



HONORS COLLEGE

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



GREETINGS

Welcome to the second issue of the Hillcrest Club Alumni Newsletter! We hope you are remaining well and healthy during these challenging times. With the COVID-19 pandemic still impacting ways to engage, the Honors College has transitioned to primarily virtual events. We hope you enjoy hearing about all of the exciting things happening within the Honors College and ways for alumni engagement.

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JOIN THE HILLCREST CLUB ADVISORS

If you graduated from the JMU Honors Program or the JMU Honors College in the last 10 years, the Hillcrest Club is for YOU! The purpose of Hillcrest Club is to help young alumni invest their time and talent back to current Honors College students in a meaningful way. All Honors alumni from the Class of 2010 to the Class of 2020 are already members of the Hillcrest Club - there are no additional membership requirements to join.

The Hillcrest Club is represented by the Hillcrest Club Advisors, a group of diverse, enthusiastic young alumni. If you are interested in serving as a Hillcrest Club Advisor, we are interested in hearing from you. We are looking for accomplished, talented, career-oriented and engaged Honors alums, less than 10 years out from graduation, who want to be JMU Honors insiders and ambassadors to their young alumni peers. We kicked-off the Hillcrest Club Advisors in the spring of 2020 and are now looking for our second cohort of Hillcrest Club Advisors to begin in early winter 2021.

[Apply here!](#)



MADISON HONORS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATE

Professional Development, Chaired by Marina George:

MHLC's Professional Development committee has been working hard this semester to provide opportunities to Honors students. We are a new committee but have put on two events with strong turnout. One of our events connected students in the process of applying to graduate schools with alumni, while the other introduced potential honors students to what the Honors college is and provided insight for them and their parents to understand what we do. Overall, we may be getting on our feet right now, but we, as a committee and an organization, are committed to creating opportunities for Honors students to learn and engage with our alumni network in order to move further in their post-graduate plans.

Service, Chaired by Kiera Schwarz:

Our biggest focus this semester is fundraising for the United Way. Alumni can either donate directly to Dr. Davis (@MHLC-JMU on Venmo with the title "Donation for United Way") or by participating in our Tik Tok for United Way challenge ([here](#)). United Way does amazing work to connect Harrisonburg's ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) population with lifesaving resources, as well as providing grants to small, local nonprofits. MHLC is also making cards for pediatric oncology residents and working with the Smithsonian doing digital transcription. You can see other ways MHLC is serving the community [here](#).



2019-2020 Madison Honors Leadership Council

RECENT HONORS EVENTS



Pictured Above: An Honors student studies on Hillcrest lawn.

Student programming continues to be exciting in the Honors College, even in a virtual world. Recordings of select virtual Honors programs are available to watch on demand at this [link](#). Here are quick updates on a sampling of our program offerings:

- Honors is in the midst of a busy season of admissions recruitment, and Honors Ambassadors made themselves available the entire month of October during drop-in Zoom sessions and 1:1 conversations with prospective students.
- All incoming Honors students completed a common reading this summer, the book *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – and Why Things are Better Than You Think*. We additionally hosted two Factfulness sessions on applied topics, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. We were excited to feature Honors alumnus Dr. Craig Ramseyer ('09), assistant professor of geography at Virginia Tech, as our guest presenter for the climate change program.
- The Toolbox Workshop series continues to offer our student the “soft skills” they need to succeed. Topics this semester have included: The College Classroom Experience, Balancing Transitions, Online Professionalism, Demystifying Graduate School, and Challenging Conversations. Toolbox Workshops are great opportunities for Honors to build campus connections, as well as to feature alumni presenters. If you're interested in presenting a particular topic, please reach out to Dr. Alysia Davis at davis4am@jmu.edu.
- A variety of additional programs are being offered that allow students the chance to spend time together. TEDTalk Tuesday programs focus on messages of resilience for students, and fun programs include monthly trivia nights, movie nights, and drop-in programs at Hillcrest House for students to get fun treats and do craft programs to de-stress and relax.

