

# The Honors College at Oakland



~ Dean's Update

~ Meet our New Staff

~ Ingenuity Program

~ Sample Courses

~ Student Association

~ Making Discoveries

~ Study Abroad

~HC "in the News"

~Upcoming Events

## Dean's Update

### Dear Students, Alumni, Friends of the Honors College,

A warm hello! It is with great pleasure that I am writing to update you on the 2015-2016 year, here in the Honors College.

You'll know from your own experience that things are never dull around the HC! Certainly this past year has captured that feeling very nicely! To begin at the end: this past year saw the largest ever-graduating class in the history of the Oakland University Honors College. 83 seniors completed their HC requirements in spectacular fashion! This was a 32% increase over 2014-2015 graduate numbers – the result of a 4 year retention and graduation strategy that the fine team in the Honors College has brought to fruition.

The 2015-2016 HC Graduation

lunch was held in the new Golf Course Pavilion, overlooking the R&S Sharf Golf Course and Meadow Brook Hall. Though we'd have loved to fit into the Hall itself, the number of graduates and guests simply made that impossible. So we can blame HC student success for the move! Fortunately the Pavilion was a perfect alternative, and the weather offered its support too, with some lovely spring photos of all the newest of Honors College alumni! Following the tradition, we heard over lunch much about what each graduate plans for the future. Suffice to say, there are some wonderful futures ahead for this latest group of Honors College graduates.

Back at the beginning of the year, the Honors College also welcomed its largest ever group of



freshmen (though fall 2016 already looks set to exceed this number). In fall 2015, 321 freshmen joined the Honors College, filling the HC100 Making Discoveries classroom (Dodge Hall 201) to capacity. Along with that, record numbers of students has meant record number of course offerings, a record number of professors teaching for the Honors College and, indeed, a record number of undergraduate research projects,

creative activities and service in the community.

The year saw an increase in available HC travel scholarships, thanks to the further generosity of Walt and Donna Young. You'll read about some of our 2015-2016 travelers here in this newsletter! The experience of studying abroad continues to be a highlight for many Honors College students. These global adventures are regularly communicated to others as HC students are often leaders of OU student organizations, and go out into the community to complete their service. The increase in available scholarship funds via the Young Scholarship will have an immediate, ongoing and positive impact on both the students and all those they meet.

Some of those they will meet include new Honors College staff. Megan Czarnowski, an Honors College alumna and currently a doctoral student here at OU, joined us as a Graduate Assistant in Winter '16 and will continue into the coming Fall. Jason Sckrabulis will be joining us as a second Graduate Assistant in Fall 2016, and continue into Winter 2017. As GAs join us we do say farewell to others, and so now we have welcomed and seen complete their time with us, Beth Gibbs and most recently Ryan Nierman. All our GAs have been making a great contribution to the HC! As we bade farewell to adviser Sandi Powell, joining us also this year were two new advisers, Preeti Gulati and Anne Holtvluwer. Preeti had previously been an advising intern in the HC (along with Sara Henning, who also completed her time with us this past winter). On Preeti's completion of her master's degree she was appointed to her current position. Anne is also a proud OU alumna, and a very welcome addition to the team.

Celebrating the ingeniousness of Honors College students was a feature this year, and will be in the future, because we launched in winter '16 the annual Shinola Ingenuity Awards, sponsored by the innovative Detroit-based Shinola PLC. The two student winners of the inaugural awards – Brian Neumeyer, a Mechanical Engineering major, and Alex Ruhfass, who is a textile artist studying in the Liberal Studies program – exemplify the strength, range and variety of our Oakland University Honors College students and their interests. Each was awarded a selection of Shinola products and was hosted at the Shinola facilities in Detroit. Keeping folks warm inside; indeed, in winter we also held the 2nd Annual Murphy Creative Intersections event, celebrating the contribution of Dr. Brian Murphy to the history and success of the OU Honors College. Brian and family were in attendance. This year's event speaker was Dr. Jon Thompson, a poet and founding editor of *Free Verse: A Journal of Contemporary Poetry & Poetics*. Jon offered a workshop for HC students around the topic of editing and the work of an editor and in the evening read from his latest poetry collection *Landscape with Light* (Shearsman), which combines poetry with a look at classical Hollywood films – a combination that seemed to capture the spirit of Brian's interests very well! Finally, in March we were the site of the inaugural conference of the new National Society for Minorities in Honors (NSFMIH). The focus of this inaugural conference was broadly on topics concerned with the support of diversity, equity and inclusion in college honors programs and honors colleges. Attendees included Honors College/program faculty, Academic Affairs staff, Academic advisers and Admission officers from around the nation.

