

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA HONORS PROGRAM ORIENTATION GUIDE

IOWA
HONORS
PROGRAM

IOWA SUMMER 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

04

06

07

08

10

12

13

14

16

18

21

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WELCOME TO HONORS



Greetings for the Summer of 2020 to our Honors program students, faculty, alumni, and friends. I hope you, your families, and friends are staying safe and well during these times.

CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

For about half the Spring 2020 semester the Honors Program staff, both our professional staff and our student staff, has been working from home. The University has not yet announced when we'll be permitted to return to our offices, since the nation and states are yet enforcing restrictions. Our staff has striven to make the university and Honors Program experience as normal as possible for our students despite the challenging conditions. The latest example, about which you'll read in this newsletter, is using an online format to welcome and help our incoming honors students to transition to the university and Honors Program.

As you'll read below, that online formatting will include Honors Program orientation and registration for our incoming students. We've tried to keep all the usual pieces of our orientation – our student panel, for instance – so that our incoming students are in no way disadvantaged. Indeed, you'll read about some advantages of online orientation. You'll also see articles on scholarship and financial aid, a section on Honors Program FAQs, and details on what to expect from Honors Primetime, our very popular 1-credit hour honors seminars that take place a week before classes begin. We hope this information helps to prepare and transition our newest cohort of honors students.

THE STRONG HONORS COMMUNITY

Speaking of Honors Primetime, which has a robust community-building component to it, you'll see below a listing of the Honors Program staff and a short description of their duties. They are part of our students' support communi-

ty, too. For example, incoming students may already have plans to participate in certain activities and initiatives, and Honors staffers can help them to realize those plans. We pride ourselves on being accessible to our students and putting their needs before all else.

In fact, you'll see that strong focus on our students in this newsletter: students wrote all articles, did the bulk of the editing, and their writing prominently features the voices and opinions of our students. Our students have told us they want and need a community of like-minded peers in which they can feel at home – something they may not have been able to find in their high school, and so we've given them a role in creating and structuring that community. The newsletter is only one example of the voice they have in the program.

I'll end with a welcome to all our incoming students. You come during challenging conditions, but we are here to work through it with you.

As always, please feel free to contact me via email (art-spisak@uiowa.edu) or phone (319.335.1685) with any comments, questions, or concerns you have about the Honors Program. I'm happy to have such conversations. Also, you can direct questions on anything related to the Honors Program experience to honors-program@uiowa.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Art L. Spisak".

Art L. Spisak, PhD
 Director, UI Honors Program
 Professor, Classics Department
 Past President, National Collegiate
 Honors Council

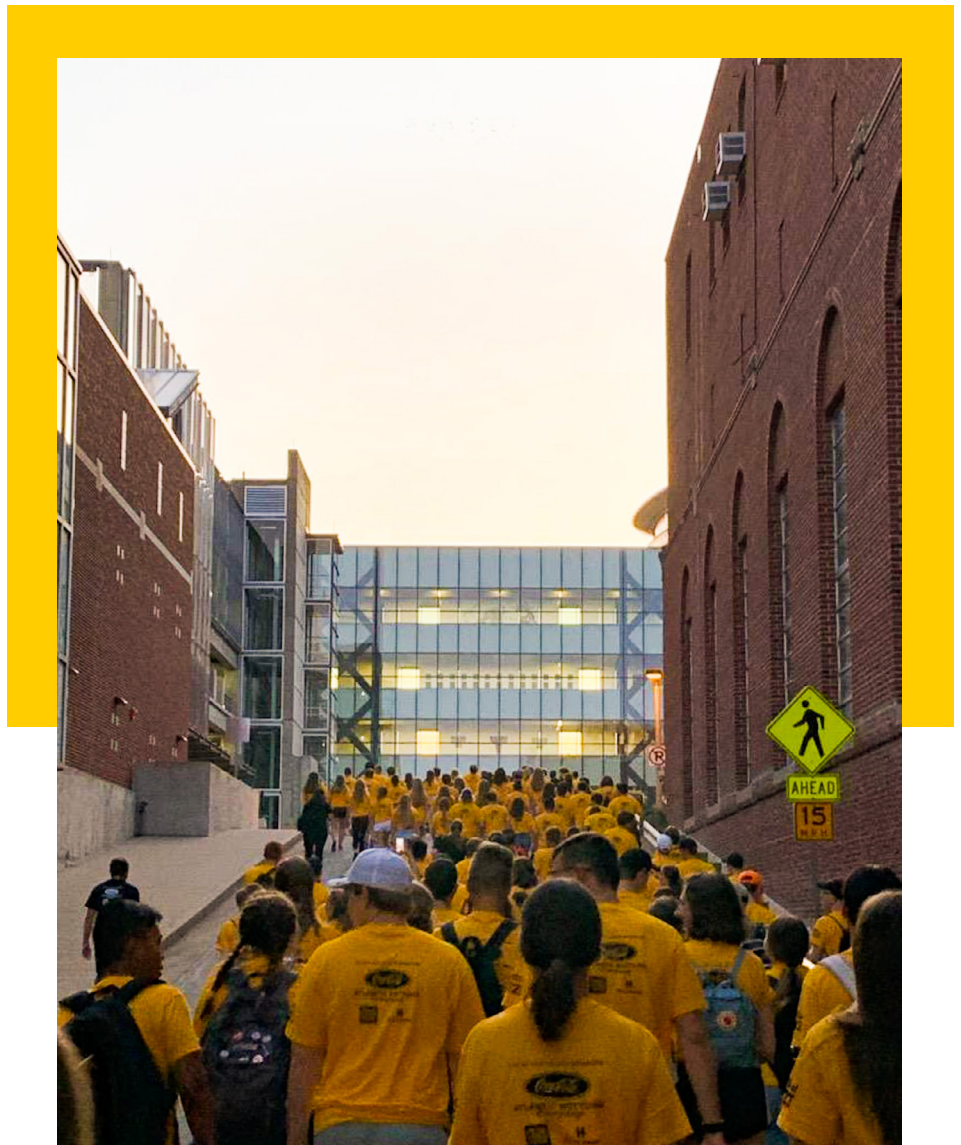
TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE ORIENTATION

By Eleanor Abbott

Honors orientation is required for all new honors students to share information about campus resources, program requirements, and class registration. Students and parents also get the opportunity to speak with Honors Outreach Ambassadors to ask questions about the program and the honors community.

Honors Outreach Ambassador Renee Mittelberg has been a part of the honors program for four years. Some of her clearest memories of orientation were of signing up for her honors classes. "There was a rumor going around that there were only a couple spots open in Rhetoric during my sign-up time, however, I had access to more sections of rhetoric, so I wasn't as stressed about getting a spot," said Mittelberg. "I also remember chatting with Bob Kirby, [former associate director of Honors at Iowa]. He talked to me about Primetime and other things. I was amazed that the staff at such a huge school were willing to talk with incoming students. It really made the process feel more personal."

Honors orientation is also a great place to start building connections with staff and fellow honors students. "Community is a huge part of Honors at Iowa, and attending an Honors orientation session allows you to start building that community before you even begin class. I still recognize people in my orientation group, [even though] it was a long time ago. It's nice to have a friendly face in some of your classes



A group of first-years on their way to Kinnick Stadium during OnIowa in 2019. Photo by Sydney Clarkin

“Incoming Honors students shouldn’t worry about missing too much because orientation is online this year. They will still be able to **experience Iowa** to the **fullest** once they are on campus in the fall.”

