors Junior Awarded International Fellowship

by Ginny Walters, Assistant Director and Fellowship Coordinator



Minnesota State junior Abrar Zawed was awarded a RISE (Research Internships in Science and Engineering) Fellowship to the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried, Germany, which is a suburb of Munich. The


program is sponsored by Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst, or DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), which offers undergraduate students the chance to work with research groups at universities and institutions across Germany.

Zawed, a Biomedical Sciences major with a minor in Chemistry, is one of 300 undergraduates to receive the award. Over 2,200 students from the United States, Canada and the UK applied. A stipend from DAAD covers interns' living expenses.

Zawed will spend twelve weeks in Germany assist-

ing the doctoral research of Neysan Donnelly. Zawed's research will study the effects of chromosome abnormalities on human cells. "I would like to thank MSU Honors Program and Office of University Fellowships for their support and encouragement. This research experience will motivate me to come up with new ideas regarding my ongoing research and help me to achieve my academic goals in the future," says Zawed.

Zawed has participated in undergraduate research at Minnesota State Mankato under the supervision of Dr. David Sharlin. "Abrar has

played an integral part in the lab's desire to develop new molecular tools for investigating the role of thyroid hormone action in auditory system development. His project has provided the opportunity for him to develop modern molecular biology skills that will serve him in his future research career. It is great knowing that his hard work was acknowledged with being awarded this prestigious fellowship," says Sharlin. Zawed presented his research at both the National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Lexington, Kentucky and the Undergraduate Research Symposium at Minnesota State. 

Honors Professor Published in the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*

by Margaret Neeck, '17 (Political Science; Linwood, Minn.)




Congratulations to Dr. Stark on her publication in the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*. Dr. Stark served as an interim director during fall of 2012 while Dr. Corley was on sab-

atical. The Honors Program is very grateful for her many contributions to the program and shares her excitement in this great accomplishment. Dr. Corley explained that the national journal is “the main vehicle through which best practices in honors education are conveyed throughout the country. Dr. Stark’s innovative class assignments that brought students into the community to explore solutions to local problems caught the attention of journal editors.”

The foundation of Dr. Stark’s article was born when she introduced students to a research project for the Southern Mankato Initiative foun-

ation. The SMIF Research Project was designed to give students a real life project. Students designed projects and collected data related to small businesses as well as entrepreneurship and early childhood education. When all data was collected, the students involved were able to present their findings to the SMIF board and at both Regional and National Conferences of the National Collegiate Honors Council.

Dr. Stark’s work with the honor students was recognized by NCHC and published in her article “Real-Life Solutions to Real-Life Problems: Collaborating with a Non-Profit Foundation to

Engage Honors Students in Applied Research.” The article demonstrates ways Dr. Stark used local projects to help students learn about research in her Research Methods class. By the end of the class, students were able to better understand what research is and how undergraduate research can be applied. The article contains six different sections that describe each step Dr. Stark took to help honors students engage in their research. Having a piece published in a national journal is a great honor that compliments the dedication and passion of Dr. Stark. 

Honorable Mentions

- Congratulations to our Honors graduates of this academic year. Fall semester graduates: Natsua Asai, Erika Koenig, Ina Pae. Spring semester graduates: Jacob Ball, Lindsey Lancette, Erika Magnusson, Alexander Mozey, Brooklyn Vetter
- Congratulations to the new 2014-2015 Honors Student Council board members! President: Julia Hamann; Vice President: Alexa Turgeon; Secretary: Becky Osborn; Senior Rep: Shelby Flegel; Junior Rep: Anna Rice; Sophomore Rep: Natalie Moses
- Lindsey Lancette was accepted into Law School at the University of Minnesota
- Tia Jacoby was awarded The Pennington Scholarship from The College of Allied Health and Nursing and Communication Disorders.
- Congratulations to the following first year students who were initiated into the national honors society, Alpha Lambda Delta: Hailey Gorman, Nicole Johnson, Bethany Koshak, Sami Swanson, Michala Schramm, Trisha Walker, Krista Willey
- Jacob Ball was accepted into Medical School at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Anastasia Humphers-Ginther accepted a full-time summer internship at Microsoft as part of the Operations Specialist team in Fargo, North Dakota.
- Mariah Haffield was elected as President of the Minnesota State Student Association
- Congratulations to Lisa Miller, an active member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority, who recently won MSU Greek Life’s “Scholar of the Year” Award.