JMU HONORS PARTNERS WITH UVA'S BATTEN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY & LEADERSHIP

The Honors College is excited to announce a partnership with the UVA Batten School for current Honors students AND alumni interested in pursuing graduate study in Public Policy & Leadership. Exclusive JMU Honors benefits include admission application fee waivers and guaranteed fellowships upon admission into the Batten School. If you'd like to learn more, check out this program [recording](#) featuring remarks by Jeff Chidester, Executive Director of External Affairs at the Batten School.



HONORS CAPSTONE PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS



JMU SCHOLARLY COMMONS

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Honors College students who complete written Capstone projects have their work available for public consumption through the [JMU Scholarly Commons](#).

GRACE LLOYD, NURSING: My Nursing Honors Capstone project is titled "Bridging Medical Services and Underserved Populations in Harrisonburg." As nurses, we are concerned with the healthcare patients receive both in and outside of the hospital. We recognized a deficit in education and resources for the population of Harrisonburg. We are partnering with The Gus Bus, a local literacy initiative, to reach out to the community and provide information to improve their health literacy.

LAUREN ALEXANDER, PSYCHOLOGY: My Honors capstone project centers on a hypothesis that I have developed while working in the Psychology Department's Social Relationships Lab with Dr. David Szwed. In this lab, we examine data collected through part of the Kliff-Vida Project, an adolescence research group run by Dr. Joseph Allen at the University of Virginia. This is a longitudinal study of 184 adolescents and their peers that are tested on a variety of measures that help show how the relationships and interactions they have can predict their future behaviors. From this study, I have chosen to focus on adolescent peer pressure, specifically negative pressuring behaviors that lead teens to participate in substance use. Using the statistics program SAS to analyze the data, I am currently testing my hypotheses that parental and psychological control will act as predictors of adolescents' negative influence behaviors. I am now working in the lab to analyze the data and find significant conclusions so that I can create a fully developed Honors Thesis.

HUY NGUYEN, ENGINEERING: My Honors capstone project focuses on evaluating industrial hemp's potential for heavy metal phytoremediation. Phytoremediation is using plant-based technologies to clean up soils and groundwater that are contaminated, in this project's case, by heavy metals. To do this, the project is separated into three phases. The first is to design an environmental growth chamber so that I can grow the hemp samples indoors and adjust the environmental conditions (light, humidity, and temperature). The second phase is to cultivate the hemp samples in the growth chamber and intentionally contaminate the soils with various heavy metal solutions. The third phase is to harvest the samples and test them to see how much of and where the samples are located within the different parts of the plant.

THE HONORS ADVANTAGE

THIS SECTION OF THE NEWSLETTER IS DESIGNED TO HIGHLIGHT A DIFFERENT UNIQUE PERK OF BEING A JMU HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT EVERY ISSUE.

THE FOCUS TODAY: PRIORITY ENROLLMENT.

Did you know that all JMU Honors students get priority enrollment? Priority enrollment allows Honors College students to choose their classes prior to most other students in their same year. Being able to enroll in classes early helps ensure that Honors students get into all the classes they need to satisfy their graduation requirements on time.

"Priority enrollment was a huge perk for me and helped me graduate when I wanted to," shared recent alum Sophia Laila Cabana. "I almost always got into the classes I wanted to take, which made it easier to pursue a double-major and form meaningful relationships with my professors. It also took some of the stress out of enrollment season because I could go into my enrollment appointment feeling confident that I'd get into the classes I needed."

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WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED

Please Be Part of the Honors Symposium Audience:

Honors is excited to offer the virtual Honors Symposium to be held via Zoom on Friday, December 11 at 12:00 p.m. The session will last approximately an hour and a half. The Honors Symposium showcases academic research and creative scholarship by JMU Honors students. We have seven students lined up to share their unique research areas, with diverse topics ranging from leadership to nursing and climate change. Each presenter will share their research in a brief presentation, and audience members will be able to participate in a Q&A. If you are interested in joining as part of the audience, please RSVP no later than December 9.

Have news to share with the Honors College alumni community?

Please fill out this form to be included in the next newsletter.

The Honors College Kitchen:

The Honors College compiled quick and easy recipes for young professionals into our very own cookbook! This is a collection of yummy recipes from Honors College students, alumni, faculty, staff, friends, and family. Check it out here.

ALYSIA DAVIS, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Contact Alysia Davis with any questions or if you are looking for engagement opportunities! She can be reached at davis4am@jmu.edu.

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