- Renee Mittelberg,
Honors Outreach Ambassador

during those first couple weeks,” Mittelberg said.

Unfortunately, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summer 2020 Honors orientation has been moved online. Students will not be able to attend orientation in person.

“I think the changes will impact Honors students and non-honors students relatively equally. Everyone will miss out on forming some early connections and exploring campus. As far as detriments, I think missing out on that face-to-face interaction and not getting to explore campus are two big ones,” Mittelberg said. “But incoming Honors students shouldn’t worry about missing too much because Orientation is online this year. They will still be able to experience Iowa to the fullest once they are on campus in the fall.”

While the shift to online orientation will make it more difficult for students to form connections before the year starts, they will have plenty of time to do so once the year begins. Honors-exclusive classes and first-year seminars are a great chance to meet students in the Honors community. “Welcome to Honors” advising sessions and one-on-one peer mentoring are available to students who need extra help adjusting to campus life. Additionally, the Honors Program, at this time, still expects to host Primetime, which will allow many Honors students to arrive on campus early and meet staff members ahead of time.



An honors orientation small group session from 2018.

Although the face-to-face interaction of orientation will be difficult to find online, there may be some benefits to moving orientation to an online program. The UI attracts students from all over the country and the world, so an online program could spare travel costs and time. “I think online orientation will be a huge benefit for students and families that live far from Iowa City,” Mittelberg said. “I have met students at Iowa from across the country and I can’t imagine it was easy for them to attend orientation. Moving to online will certainly make it easier for those who don’t live in the Midwest.”

An online program could also be more accessible to students or parents who work or have difficulty traveling. “If stu-

dents and/or parents are working full time this summer, having orientation online will make it less likely that they will have to take time off work,” Mittelberg said.

Some of the best parts of Honors orientation—meeting students and staff and exploring campus—will be much harder to achieve through an online orientation, but the change will make new students’ first weeks on campus all the more exciting. Honors students will still have great opportunities to build connections and settle into campus through Primetime and Honors classes. Orientation will be a vastly different experience for this summer’s Honors students, but the essential Honors experience will endure.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HONORS

12 S.H. HONORS COURSEWORK IN FIRST FOUR SEMESTERS IN PROGRAM

Honors Primetime 1 s.h.

Honors First-Year-Seminar 1 s.h.

General Education Courses (Rhetoric, Interpretation of Literature, Principles of Chemistry)

Contract a non-honors class into honors

- **Honors Contract Course:** A class contracted for honors credit
- See Honors Contract on our website

12 S.H. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING BEFORE GRADUATION

Examples:

- Honors in the major - departmental requirements
 - Research/Independent study
 - Study Abroad
 - Internships
 - Writing Fellows
 - Service Learning
 - Experiential Coursework
-

CONTRACTING AN HONORS COURSE

By Jenny Cape

One aspect of Honors at Iowa that students are continuously reminded of during their first two years is the required honors coursework. More specifically, within their first four semesters in the program, students are responsible for acquiring a minimum of 12 honors-designated semester hours. To assist students in meeting this requirement, a wide variety of Honors courses – ranging from large lectures to tight-knit discussion sections – are offered every semester; the hope being that each student will be able to find a class or two that coincide with their hectic schedule. However, there's always a chance that none of the provided courses seem to line up with their schedules. To solve this problem, the university supplies students with the option of contracting courses.

Sometimes overlooked as an option, contracting courses allows students to take the path less travelled in regard to fulfilling their Honors coursework requirement. "Often used by upper-level students who have completed their general education requirements, a course can be contracted when there are no Honors sections of the course, or a scheduling conflict exists," explains Honors staff member Addison Woll. Rather than enroll in one of the many courses offered on a semesterly basis, students are able to earn honors credit for a regular class by somehow enhancing their learning experience, whether that be through an additional

"Looking back, contracting was probably the **best decision** I could have made - both for my schedule, and for my **growth as a student.**"

- Ben Pappas

research paper or an oral presentation to the class. Working with the professor in distinguishing what specific honors contract work the class will entail, students are encouraged to be creative and pursue whatever related areas interest them.

In the end, not only do undergraduates earn the necessary honors credits for their efforts, but they also acquire supplemental knowledge pertaining to the class that can further enrich their overall comprehension. For example, sophomore Ben Pappas earned honors credit for his Introduction to Sociology course by reading an assigned book and breaking it down chapter by chapter with his professor. From his perspective, "Contracting a course and spending that extra time with my teacher not only helped me build a valuable relationship, but also strengthened my understanding of sociology through thought-provoking discussions."

The beauty of contracting courses at Iowa is that no two experiences will be the same. With the opportunity to design an original and intriguing project, students are given a say in how they meet the Honors coursework requirement. Only one contracted class may count towards fulfilling the requirement, with possible exceptions determined through advising with Honors Assessment Manager and Admissions Coordinator Addison Woll. While it is normally the case that "contracted classes must be in-person, during the fall or spring semesters, and the student must earn a final grade of B- or better in order to earn honors credit," Woll clarified, the Honors Program has temporarily waived these requirements due to the extenuating circumstances associated with the coronavirus pandemic.

Although getting involved on campus is definitely a great idea for incoming students, it sometimes makes finding the perfect schedule a bit of an ordeal. Thankfully, the university accommodates students who need that extra flexibility in order to obtain their mandatory honors credits. Contracting a course is not just another honors credit – it's a unique and individualized way to augment any normal college class. Most students, like Ben, wholeheartedly agree: "Looking back, contracting was probably the best decision I could have made - both for my schedule, and for my growth as a student."

THE BASICS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

By Airiana Mohr

Honors at Iowa has a unique design. Comprised of two requirements – 12 semester hours of honors coursework and 12 semester hours of experiential learning – the curriculum is intended to foster learning in ways not just limited to a traditional classroom setting. The second component, experiential learning, is noted as “learn by doing” on the honors website and degree audits and is designed to promote growth through personal experiences. Andy Willard, the Experiential Learning Director for Honors at Iowa, reflected that the goal of experiential learning is to incorporate the application of practical knowledge and skill included in the program’s mission statement as an integral part of a student’s education in a way that they can earn credit for.

“Experience is everything we do; not just in college but in our lives,” Willard commented, adding that he wishes more students would think about it during their first year.

Willard also mentioned that options for completing the experiential learning requirements include many things honors students are already likely to do. While many students choose to complete this component during their third and fourth years of study, students may seek to start this process earlier. Benefits to starting early can include allowing students to research for fewer hours each semester, not feeling rushed or short of time towards the end of one’s career, and networking

“Experience is everything we do; not just in college but in our lives.”

- Andy Willard,
Experiential Learning Director

amongst other things. The main ways students earn credit is through the pursuit of honors in the major, study abroad, research, and internships, but there are a few other methods as well that are related to specific courses designed to include out of classroom pieces in their course structure.

Earning honors in the major, which often involves research, allows students to earn all twelve hours of experiential learning. Even if students are not looking to pursue honors in their major or wish to conduct research in another area of study, research can be experiential learning credit. Becoming involved with research can seem like a daunting process but can be fairly simple. The University of Iowa is a top research university, so opportunities are not scarce. There are a few different ways to become involved including through conversations with professors or the Iowa Center for Undergraduate Research (ICRU)’s services. With research, the amount of time spent each week will

determine the number of hours earned.