As the academic year 2015-2016 drew to a close Honors College students returned from presenting at the

annual National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), where they competed for the small number of presentation places against students from hundreds of other institutions, and from the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, & Letters (MASAL) 2016 Conference, held this year at Saginaw State University. At Spring Commencement, the 2016 Matilda R. Wilson Award was awarded to Jacqueline Yee, a political science major and an energetic member of your Honors College. And as the record number of Honors College graduates, wearing their Honors College medallions, crossed the stage they were recognized by Oakland University President, Dr. George Hynd.

As we look forward now toward fall 2016 with great excitement we likewise see just beyond that the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year of the Honors College in 2017. We will be reaching out in the year ahead to our alumni and friends with that anniversary in mind. Along with the 60<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Oakland University, also in 2017, and the 200<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the City of Rochester in 2017 too, the year ahead looks particularly lively! We've already begun some activities, with a unique Rochester (MI) to Rochester (Kent, England) link in place, where students from both cities will be sharing their imaginative stories over the next 12-18 months. Much, much more is ahead, and we'd love you to be part of it! Onward!

Graeme  
Dean Graeme Harper  
Honors College

## MEET OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS

### Preeti Gulati (HC Adviser)



Hi! My name is pronounced “Preethi” and I’m excited to be one of the new Academic Advisers at the Honors College. I have a B.S. in Human Resource Management and an M.A. in counseling, both from Oakland University. I also have certifications in Career Development Facilitating and Teaching English as a Second Language. My specific interests

are career counseling and academic advising in higher education.

I started off in the Honors College as a Graduate Advising Intern, which granted me the opportunity to work in an environment and with a population of great interest to me. I have met many HC students already in advising sessions, informational sessions, workshops or other events on campus. I look forward to meeting and working with them all!

I enjoy reading, watching movies, various expressions of art, through graphic and web design, painting and spending time with friends and family.

### Anne Holtvluwer (HC Adviser)



I am excited to be a part of the Honors College as one of the new Academic Advisers. I have a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from GVSU and Master of Arts in Counseling from OU. I want to motivate students to reach their goals by focusing on their plan, getting involved, and making meaningful connections on-campus. I truly

enjoy career counseling and I strive to assist individuals find their own path by developing their strengths and interests. I advise students to take advantage of all of the wonderful opportunities available on campus to help students develop and meet their personal, academic, and career goals.

Since joining the Honors College, I have met many students and their families at New Student Orientations, Information Sessions and through advising appointments. I look forward to additional opportunities to meet even more!

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends watching sporting events, and traveling. I also like to cook and read whenever I can!

### Megan Czarnowski (Graduate Assistant)



I am a proud graduate of Oakland University and the Honors College as of May 2013. I graduated with a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry as well as a minor in exercise science, and a concentration in pre-medicine. In addition to academics, I am an alumnus of the OU women’s track and cross-country teams. Since graduation, I

completed my graduate certificate of biomedical sciences in May of 2014, and I am currently in my second year of OU’s Doctor of Physical Therapy program. My previous teaching experience was as a teaching assistant for the undergraduate anatomy lab, and I currently team-teach the HC390 Introduction to Thesis class. I will also be team-teaching HC100 as well this fall.

In my free time, I enjoy playing soccer and running. I have completed one half marathon and three full marathons since finishing my collegiate athletic career. I also have a passion for coaching soccer, and I enjoy coaching children of all ages.