Visiting International Student Reflection

by Yusra S. Hayat, '15 (English; Pakistan)

My home university is not so internationally diverse, and majoring in Literature there is not socially desirable. In order to expand my horizons, I left Pakistan for the US to study for a semester having secured a full scholarship from Global UGRAD and IREX.

I had an odd encounter recently which sums up my entire experience in the US so far. I was sitting and reading a Russian novel at a local coffee shop here at Mankato, when an American woman paused and sat down with her husband, chatting with me for a good hour about how overwhelming the novel was. Suddenly, she asked me where I was from and upon my reply, her facial expression changed. She talked about Pakistan and its scenic beauty, but more significantly, her opinion of its perpetual state of fear and conservatism. I began to ponder over the diversity of culture and differing backgrounds back at home.

I grew up in a very liberal household. I went to the most prestigious schools and colleges in Pakistan and was raised

to be trilingual. I was blessed by parents who, even though they ascribed to a particular religion, never coerced me to follow it. All the things ostensibly banned in my country: clubbing, drinking, not covering your head, free mixing of the sexes--these were not alien concepts to me. All of us indulged in them to some extent or the other. It was only after this conversation when I realized both Pakistanis and Americans can have misinformed, stereotypical views of the other. This is especially true of residents of both countries who neither receive an extensive education nor have the opportunity to travel. The vicious cycle of not being able to change certain perception continues.

My encounter at the coffee shop made me realize this deep rooted pattern and how desperately it needs to get altered. At that moment, I felt proud of being an ambassador of my country. I felt joyful that I was able to explain that daily Pakistani life is influenced by social and cultural class. It was overwhelming to paint a picture for the Americans in a

way that highlighted the problems but demonstrated how the spirits of the Pakistani people are ever-soaring.

I described many circumstances in which this is the case. A family of six people travels on a two-seater motorbike to sit at a beach on Sunday morning, enjoying the sunny weather despite the high level of unemployment they experience. The great number of beggars in the city of Karachi does not simply reflect the level of urban poverty but also indicates that it is one of the most philanthropic cities in the world. People go berserk in the city when there is a cricket match and it feels like a national holiday irrespective of what the political leaders in the nation say or do. The number of people visiting mosques has not decreased; the heads prostrate before God in the same manner as before, without fear, because their faith gives them that courage even in the face of multiple suicide bombing attacks. Pakistan is a country where warmth and love survives despite the air of intolerance that plagues it.

(Continued on page 10)

Honors Students Attend Culture Night

by José Lopez Munoz, '17 (Aviation; St. Louis Park, Minn.)


One of the opportunities the Honors Program offers its students is the chance to learn about different cultures by attending culture nights hosted by the University. In February, the program purchased tickets for students to attend Middle Eastern Night. Through attending this event I learned about the cultures of Yemen, Egypt, Bahrain, Iran and Morocco. Students attending this event could try the food from different Middle Eastern countries. I tasted a variety of chicken, rice, and vegetables. This food was very different from the food that we eat in the United States. After dinner there were performances that offered further immersion in the culture, including traditional dances, song, music and poetry.

The performances opened with a flag parade accompanied by melodious

music that talked about the union of the nations. A musician played the Basouki, an instrument used in the country of Turkey. A student from Yemen read the Poem "Who are You?" The poem was inspired by an unfortunate event in Yemen where a group of terrorists attacked a hospital and killed many people. The poem addressed the people who found this act justificatory.

After the poem, an Arabic folk dance called the Dabke was performed. Seven dancers coordinated the dance wearing the spectacular traditional costume. People from the crowd were even invited up onto the stage to practice. They were taught the dance moves and it was a good moment because everyone was smiling and having a terrific time. To conclude this event, the crowd joined in singing a popular Middle

Eastern melody with the performers and received a box of candies. This is a special tradition of many children in the region similar to the American Halloween. Instead of saying "trick or treat," the children in the Middle East sing for candy.