For first-year student Haley Lightfoot, research was not something she expected to be involved in so early in her career, but she planned on it being part of her educational experience. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Lightfoot was set to begin research with faculty in the chemistry department whom she had approached with about their studies. After expressing interest, she was offered a position in the group.

“I wanted to join research eventually because that’s what I want to do for the rest of my life. I want to work hands-on with my major, and this is an amazing opportunity for me,” Lightfoot said.

Outside of research, many students will study abroad or obtain an internship either during the summer or for a semester. While studying abroad typically does not occur during a student’s first year, they may be able to go abroad the following summer or later. Internships may require a certain grade level or educational background, so opportunities may be limited during the initial years, but there are possibilities. It is important to note that students who elect either of these options will be required to complete a pre and post reflection assignment to earn credit.

With many options and the freedom to combine multiple of them comes a variety of misconceptions. When asked about common misconceptions, Willard highlighted a few. First, the length of time a student spends abroad or

DEBUNKING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

With Experiential Learning Director Andy Willard

1. Length of time spent abroad or in a position **does not** always correlate with the level of impact.
2. Internships **can** be done part-time, a student should not worry about working forty hours a week during the summer
3. The word "internship" **does not** need to be in the title for a job to be counted as an internship.
4. Students **do not** need to search for "elite" opportunities at well-known companies, there are many opportunities to gain experiential learning credit in Iowa City.

"I wanted to join research eventually because that's what I want to do for the rest of my life. I want to **work hands-on** with my major, and this is an **amazing opportunity** for me."

- Haley Lightfoot

involved in a position does not always correlate the level of impact. Second, students do not need to be worrying about working forty hours a week at an internship during the summer. Students can do an internship part-time and can hold what Dr. Willard calls "just a job" in addition to this. Finally, Willard cited the number one misconception is that students do not always recognize how many jobs can be counted as an internship. In fact, the word "internship" does not even need to be included in the title. He encourages students to

reach out to him regarding their positions if they feel that they could qualify.

One other misconception students have is that they must seek "elite" opportunities such as interning for well-known companies. This often is not the case, and students have a wide range of opportunities to earn experiential credit within Iowa City. Listed on the honors website is a list of courses that count as experiential credit due to their community engagement component. On top of this, students can work as undergraduate teaching assistants,

Success in Rhetoric leaders, or work with the Iowa Youth Writing Project.

While the range of opportunities can seem daunting, the honors staff is always willing to help students. Willard encourages students to chat with him about ideas they have or to help them find things they may want to be involved with.

For incoming students, Willard wants them to "realize that they are joining a program that really values out of classroom experiences and will give you credit for them."

A PRIMETIME PRIMER

By Priyanka Srinivasan & Rubye Ney

Honors Primetime is a three-day long course for freshmen to explore interests they may not have considered before in a small group setting. Students build relationships with one another, their professors, and Iowa City before classes start. On the final day of Primetime all groups present a small glimpse into their course. Primetime typically features a wide range of course topics to fit any interest, from “Eating Local: Mapping Food Sources From Ancient Rome to Iowa City, IA,” “How Do Birds Work?” and “Doing Politics.”

Kate Cavanaugh decided to take Primetime to get settled into the University and to meet new people before classes started. Her course, “Standup Comedy: the Why and the How,” taught by Megan Gogerty, was far from initial expectations.

Prior to Primetime, students fill out an interest survey to match with a course offered but do not actually select the course. “When I got the email about what my Primetime was about I was like ‘oh no’ because I knew I was going to be out of my comfort zone.” Humor can be a vulnerable topic for anyone, much less a group of nervous 18-year-old strangers.

“But my professor was really awesome, she made everyone feel so comfortable,” said Cavanaugh. Her professor, Megan Gogerty, has offered a Primetime course for several years, but this was her first experience teaching a standup comedy course.

“One of the great things about Honors Primetime is that the students start out terrified because they’re coming to college,” said Gogerty. But their transformations are evident to Gogerty, which is why she loves Primetime so much.

“When I got the email about what my Primetime was about I was like ‘oh no’ because I knew I was going to be out of my **comfort zone.** But my professor was **really awesome,** she made everyone feel **so comfortable.”**

- *Kate Cavanaugh*

She tries to abate students’ fears by creating a sense of comradery within their class. On the first day, she told her students they were now part of “The Gang,” meaning they were to smile at each other around campus and get to know everyone.

In addition to learning how to perform and building relationships, Gogerty feels it equally important to teach her students about their campus. Tips like how to do their laundry and how the Cambus routes work to make students feel a little more comfortable during their first weeks on campus.

Cavanaugh reflected on her relationships in “The Gang,” saying, “It helped a lot that first week when everyone was kind of rushing around I was able to be a little more calm knowing that I had people to talk to or hang out with.”

Kyler Johnson, also a participant in Honors Primetime “wanted to attack the school year” after his return from

Belgium. Johnson had been an exchange student there for a year, and now was ready to dive deep into everything about the UI experience.

Still not completely set on a major, Kyler looked to his Primetime course, “Creative Writing: Remembering Stories of our Lives”, with Professor Tameka Cage Conley as a way to test the waters in the creative writing major.

“As soon as I got to Primetime and we got talking as a group and started creating and crafting and just producing a lot of cool ideas and pieces, yes, it affirmed everything that I had kind of gone into thinking about the creative writing major... And I told my academic advisor... ‘I found my thing’.”

Johnson observed that he felt the effects of Primetime well into his first year. “I was very confident with sharing my pieces [in Primetime] which has then helped me in my creative writing courses now, and my other classes too I feel like I’m a much more active participant in everything, which I think comes from that success with Primetime and that attack mentality.”

His experience in those three days changed Johnson outside of the classroom as well. “I met one of my best friends there... Now we get breakfast every morning, we have traditions together. I was able to get some of those friendships that were new going into the school year.”

Both Cavanaugh and Johnson wholeheartedly recommend Primetime to incoming students. Even though she grew up only 20 minutes from campus, Cavanaugh felt that Primetime introduced her to things about college she didn’t even know she didn’t know and gave her a head start on her first year



Photo courtesy of Thomas Duong

at the UI.

Primetime may be the confidence-booster you need coming into the school year, as Johnson put it, “When you allow yourself to take that confident step forward, in the classroom, in Primetime, wherever, it really makes that experience ten times more powerful.”

First Day: Students jump right into their first session with their college professor. They introduce themselves to others in their session as well as learn about what their specific topic will consist of throughout the rest of the week. Students also attend a welcome event in the afternoon.

Aya Hamanaka, a first-year who was a part of the 2019 “To Know is to Tell” session, enjoyed learning how to effectively communicate with people. “As part of our Primetime ‘assignment,’ we were assigned a partner and were instructed to eavesdrop on conversations that people were having, and report back at the end of the day what we observed. This was an enjoyable outing

because my partner and I decided to go on an adventure through downtown Iowa City, so as a result, we were able to get to know the city more.”

Second and Third Day: These days are similar in the fact that the students spend the majority of their day with their professor learning and engaging with their topic. These days may also include taking field trips around campus such as visiting the art library to get some inspiration for a project that the students will create.