### Jason Sckrabulis (Graduate Assistant)



I have always been fascinated with how things work which led me to study Applied Biology at Arizona State University and focus on animal locomotion and quantitative biology. I am now a second-year doctoral student at Oakland University in the Department of Biology. I study host-parasite interactions and how these interactions change with

temperature, pollutants, and resource quality by measuring metabolic parameters, which are the most basic, and mechanistic processes in life. I also incorporate newer, computer-controlled technology in my work (e.g., electronic device design and 3-D printing).

I like to spend my time learning new skills and making whatever is my newest interest. Recent examples include metalwork, drone piloting, and cold-brewed coffee. I am also very involved with Beaumont Children’s Hospital fundraising through an event called Extra Life, a 24-hour video game marathon. I have personally fundraised over \$17,000 in the past 5 years to help kids and families at Beaumont.

## INAUGURAL INGENUITY/INNOVATION PROGRAM

In the fall of 2015, The Honors College initiated the *Ingenuity Program*. The first year's program consisted of a one day event, titled, *The Day at the Improv* as well as a semester long undergraduate course, titled: *Global Creativity*, a design thinking course.

*Day at the Improv* allowed students and industry leaders to immerse themselves into new methods of creativity, ideation, and problem solving. *Global Creativity*, taught Honors College students how to address a local or global problem and turn it into a positive opportunity. Projects, including some with commercial potential include: improving handicap accessibility on OU's campus; a medical dispenser device that addressed addiction issues; and a "theft proof" backpack for travelers. Members from the AndDetroit collaboration mentored students on their projects as well as the OU Incubator Global Business Coach.

In the next year, the program will expand to include Honors College **alumni mentors**. If you would like more information on mentoring a student in the *Ingenuity Program* or serving as a Career mentor, please email: **Dr. Roberta Michel** at [michel@oakland.edu](mailto:michel@oakland.edu). An outreach effort to Honors College alumni mentors will be starting in the Fall, 2016.

My name is Marcell, I am currently an Honors College senior pursuing my bachelor's degree in biology. Registering to attend the Ingenuity and Innovation Program I had no idea what to expect or what the event was about. The ideas were geared toward teamwork development and program-solving techniques using unique means. We participated in a variety of endeavors from lining up in the order of our house numbers (without being able to speak to each other) to creating outrageous stories by building on each other's ideas. Such activities assisted us in developing our teamwork skills and helped us start thinking outside of the box about the ways in which we interact with one another. The biggest take away from this event was the power of the word "and". For example, in one activity goal was to try to improve on an existing item. Each team member told how they wanted to improve it but rather than saying "no" to what the person before you had said, you were told to say "yes, and lets add x, y, and z" to the item as well. This experience shed a new light on what listening to someone's ideas, not saying "no", and saying "yes, and" can do in terms of idea generation and problem solving. This program also provided me with the ability to interact and learn from executives outside of my field, in the automotive industry and has been one of the most memorable events that I have attended through Oakland's Honors College. It gave me new ways to sharpen my current ideas and to create new ones.

**Marcell Brikho: Student Participant, Class of 2017**

"The Ingenuity Program at Oakland University's Honors College is positioned to address a great need for our current and future leaders: Instilling the spirit of innovation. In its inaugural year, it has already shown incredible promise as it collaborated with the AndDetroit Enterprise Innovation Collaborative. Through this partnership, experienced corporate leaders were teamed with millennials in the honors college program to explore the challenges of innovating in established corporations. Together they learned techniques to build off of one another's energies and develop strategic ideas for progress.

As an inaugural ingenuity fellow, I have most enjoyed interacting with the raw energy of these great students. We imagine an expanding program that will continue to pair leaders in corporate innovation with these leaders in the honors college."

**Gregg Garrett**  
CEO & Managing Director  
CSG Advisers



## SAMPLE of our 2015-16 COURSES

HC 201: Art: King Arthur through the Ages

Professor Gania Barlow

HC 207: Formal Reasoning: How do I Know  
What I Know?