At the beginning of the event, I had a different point of view about Middle Eastern countries. I thought that it would be hard to understand their culture, but after the event I realized their cultures were interesting. I encourage everyone to attend a culture night. During this event, I was able to explore a different culture outside my own. This will help me on my journey to become a better global citizen because this event opened my mind to new ideas. 

Honors in Review



Ina Pae, December 2013 Honors Graduate



Dr. Corley and Spring 2014 Honors Graduates: Jacob Ball, Erika Magnusson, Lindsey Lancette, Alex Mozey, Brooklyn Vetter



Ashley Kanak and Jake Ball at the Honors Curling Challenge



Honors Event: Curling Challenge



Honors Event: Snowshoe Adventure



Ginny Walters, Alex Mozey, and Dr. Corley at The Celebration of Excellence



Hailey Gorman, Mikyla Denney, Lauren Bach, Marin Beck, Stephanie Peterson

Director's Note: The following articles titled "The Outside Student Experience" and "The Inside Student Experience" are artifacts originally published in "The Reflector" in Fall 2013. They are reflections on the honors course "Social Problems" taught by Vicki Hunter in Fall 2013. Honors students took the course at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Shakopee with women participating in the educational system at the prison. This relationship is referred to as "The Inside Outside Program." Both of these articles give the perspective of going through the program both as an inside inmate and an outside civilian.

The Outside Student Experience

by Lindsey Lancette, '14 (German; Oakdale, Minn.)



Looking back, I would say that my experience with the Inside-Outside program began before my time in Shakopee even began. I was constantly asked if I was nervous, since

nobody in my life had ever had an experience like the one I would be having. In all honesty, I found it interesting that people reacted that way. The inside students were just trying to improve themselves in some way, just like my classmates and I were, so I felt no reason to feel nervous about the class. My only concern was whether I would accidentally violate the facility's dress code and have to miss a class!

Although I had anticipated a positive experience, I was not quite aware that my time would have such a meaningful impact on my life. I thought that it would be a cool class that would allow me to

reach the necessary number of credits and provide some interesting pieces for conversation. This ended up being true, but to limit my experience to that assessment would grossly underestimate how this experience has affected me. Much of the class was centered around large group discussions and my classmates and I did not necessarily engage in a large amount of personal conversation, yet somehow I feel a closer relationship to my classmates, closer than I usually feel in classes of a similar size. Although we did not necessarily share much personal information (at least with the large group), the personal information that we did share seemed much deeper. Additionally, the experiences that the inside students shared about life in the facility struck a chord, often reminding me of my own experiences, even though they occurred in completely different contexts.

I am not the only one who has noticed how this course has affected me. It is now not unheard of for my experiences with the inside students to dominate meal-time conversations, whether they

occur with a friend at lunch or with my mom at dinner. One of my friends is actually a law enforcement and corrections double-major, and it's not uncommon for us to spend up to an hour discussing the justice system and how it affects those who are or who have been incarcerated. As for my mom, she has commented that she is glad that I took the course, because although she has always considered me a fairly empathetic person, this experience has given me a new perspective of individuals who have had to face different life circumstances than I have. I, too, am thankful for these effects, but there is still one element that I am extremely thankful for that I have not yet described. As a senior in college, with the real world threatening to crash down on me, I was beginning to question whether I would like to enter the field of law, which has been my plan since I was in middle school. Although there were several factors that eventually made me excited to enter this field, this course has played a major role. And for that, I am extremely grateful. 📖

*Visiting International Student Reflection
(Continued from page 8)*

I will return to Pakistan with a more profound meaning of friendship because of my experience in the United States. I will return knowing how healthy it truly is to have a great discourse characterized by mutual respect. I will return having realized that no matter how different we may be, we share global values and emotions. We may have different skin tones and we may differ in our religious beliefs but we care as much for every American life lost in 9/11 as we do for all the Pakistani lives lost in drone attacks. The woman from the coffee shop and I not only share the same taste for fruit and Russian writers, but also hopes for a better and more peaceful world. 📖