Kyle Lastine is a first-year who attended a session called “Doing Politics” taught by Sarah Prineas. “For most of the session, the class acted as a political campaign for a fake candidate. Everybody had a different position within the campaign; mine was ‘Advertisement Coordinator,’ so I worked with the candidate and other students to make the TV campaign, which was presented in the symposium.” Each topic had a different focus and they all allowed students to engage in activities not typically done in a classroom.

“When you allow yourself to take that **confident** step forward, in the classroom, in Primetime, wherever, it really makes that experience ten times **more powerful.**”

- *Kyler Johnson*

Fourth Day: The last day consists of students from each topic presenting their findings to other groups in a symposium to ensure that all Honors students get a taste for what each group learned.

After each day’s sessions conclude around 5 p.m., the students are encouraged to participate in various events hosted by the Honors Program including trivia and board games.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCES

A Program with Paths for All

By **Kyler Johnson**

Coming into the University of Iowa as a first-year student holds its challenges. Every student has to make the transition, installing into a new community and oftentimes leaving behind old expectations for new ones. As new honors students begin to plan their journey here at Iowa, the scope of opportunities and paths to embark on are nearly endless, and as first-year honors students of the class of 2023 discovered, the first year is by no means a one size fits all situation.

Radha Velamuri, for example, a biomedical sciences major and music minor started her honors experience with Honors Primetime, establishing some of her first college connections in a three-day seminar on a subject totally different from her major.

"My entire [Primetime] class got along really well," Velamuri said. "It was nice to meet and get to know many of the people who were going to be living in Daum with me too."

Noah Sinclair, another first-year honors student who took part in Primetime, found that living in Daum and getting to invest in that community was perhaps his favorite part of Honors Primetime.

"I got to meet some of my best friends during the early move-in," Sinclair said. "Even though being social isn't exactly my thing, it was very easy to meet new people."

That being said, not all Honors students will take part in either Primetime or the community within Daum, and these students can be just as successful. Take public health major Lindsey Metzger, for example. A student not living in Daum nor having participated

"It was wonderful to be surrounded by equally motivated students in these difficult classes."

- *Lindsey Metzger*

in Primetime, Metzger still made sure to engage in course material and utilize resources offered by the Honors Program.

Taking principles of chemistry and foundations of biology as honors courses, Metzger began to tackle honors coursework requirements with which incoming first-year students will become familiar.

"It was wonderful to be surrounded by equally motivated students in these difficult classes," Metzger said. "I've met some of my best friends through the honors program."

Sinclair also heavily engaged in coursework, completing his honors class requirements in his first semester. Taking honors Rhetoric, principles of chemistry like Metzger, and an honors engineering course, his sentiments in regards to finding people and community were akin to Metzger.

While Metzger and Sinclair were able to flourish in these honors courses during the normal academic school year, Velamuri, on the other hand, ended up only having her seminar at Honors Primetime count for honors coursework in her first year.

Velamuri said having brought in an abundance of transfer credit, she

faced difficulty finding how the honors coursework would fit into her schedule. Ultimately, Velamuri said working with honors staff was extremely helpful for her individual situation.

"Holly Yoder was a very helpful advisor for me in making sure I can graduate with university honors," Velamuri said. "The peer mentors were also immensely helpful in learning about experiential learning credit."

Velamuri, who is engaged in an on-campus research position analyzing major depressive disorder, acquired experiential learning credit for her work in the lab, satisfying part of another required element for earning honors credit that incoming first-year students will become acquainted with. Whereas Velamuri seized this chance, Metzger and Sinclair both said they thought it best, however, to hold off before diving into their experiential coursework.

At the end of their first year, while all three students ended up with varying credit, experience, and relationships with a variety of honors staff, their opinions all aligned in the sense of community felt from the program. Velamuri is looking forward to cultivating these relationships throughout her undergraduate years. Metzger enjoys being challenged by peers she has met through Honors. Sinclair found himself in what honestly felt like a tight-knit community where people look out for one another.

For incoming first-year honors students, while one path cannot fit what everyone experiences in the Honors at Iowa, with the support of the honors community, everyone can find their path.

REFLECTING ON COVID-19

By Emily Reinertson

How are you?

A simple three-worded question that can easily elude even the most introspective. In the current state of the world, *how are you?* is a more difficult question than ever to answer. For many students, including myself, the spring semester of 2020 has easily been one of the most challenging periods of our lives. Over the past few months, I've had a *lot* of time to reflect... Like, a lot. I've taken this time to reclaim control over the small moments in my life.

As someone who is constantly studying psychology, it quickly became apparent to me this semester that I wasn't *learning* correctly. I could do countless hours of reading, but it didn't mean much if I wasn't retaining any information—it was with this realization that I took time to reflect... which brings me to my first strategy.

Reflection. It is an often-underappreciated practice in academia, but one that I believe is especially paramount to student success. Each day, I use fifteen minutes to journal about what I think went *right* in my day—lately I've been journaling even longer (what else is there to do while isolating?) This helps me articulate the highlights of my days, so I can attempt to recreate and *reward* successful actions/behaviors. Arguably, even more importantly, I take time to reflect on what *didn't* go right that day, which brings me to my next strategy.

Forgiveness. This is a technique that has been extremely taxing to practice daily—even now, some days feels like chipping away at the Grand Canyon with some Fiskars scissors. When I take time to reflect on what *didn't* go right, I also ensure to take time to

"Right now, I **don't have control** over many things in my life. I use my privilege to examine the things I do have control over—I take advantage of these small, sometimes fleeting, moments. With this, I feel as though I finally can have some semblance of **"normalcy"** back in my life."



The author's dog keeps her company as she works on class assignments online.
Photo by Emily Reinertson

create a forgiving space for myself. It is in this space where my motivation to *do right* can grow. While I reward myself for positive behaviors, I do not punish myself punitively for "negative" behaviors. If I didn't get an A+ on that test—*"I know you tried your best. Let's find the silver lining here."* Any clinical psychologist will tell you that positive reinforcement is infinitely more effective than negative reinforcement, which leads me to my third, and final, strategy I have employed to promote academic success.

Silver linings! Although I don't have a witty psychology quip about this strategy, I do believe it has made a world of difference in my academic success. Let's be real with each other for a second—**college is hard.** We fail. We have to take physics. We get a worse grade on an exam than our friend. We fall at the bottom of a curve for a lab report! Allowing myself to find silver linings in these situations is the surefire way for me to stay afloat the hectic lifestyle of a full-time student. Learning to not punish myself for a mistake is one of the hardest things I've tried to do here at Iowa, which is a common behavior amongst high-achieving students.

I wholeheartedly believe that reflection, forgiveness, and taking the time to focus on optimistic moments (even when they are only that—a short few moments!) are the strong foundations to academic success. Right now, I don't have control over many things in my life. I use my privilege to examine the things I *do* have control over—I take advantage of these small, sometimes fleeting, moments. With this, I feel as though I finally can have some semblance of "normalcy" back in my life.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Do You Really Hate Your Roommate?