Dr. Roberta Michel



**King Arthur &  
Merlin-as-a-Tree**  
By Corey Quigley

Inspired by both T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*, and Gustav Doré's artwork of the Arthurian legends.

In Fall 2015, HC 202 "King Arthur Through the Ages" offered students a chance to "get medieval" by exploring the medieval legends of the Knights of the Round Table not only in their earliest forms, but also through the afterlives of the legends into the twenty-first century. In

class discussions and papers we investigated how the themes of ideal leadership and justice, loyalty and betrayal, tragedy and forgiveness, remained urgent for writers such as Mark Twain and Marian Zimmer Bradley even as those later figures adapted the stories to the particular

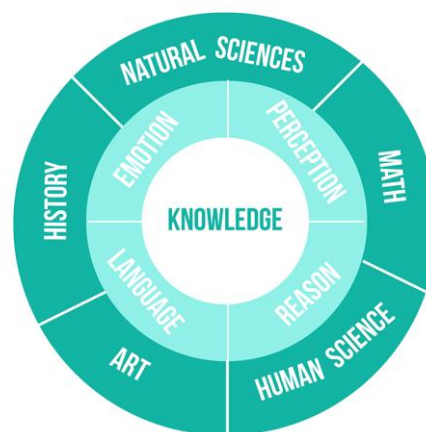
cultures and concerns of their own times. Readings were enlivened by artwork, music, and film clips related to the legends, from John William Waterhouse, to the Camelot Musical, to Monty Python. At the end of the course students made their own contributions to the ongoing life of the legends through creative projects, which ranged from children's books to screen plays, and from charcoal sketches to twitter feeds, in a fascinating collection of imaginative engagements with this foundational story of English literature.

By Ellen Nestor

One of the illustrations from her children's book that added onto the story of *The Once and Future King*



Where does knowledge come from? As a student in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how are you prepared to think and frame the future? These were the overarching questions that eleven HC students explored in Fall '15. Students examined various theories of knowledge, learned how knowledge has been built up over time, and how it is evaluated by individuals and societies. Students learned the connections between academic disciplines and personal thoughts, actions, and methodologies.



They also learned to recognize the way in which culture and societal positions filter the way in which individuals see and interact with the world. Through student led discourse, Socratic circle dialogue, and a formal presentation at Research and Scholarship Days, students learned to recognize, analyze, and discuss their own as well as leading theorists lens on current events. Lastly the question that students were given as the doorway to their future coursework at OU: How are you prepared to think and frame the future?

# HCSA-Honors College Student Association

By: Megan Kabara

The Honors College Student Association has been working hard putting on various fun events for the Honors College community. This year we put together seasonal movie nights for students to come enjoy a snack and watch movies together. The HCSA also branched out to help recruit other organizations to talk at our events. For example, we had a craft night with representatives from the Graham Heath Center to talk about handling stress.



In March, the E-board put on our annual Meet the Professors Night for students to come and mingle with professors who are going to be teaching Honors College classes next year!

Finally, our end of the year game night in Oak View Hall included games and food!

It was another good year for the HCSA and we are excited to continue planning events for the Honors College community.



## 2015-16 HCSA E-BOARD

President: Megan Kabara  
Vice President: Morgan Farrah  
Secretary: Katelyn Pettit  
Treasurer: Kara Olsavsky  
Webmaster: Trevor Evans



# 2015 Freshmen-Making Discoveries

By Nicole Freeman and Ross Miltz

As this year's Dean's Student Fellows for the HC100 course, we are proud to report back on another successful semester. As with every year, the class was revamped around the theme of "Making Discoveries." The nearly 300 students read two books: *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel and *Spare Parts* by Jonathan Davis. We both have two years of Teaching Assistant experience under our belts, so we definitely feel qualified to say that these books were a huge success with students. *Station Eleven* takes a new spin on dystopia through the intersections themes like identity and survival. *Spare Parts* retells the story of a high school robotics team from an underprivileged community competing against the country's top universities in a national competition. The messages of both texts resonated with the students and led to more fun assignments, including the "robot building" contest that saw each small group dress their Teaching Assistants up as mechanical objects.