New Honors Learning Community Community Coordinator for 2014-2015



Ali Oku Eastman

Ali Oku, a first-year student in the Biomedical Sciences department, has been named the Honors first-year Learning Community Coordinator (LCC) for the 2014-2015 academic year. Born in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Ali says it was initially difficult to adjust to an entirely new environment but recognizes his Honors LCC as the biggest contributor in helping to adjust to Minnesota State, Mankato. Oku feels his involvement in leadership positions with his youth group has helped to prepare him for taking on this new leadership position. 📖

The Inside Student Experience

by Breezetta Etienne



When I first heard of a course offered where Minnesota State University students came into the classroom with us Shakopee women, I imagined a bunch of

stuck-up, know-it-all, college students gawking, questioning, and judging the lot of us condemned—excuse my language—felons. I imagined having the same icky feeling that some of us get when tours come through the prison. It feels as though outsiders have come to see the animals in their man-made confinement centers and I, the animal, have to suppress the urge to amuse myself and roar just to get a rise out of the onlookers.

Nevertheless, thankfully, I gave the course a chance. I interviewed to find out more. Instructors Vicki Hunter and Kirby Hurd (“Vicki” and “Kirby”) assured us Shakopee women that we were not the subjects of study. In fact, labels like “felon,” “offender,” and “inmate” were strictly prohibited in class. Inside and Outside students were given equal access to instructors and it was enforced that we were all equally students.

The course, *Social Problems*, focused on how claims about problems such as poverty, teen pregnancy, eating disorders, and racism are presented, who presents them, and why they are presenting them in the manner they are. The *Social Problems* class was excellent not just in the curriculum, but in many unconventional ways as well. The papers we wrote were not easy. They required integrating complex ideas from several readings and a class discussion and then developing a streamlined theme. They were challenging. However, what made them enjoyable and

rewarding was the feedback that Vicki and Kirby gave us when our papers were returned. Their notes were highly anticipated, thoughtful, and edifying.

Interacting with the Outside students was also enriching. There were blaring differences between the two groups. The majority of the Inside students were older than the younger Outside students, like mom-versus-teenager-older. What this meant for us Inside students was an opportunity to interact and remove some misunderstandings about the millennial generation. Maybe they weren’t as selfish and flighty as people say? What it meant for Outside students who had likely never been this intimate with people convicted of a crime was that they could find out if we were what people say we are or if we were really just regular people.

I didn’t notice Outside students staring at us Inside Students. This could be because I was too busy gawking, questioning, and judging THEM to notice. (Oh, the hypocrisy). What I did notice was how many of them doodled. Yes, doodled. Not only did they doodle, they doodled VERY well. They were designing doodle masterpieces on their pages. I call myself an artist, but I don’t doodle. I chide myself on not developing that third eye, but these students have it! I saw them making art on their notebooks more times than I can count and I can’t imagine it being a coincidence. I come from a time when teachers yelled at students for doodling and told them to stop daydreaming and pay attention. But the Outside students were masters at multi-tasking. They listened intently to the discussion and offered valuable feedback. They were taking notes. Simultaneous talking, texting, and conceptualizing are a breeze for these ladies of our future. I have faith that the skill of this generation will help to solve so many of the social problems we discussed in class. 📱

Honors Fall 2014 Courses

Public Speaking, Dave Engen

The skills you will develop in this course include analyzing the speaking situation, choosing appropriate topics, conducting research, organizing ideas, utilizing evidence, delivering speeches effectively, and the ability to listen critically.

Introduction to Psychology, Karla Lassonde

In this course we will explore the science of psychology by examining theoretical aspects and then applying them in class discussions.

United States Government, Joseph Kunkel

Your foundation learning will include basic political science information on historic and present U.S. government and politics.

American Indian Leaders, Rhonda Dass

We will look at historic leadership among American Indians prior to European colonization, the overlap of Indian and colonial leadership, contemporary governmental leadership, and contemporary tribal leadership.

Performance and Social Change, Leah White

This class is designed to teach students to identify instances of injustice and promote social change through theoretical analysis and performance techniques.