By Oliver Willham

Living in the same room as someone is a unique experience. If you've never done it, you might think it could be challenging. And if you have done it, you know it is challenging. Sometimes they will leave your favorite bowl in the sink covered with leftover ramen sauce and partial noodles. Sometimes you will leave your dirty underwear out when their partner comes over. That's just the reality of living five feet away from someone for a year while gaining the freedom of college life. Everyone comes from a different experience before living on campus, and it is important to have an easy and short guide on how to deal with the inevitable conflicts that emerge between two roommates. Or if you're living alone, how do you live on a floor with the same amount of people required to run a small circus or a large book club?

The most important thing to remember is that both of you are just trying to live your lives. Unless you get a truly hellish roommate (and if you do, talk to your resident assistant, or RA, they are there to help you have a fun time your first year), you can be confident your roommate is not trying to make your life a living hell. This leads to the first thing you should do: Cool off! Don't try to start something when you're still upset. Make sure you think through exactly what caused you to feel the way you do and then take the time to communicate it to your roommate. Cool off, then communicate. Talking about issues openly is the best approach to any problem you encounter in your living situation. There is nothing

"Talking about issues openly is the best approach to any problem you encounter in your living situation."

- Oliver Willham

that sours any relationship quite like passive aggressive attempts to communicate your feelings. It can be difficult to talk to someone, but that is the very reason it is important. If you let the little things that really bother you bottle up inside, it'll sour the entire relationship. Remember to be gracious if someone admits to being wrong. As Slater RA Kyle Jones says, "no one should shame them further." When they already know they're in the wrong, that little bit of shame already goes a long way.

Little things that bother you a bit, like fleas on a dog, are also going to come up. These aren't the important issues. Maybe your roommate always uses a paper towel to dry their hands when you want them to use the hand towel you bought specifically for dorm use. Maybe it makes you feel like they don't appreciate the work you put in to get that towel. Maybe you think it's wasteful they can't use the hand towel like everyone else. This is the time to be-

come like a seal, the ones with all that soft silky blubber, and let that stuff slide off your back. When you're living with a roommate, try to let go of what you can without making a big fuss. If you can adjust without making a big change to your life, at least try to stick it out.

My roommate freshman year liked walking back from the shower wearing a towel, and only a towel, and put on his clothes in our room. The problem was that I also liked to be in our room around the same time he took his shower meaning I was there when he got back and had to clothe himself. Potentially this could have been a major problem in our relationship. Turning away for a minute while he got dressed seemed terrible at first, but as the semester went on, I just got used to it. In fact, it became a kind of shared joke in our friend group. I won't lie and say I miss it, but it never bothered me that much.

More on showering: the one thing you might be reading this article for. It can seem like showering in those communal showers would be "disgusting," "terrible," or "another bad adjective." That's not really the case. As long as you wear shoes and have a moderate sense of balance, it's not that bad. I would recommend flip flops over heels or dress shoes, just to make sure your feet get clean. Truthfully, it can be hard to get naked and shower in an unfamiliar place, and that feeling shouldn't be diminished. You might be a bit uncomfortable the first couple times you walk down the hallway to shower but nearly everyone there is having that



A triple in Daum Residence Hall.
Photo courtesy of University Housing & Dining

same feeling. You are all in it together. Try to talk to some of them about it, I'm sure they'll feel the same way. It will be a little awkward for a while, before it becomes just another moment in your day.

There might be other problems with hygiene from you or your roommate. Sometimes you aren't lucky enough to get someone who showers every day. That is something that may require RA intervention, as Hillcrest RA Laxmi Annapureddy had to deal with. "One resident told me her roommate didn't like showering daily, rarely did laundry, and generally did not smell pleasant. Another resident's roommate threw up in her own bed and slept in the dry vomit for three weeks before washing her sheets. Just respect the space and the people living in it. Take care of your hy-

giene and clean the room for everyone in it. Chore lists will help with that, so you each have responsibilities. Even doing something like a love language test could help you get along, and you'll probably be set!" Whatever you do, remember to clean up anything you throw up on before it gets set in there.

The final thing is that your RA is the greatest resource you'll have on campus. They are always, unless they are in class or in a state of undress, there for you to talk to. If you are having problems with someone on the floor or even your roommate, they are there to listen. Even if venting about it is all you need to do, they are ready to help you out. Talk to them whenever you have a problem. Trust me, they want you to talk to them. No RA would be an RA without wanting to help people.

"Just **respect** the space and the people living in it. Take care of your **hygiene** and clean the room for everyone in it. Chore lists will help with that, so you each have **responsibilities**. Even doing something like a love language test could **help you get along**."

- Laxmi Annapureddy,
Resident Assistant

FINANCIAL FEARS? HONORS SCHOLARSHIPS ARE HERE!

By Sonia Beltz

How will I pay for college? It's the question on every college student's mind. Even as you're sitting at home, eagerly awaiting your arrival on campus, the question may still hang over you. You might be wondering, then, if there are things you can do to help answer that daunting question.

While University of Iowa scholarship deadlines for the 2020-2021 school year have passed, you will have a chance during your freshman year to apply for dozens more scholarships, including UI Honors Scholarships.

These Honors at Iowa exclusive scholarships open for applications in late November, usually just before Thanksgiving break, and don't close until late February or early March. This gives Honors students plenty of time to prepare their materials and submit a strong application. The application is open to all Honors students with at least one full semester on campus, which means that first-year applicants should wait until their first-semester grades are in before clicking submit.

But where should eager honors students go to apply?

"The key and beautiful thing about the process now is that [students] only have to do one application," says Camille Socarras, the Honors Scholarship

Coordinator. Socarras's job is to facilitate the Honors Scholarship process for students, which she says has been made much easier by the adoption of a universal application. Now, students can apply for all UI scholarships through one portal, meaning that, according to Socarras, "[students] don't have to stress about finding the right scholarship."

There are many Honors scholarships available for freshmen, including the Rhodes Dunlap Scholarship for Achievement in the First Year, named for Honors at Iowa founder Rhodes Dunlap. This scholarship, among others the Honors program awards to first-year students for use on their second year's tuition, can be applied for using the University of Iowa Scholarship Portal.

After filling out basic questions in what is known as the "General Application," students' portals will reveal other opportunities, including, for Honors students, the Honors scholarship application.

The first few questions are simple, asking students for their class/year, enrollment status, as well as all majors, minors, and certificate programs they are pursuing. Then comes the interesting part: a resume/CV, essay, and letter