In addition to the texts, we were able to bring in many guest speakers into the large lecture sessions that provided the class with valuable outsider insights. Highlights of the semester included Sheilah Clay, President and COO of the Neighborhood Service Organization. Her combination of experiences, which includes an appointment to the Chicago Federal Reserve Board, and passion for her career as an advocate for marginalized communities around Detroit left a great impression on the students.

Students in HC100 were also lucky enough to see a production of *The Explorers Club* when it played this



season at Meadowbrook Theater here at OU. The interesting play was filled with the type of slapstick comedy that never seems to get old. Each small group also participated in OU's Make a Difference Day, in which they worked with local organizations in community service endeavors. Our hope is that these activities begin to build a sense of service in Honors College

students that they carry throughout their careers with us.

On a personal note, this is both of our final years working with HC100. We have nothing but wonderful memories of being students in the class and then taking the steps join the mission of the Honors College as Teaching Assistants. Our selection as the class's Dean's Student Fellows is a massive honor and a privilege. We are immensely grateful for the opportunities we've received through our involvement with the Honors College and HC100 and wish Karen, Dr. Harper, and the rest of the hardworking staff continued success into the future!



## Study Abroad

### Palma de Mallorca Spain

Joe Grzywacz



In the summer of 2015 I spent a month in Palma de Mallorca Spain, which is the capital of a chain of islands off the mainland. During my time abroad, I studied marine biology with students all across the United States, practiced my language skills, explored an island paradise, and learned about the Spanish culture by living with a host family. My everyday

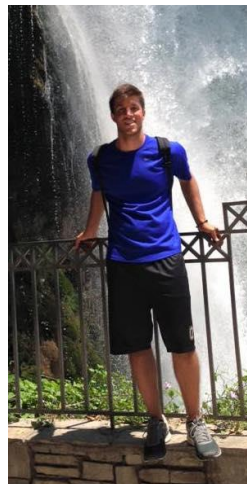
class varied from going to the beach and snorkeling with my professor to visiting an aquatic lab to study different species of crab. Some material was taught similar to a traditional class, but the ocean was our true classroom. I was taught by one of the leading scientists in the Mediterranean and I learned so much in such a small period of time. I truly loved my experience and could not have asked for a better destination, host family, or program. I highly recommend studying abroad! See the world while you can and learn something while you are doing it! You will not have another opportunity like this again so do not let it slip away! (P.S. ask Karen about how the Honors College will help fund your trip!)



Palma Cathedral

### Greece

Alexander Bageris



Last summer I studied abroad in Greece for a month and it was truly a life changing experience. I attended the American College Thessaloniki where I lived with other students from all over the U.S as well as other countries. My professor was awesome and was passionate about taking our learning out of the classroom and having us see and experience as much as possible.

History is all around you in Greece. We visited the ruins in Athens, toured museums, churches and monasteries throughout the countries. We also travelled to Istanbul, Turkey, which was an incredible place as well. I swam in Greece's clear blue water and hiked in the mountains. The people were friendly and helpful and being the foodie that I am, I was definitely in my element! Studying abroad definitely took me out of my comfort zone in the best way.

Finally, I would like to thank the Honors College and the Young family for helping make this experience a reality.



Mount Olympus



## Honors College Graduate Reception



### 2015- 2016 Graduates

Shereen Abunada  
Marie Adams  
Ziyad Al Obaidi  
Mirna Awrow  
Derek Behlow  
Miranda Belcher  
Tiffany Bellomo  
Marcella Bolen  
Taylor Born  
Cullen Callaghan  
Caroline Cencer  
Marisa Cervantes  
Michael Culver  
Courtney Cutler  
Camryn DeLooff  
Amith Diwakar  
Nicole Ensink  
Holly Ernst  
Mason Geno  
Jamie George  
Derrik Germain  
Kathleen Gorkiewicz