Developing Your Mentor Philosophy, Christopher Corley

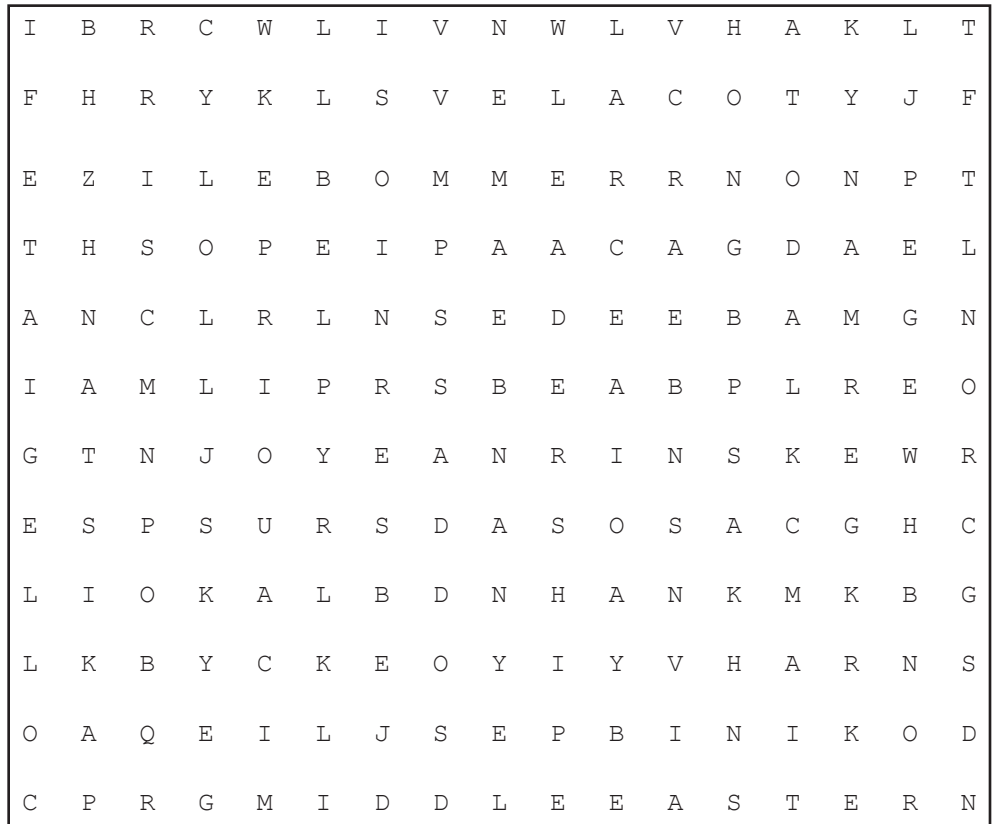
Students will apply their mentor philosophies throughout the semester by guiding new honors students through various mentoring opportunities.

Full course descriptions can be found at: msu.edu/honors/currentstudents/courses14html.html

Honors Fun Corner: Word Search

Clues:

- The first Director of the Honors Program was _____.
- Ashley Kanak is pursuing a master's degree in Educational _____.
- Thanks to the Honors Research Seminar, Lisa Miller's application to the _____ has been approved.
- Zach Petzel and Slade Baumann took a class service learning trip to _____.
- Lauren Bach was elected as a student board member to the National _____ Honors Council.
- Abrar Zawed was awarded a fellowship from the Max Planck Institute of Biochemistry in Martinsried, _____.
- Dr. Stark's article published in the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* demonstrates ways she used local projects to help students learn about _____.
- José Lopez Munoz learned about global citizenship while attending the University's _____ night.
- Yusra S. Hayat is an international student from _____.
- In fall 2014, the honors class "American Indian Leaders" will be taught by Professor _____.



Answers to last issue's puzzle:

Fellowship, Wheeler, Dijon, Ohio, Nepal, Scandinavian, Ecuador, Culture, Burundi



Make a difference in the lives of those preparing to make a difference.

Because they have the opportunity to push themselves to do more here at Minnesota State Mankato, students in the Honors Program will be ready to push for success in the real world as well.

Supporting the Honors Program has an impact on students who will become widely recognized, prominent, distinguished leaders, researchers and global citizens who are able to bring about change in the world, no matter what their chosen discipline may be.

Giving to the Honors program is easy; simply visit mnsu.edu/giving/giving.html and designate your gift to the Honors Program.

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