KEY ASPECTS

RESUME

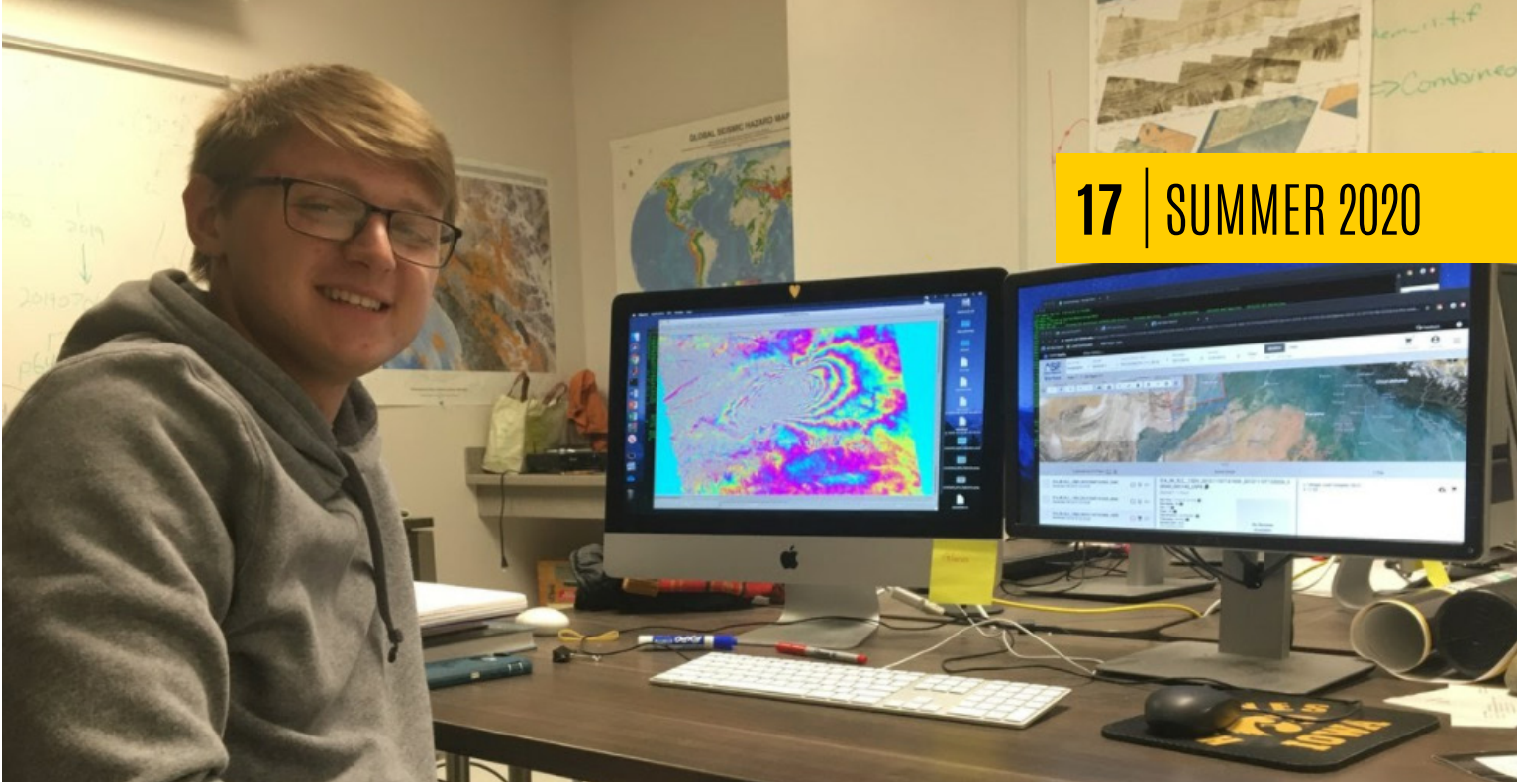
Demonstrates intellectual growth, professionalism, and a student's developmental process

ESSAY

Offers a 3-dimensional picture of a student, and reveals their direction and trajectory

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Outside representation of student character



Second-year and Rhodes Dunlap 2019-2020 recipient Zachary Vig.
Photo Courtesy of Zachary Vig

of recommendation are all required.

According to Socarras, the CV/resume portion shouldn't be "any different from what [students] have already created for other applications." The CV/resume is simply meant to be a list of not only a student's prior work experience, but also their involvement in college activities and Honors coursework, which serves as another way to help students present themselves.

"It's a weird balance," says Zachary Vig, a sophomore who received the Rhodes Dunlap award in his first year, when asked about what to include on the CV/resume portion. "You want to stay involved in things that you're passionate about, but you also have that looming fear of 'Oh, I've got to put this on a resume later.'" He advises that students focus on their passions, then connect those experiences back to their career path or journey later.

The next section, the letter of recommendation, is the one that both Socarras and Vig say is tough. Students must find a faculty member, lecturer, or teaching assistant to write them a recommendation outlining their character and skills -- a task that requires a depth of knowledge. For this reason, Vig says, "It might be daunting to go up to [professors] after the first day of class and

"You want to stay involved in things that you're passionate about, but you also have that looming fear of 'Oh, I've got to put this on a resume later.'"

- Zachary Vig

introduce yourself. I shook my physics professor's hand after class." For him, this began the development of relationships with faculty whom he trusted to write a good letter of recommendation.

But for those still nervous about approaching professors in lecture halls, there are other chances to develop these kinds of relationships. "One of the things that honors offers freshmen is the opportunity to do more small group sessions," Socarras says, noting Honors Primetime and Honors first-year seminars among these.

The final portion of the application is the essay. Each year, a new, intro-

spective prompt is posed to students, asking them to consider their personal development and growth. But don't get too wrapped up in formal writing. According to Socarras, essay readers are really wondering, "Could I imagine myself having a conversation with this student based on what they've written?"

Vig echoes this, saying, "My approach to the essay was to be a little weird, because they receive a lot of essays, and most start out boring." He and Socarras both champion not only originality, but also authenticity in crafting a strong application essay.

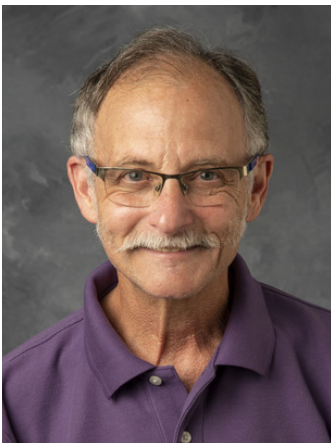
With all of these pieces and parts, if you ever need help, Socarras says that her door is always open. (She can also be contacted at honors-scholarships@uiowa.edu) But also, she says, "You can get feedback from anybody!" Campus resources, including the Career Center and Writing Center can offer help with resumes and essays, while even friends and family can offer constructive feedback.

And of course, you still have plenty of time before the applications are due. But Vig and Socarras each offer one last piece of friendly advice: "Always just remember to apply," and "Pay attention to deadlines!"

MEET THE HONORS STAFF

Helpful Honors Staff Ready To Assist You With Your Journey Here At Iowa
By Mackenzie Anderson

With the transition to life as a college student, nerves can definitely be a normal part of adjusting to the new lifestyle, and the honors staff is here to assist you with anything you need. While any member of the honors team would be more than happy to assist you, they each have their own unique, student-oriented expertise to help you along the way and would love to hear from you. Here, they provide a bit of advice on adjusting to everything that the University of Iowa has to offer.



Andy Willard

Email: andrew-willard@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday from 2:30–4:00 PM in Room 413 of the Blank Honors Center

Experiential Learning Director Andy Willard is especially useful when planning how to fulfill the experiential learning credit requirement to graduate with honors. With the requirement being very flexible in its demands, Andy is a great contact for finding out all of the unique ways that you can achieve the needed credits within your own field.

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

“Take a deep breath or two, relax, explore new or old areas, keep your focus and discipline, and you will have a wonderful experience.”



Addison Woll

Email: addison-woll@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday from 1:30-2:30 PM in Room 409 of the Blank Honors Center

Assessment Manager and Admissions Coordinator Addison Woll is another staff member that dedicates his work to making sure that students within the Honors Program are receiving all of the best resources to help serve them throughout their time at Iowa. He also keeps up with how students are doing academically making sure that they are being as successful as possible. Questions about certain requirements of the Honors Program or any concerns regarding would be great reasons to schedule an appointment.