Catherine Graves  
Sarah Grimmer  
Joseph Grzywacz  
Monica Hable  
Haniya Halim  
Farha Hanif  
Louise Haven  
Jessica Hovey  
Anna Jahshan  
Mitchell Johnson  
Vincenzo Julian  
Rita Kassab  
Michael Kernan  
Kendall Kosikowski  
Molly Kosnak  
Kelsey Kuhl  
Kimberly Kushner  
Walter Lashar  
Alexis Leach  
Holly Lustig  
Laila Malki  
Tayler Mandziara

Katie Martin  
Matthew McClure  
Kaitlin McNeil  
Matthew Michalewicz  
Ross Miltz  
Tudor Moldovan  
Khayriyyah  
Muhammadsmith  
Drake Mullett  
Meghan Murley  
Samantha Nagy  
Benjamin Nold  
Candice Novinski  
Kara Olsavsky  
Alexis Parchell  
Ruth Paula  
Alex Petrovici  
Katelyn Pettit  
Aws Polina  
Alexander Poznanski  
Nicole Redko  
Chelsea Ringl

Rachael Ross  
Danielle Roy  
Afrah Saeed  
Andrea Saluzzo  
Ellen Searle  
Hannah Sells  
Manan Sevak  
Leah Slazinski  
Rachel Smith  
Rebecca Smith  
Amanda Sosnowski  
Rebecca Starke  
Mikaela Strech  
Mary Suriano  
Laura Tack  
John Tufnell  
Nicholas Walter  
Marguerite Wasinski  
Craig Yanuszeski  
Jacqueline Yee  
Jermyn Yohanan

# Honors College “in the News”

## OU Honors College Continues to grow, attract top students

For the second consecutive year, Oakland Universities Honors College welcomed a record number of freshmen to its ranks. This year's class is remarkable not only because of its size-300 students-but also because of its strong academic profile. Nearly 40 percent of its members are Presidential Scholars-students who achieved at least a 3.9 GPA and an ACT score of 31 or above while in high school



### Shinola Ingenuity Awards:

Alexa Ruhfass & Brian Neumeyer were recognized for showing exceptional ingenuity outside the classroom and each received awards sponsored by Shinola, the Detroit-based company known for its handcrafted products, including watches, bicycles and leather goods

## Honors College launches first Honors Inclusion Conference

The three-day event was geared toward university faculty, admissions officers, academic advisers, honors program staff, graduate students, high school teachers and others interested in enhancing inclusivity in honors education nationwide.



### Jaclyn Yee wins prestigious Wilson Award

“Yee is one of those rare students “who have the intellect and humility and dedication to helping others in need and commitment to public service within the context of government and in their daily lives as citizens.”

## Katie Aleck and Rita Kassab Present at National Conference of Undergraduate Research

NCUR is one of the oldest and most respected conferences held annually for the purpose of supporting and disseminating undergraduate research.



### Zack Thomas and Anders Engnell to lead Student Congress this coming year

With the motto “Serving Students First,” Zack and Anders won the recent student body election.





# IMPORTANT DATES

July 5	Summer II Classes Began	Nov. 24-25	Thanksgiving Recess
Aug. 31	Freshmen Orientation Part 2 (check your email in mid August for details)	Nov. 23, 30 & Dec. 12	Final HC 100 Presentations (3:30-5:15 Parents invited)
Sept. 1	Fall Classes Begin	Dec. 5	Fall Classes End
Sept. 5	Labor Day Recess		



- **INFORMATION:** Explore The Honors College website <http://www.oakland.edu/hc/>
- **ARRANGE A VISIT, SEND AN UPDATE, or VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME,** or be added to our **EMAIL LIST** to our you can contact us by email [hc@oakland.edu](mailto:hc@oakland.edu) or phone (248-370-4450)
- **MAKE A DONATION** to the Honors College, its programs and/or scholarships.

**ALUMNI: ARCHIVE your HC THESIS** on Kresge Library's website:  
[hour.oakland.edu](http://hour.oakland.edu) \* For help contact Karen at [conn@oakland.edu](mailto:conn@oakland.edu)



**Thank you for your time. We hope you enjoyed this newsletter and we look forward to seeing many of you in September!**

**The Honors College Staff**