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

“Jump in with both feet and get involved with things that make you excited! Honors has many opportunities to form community and showcase your passions. Simultaneously work on the power of saying “NO” to make time for the things that will allow you to thrive. Lastly, always ask for help. It seems scary, but asking for help shows maturity and drive for excellence.”

For more information about each of these staff members as well as a complete staff directory make sure to visit our website honors.uiowa.edu.



Camille Socarras

Email: camille-socarras@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Appointments can be scheduled through MyUI

Scholarship Coordinator Camille Socarras is a great resource when looking to discover what scholarship opportunities you may qualify for. With the Honors Program offering many scholarships for its members to apply for, as well as other possible opportunities to fit your situation, Camille is here to help.

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

"I know it sounds very cliché, but don't be afraid to try new things; attend different events, check out student organizations, talk to the people in your classes and don't be afraid of your professors or other potential mentor-figures on campus – get to know them and let them get to know you!"



Holly Blosser-Yoder

Email: holly-yoder@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30–9:45 AM in Room 417 of the Blank Honors Center

Advising Director Holly Blosser-Yoder can answer a wide variety of questions due to her wide involvement within the Honors Program. Within her average day she oversees all of the Honors Peer Advisors as well as Honors Orientation Ambassadors. Whether it's studying abroad, interest in a specific honors course, or wanting to find out more about how research can fit with honors, scheduling an appointment will offer you an answer!

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

"Seek out interesting people—peers, professors, advisors or other staff—to learn from their journeys. What education path did they take? What college experiences have been/were meaningful to them? Look to a variety of role models and not just one. Be curious and be persistent."



Emily Hill

Email: emily-d-hill@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Monday 3:00-5:00 PM in Room 443 of the Blank Honors Center

Assistant Director Emily Hill works to make the educational experience of honors students the best it can be. She works on different programs for students to get involved in, develops ways for students to be challenged by their curriculum, as well as helps to build up the honors community. Emily works very closely with students within the university and is involved with research pertaining to how the university can adapt to provide the best environment possible to kids with mental illnesses, which Emily is a fantastic resource for finding more about.

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

"My door is always open for students to visit about honors academic advising and scholar development! One of my biggest pieces of advice as a former honors student myself is to find faculty and professional staff mentors you trust and don't be afraid to ask them questions. Those conversations can bring you to unforeseen and valuable opportunities!"



Heidi Schmitt

Email: heidi-schmitt@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Please reach out to Heidi with questions anytime by email!

Program Coordinator and Communications Specialist Heidi Schmitt commits a lot of her work to the events and opportunities in which the Honors Program provides. This includes planning events that happen throughout the year, talking with different staff members to make sure things are running smoothly, as well as the marketing aspect of the program. For any questions about any events advertised, she would be the one to ask!

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

“Get involved in the wonderful opportunities Honors provides from experiential learning, peer mentoring, to connecting with our team. There is something for everyone. Also, be sure to check out the weekly Honorable Messenger electronic newsletter for important program updates and ways you can showcase your creativity. We are all here to help you succeed on your journey!”



Kelly Thornburg

Email: kelly-thornburg@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: Appointments can be scheduled through MyUI

Director of Scholar Development Kelly Thornburg can be extremely helpful to students in need of guidance when looking to apply for opportunities like grants, fellowships, scholarships, etc, often on the national level. Looking to apply for these things for the first time can be extremely intimidating, which can be eased by scheduling a meeting with Kelly.

Advice for Incoming Freshmen

“Attending college is an experience that comes with a lot of underutilized perks. One of the best of these benefits is access to a vast library system that makes it possible to read, watch, and experience a huge range of life-changing, perspective-altering media. In my experience working with top scholars and national fellowship recipients, what tends to make people stand out in a competition (or in life) is what they learn, know, and do because they cannot stop thinking about it. Whether it is musical theatre, microglia, or *Mad Magazine*, if you want to know more about something, don’t wait to take the right class or find the perfect research mentor to go after that expertise. Go after those experiences as well, but in the meantime, start reading about it on your own! In my seminars, I ask my students to choose their own “Trifecta of Input” - a scholarly journal, a newspaper, and a magazine - that is connected to their topic of choice. I recommend reading each often for a year, but even if they keep it up for just a semester or a summer, they are still going to know more and feel more prepared to take their knowledge further or in a different direction when they are done. Building this habit can make it easier to do a lot of things we all have to do as developing professionals - chat someone up at a job fair, contribute more to an internship, or be a better communicator whether you are talking to your boss or your grandma.”

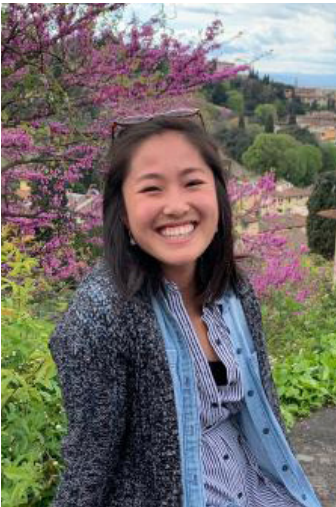
Honors Peer Mentor Team

One of the most used resources that the Honors Program offers is a set of peer mentors available by appointment to help with nearly anything Honors-related. Whether you are planning honors credit, have questions about honors courses, or just want to talk to another student within your field who has already taken the courses you are enrolled in, an appointment can be helpful in an endless number of ways. Appointments can be set up with any honors peer mentor through MyUI who all have varied interests and areas of study.

HONORS PROGRAM FAQ

By Jacob Sammon

The University of Iowa's Honors Program is excited to help you understand what we are all about! We have a staff of honors students known as peer mentors who work individually with other honors students throughout the academic year and answer any questions they may have. Olivia Sandvold, Joshua Parbs, Madhuri Belkale, and Laura Widman, just a few of our many helpful peer mentors, helped curate a list of the most frequently asked questions by prospective honorable hawkeyes.



Olivia Sandvold

Olivia (she/her/hers) is studying biomedical engineering with minors in computer science and mathematics.



Joshua Parbs

Joshua (he/him/his) is a biochemistry major, pursuing minors in chemistry and global health studies, and a certificate in intercultural leadership.



Madhuri Belkale

Madhuri (she/her/hers) is majoring in psychology and political science with minors in Spanish and international studies on the pre-law track.



Laura Widman

Laura is studying linguistics with a focus in teaching English as a second language, ethics and public policy, a minor in French, and a certificate in international business.

Q: Are honors courses more difficult than non-honors courses? What should I expect from honors-level coursework?

A: Honors courses are not structured to be more difficult than their non-honor counterparts. They are typically focused on teaching and exploring course content in unique ways which include more class discussion, individual and group projects, and even flipped lectures, where you do your work in class time with teaching assistants and the professor, then learn the content outside of class time. They can sometimes even be easier than non-honors courses. For example, the traditional foundations of biology class has over 400 students in it and puts little to no emphasis on discussion-based learning. This directly contrasts the honors section in which there are only 70 students and the majority of learning is done through discussions. This often makes the courses easier due to the stronger connections and a more personal learning environment. You may even get the chance to explore concepts more deeply and venture outside of the normal course syllabus.

Q: Do all of my courses have to be honors courses? How many courses do I need to take?

A: Nope! Not all of your courses need to be honors courses. You are only required to complete 12 semester hours of honors coursework (which is the equivalent of roughly four courses), but you may take as many as you like. Most students choose to complete this requirement by taking honors versions of general education courses, but there are plenty of other honors courses within your major studies, too. These 12 semester hours need to be completed within your first four semesters on campus, so you could take one honors

course per semester and fulfill that requirement on time.

Q: If there is an honors section of a course, do I have to take it?

A: Nope! You are not required to take that section, but if it fits into your schedule, we highly recommend getting enrolled in various honors courses to meet your honors peers and develop strong social and study groups. However, if the non-honors section of a course fits better into your schedule, it is 100% acceptable to take the non-honors section of the course.

Q: I completed all of my general education courses while in high school. Are there still honors courses that I can take?

A: Yes! You are always welcome to do an honors contract course, but you can also expect a number of courses that are required for majors, minors, or certificate degrees to be honors courses.

Q: What are honors contract courses and how do they work?

A: Honors contract courses are an opportunity to receive honors credit for a non-honors course. If you are struggling to find honors coursework that works with your schedule and plan of study, you can choose to contract any graded, in-person class. To do this, students work with the professor of the class to come up with an additional project that they will complete throughout the semester. Students should fill out the honors contract form, available on the Honors website, by the fifth week of the semester. The form will get sent to their professor for approval. At the end of the semester, the professor will confirm that the student has completed the project to their satisfaction. As long as the student receives a B- or

better in the class, they will receive honors credit for the class. Students are typically allowed one contract class, but the Honors Program will make exceptions for students with certain circumstances.

Q: What are experiential learning credits? When should I start thinking about fulfilling them?

A: Experiential learning credits are credits that you earn by engaging outside of the classroom and building upon your passions and expanding your skills. You can earn experiential learning credits through internships, research, study abroad, and service-learning. Additionally, we offer Honors experiential coursework which can further your involvement in the Honors program and support fellow Honors students. You can begin earning experiential learning credits at any time, but most people start around their sophomore and junior year. Many honors students say that they do not add any unnecessary work to their plate and are their favorite parts of their college experience.

Q: What is Honors Primetime?

A: Honors Primetime is a unique first-year experience that brings Honors students to campus a few days earlier than the rest of campus and provides an opportunity for Honors students to get to know each other through various activities. When students sign up, they are able to list preferences for the topic of their Primetime course. It is a great way for new honors students to get acquainted with each other and move to campus a little bit earlier than everyone else. I think this is also a great way to learn new things since a lot of the courses offered will be different than what you are planning on studying. In addition, I also think this was a huge part of having a successful transition



to college, which has been paramount to my overall success at the University of Iowa.

Q: What is the honors community like?

A: It's WONDERFUL! It is a wonderful corner of campus, full of vibrant people and diversity of thought. Personally, I've met many of my closest friends through honors experiences. We are always working on ways to improve the sense of community we create in the program.

Q: What is the Blank Honors Center?

A: The Blank Honors Center, or BHC, is the home of the peer mentors, honors front office, and professional staff. Students come to the BHC to get their questions answered regarding courses, scheduling, experiential learning, study abroad, scholarships, or utilize the study spaces available.

Q: How can I receive Scholarships?

A: Complete the Honors scholarship application in the spring and consider applying for national scholarships in your sophomore-senior years.

Q: Why should I utilize the University of Iowa's Honors Program?

A: The University of Iowa's Honors Program is the perfect opportunity for aspiring Hawkeyes to be welcomed into a community of individuals who help cultivate and inspire success amongst one another. There are a variety of resources and scholarships that are exclusive to members of the Honors Program. The opportunity to work more in-depth with students and faculty has consistently been a motivating factor for students looking to gain the most out of their education and tenure at the University of Iowa. We would love the opportunity to get to know you!

MEET THE WRITERS



Eleanor Abbot

Eleanor is a first-year Statistics major who likes writing, drawing, and taking long walks around campus. She's planning to study abroad later next year.



Mackenzie Anderson

Mackenzie is a first-year from Ames, Iowa studying Health and Human Physiology with hopes of becoming a Physician's Assistant. Other than her passion for studying health she also enjoys doing anything active, drinking way too much coffee, and exploring Iowa City with her friends.



Sonia Beltz

Sonia is a first-year from Beavercreek, Ohio, studying English and Creative Writing. In addition to writing and reading, she enjoys listening to music and spending hours researching European history.



Jenny Cape

Jenny is a first-year from Brookfield, WI, majoring in Biomedical Sciences with a Spanish minor. Besides math and science, she loves playing soccer with her team, listening to different Spotify playlists, and exploring new places.



Thomas Duong

Thomas is a first-year student from Iowa City, IA, with an open major on the pre-medical track. Besides his studies, Thomas is president of UNICEF Iowa and is an undergraduate researcher. He enjoys sports, playing drums, and traveling.



Lydia Guo

Lydia is a first-year student studying Biomedical Sciences and is a design editor for the Honors Newsletter. She works as an undergraduate research assistant focusing on cystic fibrosis and volunteers at the UIHC. In her free time, Lydia enjoys oil painting at her local art studio.



Kyler Johnson

Kyler is a first-year at the University embarking on an English and Creative Writing major with minors in German, Portuguese, and Chinese. Having spent the last year abroad in Belgium, he's happy to be a bit closer to home, hoping with the stories he shares to really connect with his new college community.



Gabbie Meis

Gabbie is a fourth-year studying English and Creative Writing with minors in Spanish and translation. As the honors publication editor and an editor for Fools Magazine, she spends much of her time writing and editing. You can also find her baking and reading alongside her cats and friends.



Airiana Mohr

Airiana is a first-year neuroscience major from Machesney Park, Illinois with minors in chemistry and Spanish. Aside from her studies, Airiana is a member of DSAC (Dean's Student Advisory Committee – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) and UISG. In her free time, Airiana enjoys reading and spending time with her friends.



Kinsey Phipps

Kinsey is a second-year studying English and Creative Writing with minors in Spanish and translation. With a heart for travel, she spent last summer interning in Dublin, Ireland. You probably won't see her without a coffee in hand.



Emily Reinertson

Emily is a second-year with a passion for medicine. She is an honors student studying psychology, and hopes to become an obstetrician in the future. Though she excels in science, she also has a deep love for reading and writing.



Ruby Ney

Ruby, a first-year from Wellman, Iowa, is a double major in international studies and journalism with a minor in Arabic. She loves eating at Masala's lunch buffet, playing with her friend's kittens, and listening to the Hamilton soundtrack.



Jacob Sammon

Jacob is from Urbandale, Iowa, and is a first-year student at the University of Iowa. He is pursuing a major in English and Creative Writing, a minor in Communication Studies, and is on the Publishing Track. He hopes to continue developing his skills as a writer by learning from his dedicated peers and the City of Literature's culture.



Priyanka Srinivasan

Priyanka, a first-year from Bettendorf, IA, is studying health and human physiology on the pre-medicine track with a minor in Spanish. During her free time, she enjoys volunteering at the UI Stead Family Children's Hospital. Apart from this, she likes to dance, travel, play the piano, and spend time with her friends and family.



Oliver Willham

Oliver is a sophomore from West Des Moines, IA, majoring in English and Creative Writing and Cinema. He spends most of his time at the library, writing and reading. Or just drinking the library's smoothies.