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Wood Honors College Staff

Director: Dr. Kim Klein, kmklei@ship.edu
Assistant Director: Dr. Luis Melara, lamelara@ship.edu
Secretary: Ms. Cindy Poe, cmpoe@ship.edu

Connect With Us

Website: www.ship.edu/honors
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Cover Photo by Madison Cosey, Honors Sophomore
When I was in middle school, I dreamed of becoming a “famous novelist”—this is in quotes because that’s what I used to tell people. I had a heck of a lot of passion for the craft. I spent nearly all of my free time writing R-rated Transformers fan fiction—these stories died with the hard drive, thank the Lord—and reading, much to my mother’s chagrin, the old-school Stephen King horror novels. I didn’t have many friends, so on the weekends, I had my parents pretend to be Charlie Rose and interview me about the “stunning debut bildungsroman” that I hadn’t even written yet.

What I possessed in passion, I lacked in perceivable skill. My plots were mostly rip-offs of the original Star Wars Trilogy. If I didn’t know how to end a story, I’d just reveal that the antagonist was the protagonist’s father the whole time. I also used waaaay too much profanity in my dialogue—not just for a twelve-year-old kid, but for any writer. Seven f-words in one sentence is just a tad over the top. Less is more! Nevertheless, my passion overshadowed—shielded me from—the fact that I was a black hole of talent. I was convinced I would win a Pulitzer before I graduated high school.

You can imagine the consciousness-ending shock I experienced when my seventh grade ELA teacher—Mrs. Hoover—gave me an A- on my first narrative writing piece in her class. I thought that thing was my magnum opus. I approached Mrs. Hoover after the period to argue the case for my piece’s “inherent cosmic genius,” but before I could jump into my spiel, she said, “Luke, you could get pretty good at this if you put some work into it. Come to my room tomorrow during lunch, and we’ll talk.”

So, I did. And I still remember what Mrs. Hoover taught me the first time I ate lunch in her room. She told me that you can’t switch tenses in the middle of a story without good reason. It creates “narrative incoherence.” I had switched tenses several dozen times in my opus without even realizing it. Her constructive criticism was incredibly hard to swallow—it required me to shift my perspective on myself and the world—but the feeling of knowing I was getting better made the sting of failure worth it. The best mentorships are tough and then infinitely rewarding. I began eating lunch in Mrs. Hoover’s room every Friday afternoon. She pushed me, molded me, started me on a lifelong path of getting better at writing. I think the only reason I’m writing in this newsletter today—boy oh boy, I still have so much to learn—is because of Mrs. Hoover’s mentorship from over a decade ago.

In these pages, you’ll find stories of some of the Wood Honors College’s Mrs. Hoovers—mentors that change lives, mentors that last, mentors that give up their peaceful lunchtime to help their mentees. Mentorship is one of the cornerstones of what we do here, and everywhere I’ve turned over the past four years, I’ve been met with mentors of the highest, truest “inherent cosmic genius.” We have the mentor-mentee program through which every first-year student is paired with a junior or senior in the same major. Mentors push their mentees to get involved on campus, and they respond to late-night texts from their mentees about scheduling, essays due in six hours, the best place in town to buy ear plugs to drown out the sound of a roommate’s snoring, anything. We also have some of the finest faculty mentors on the planet. The Honors professors tell us the truth even when it’s not what we want to hear. They connect us to amazing opportunities. With their guidance, we are always getting better and inching ever closer to our career and life goals. We also have a vast network of Honors alumni dedicated to making this program as good as it can be.

Honors mentorship has grown, even flourished, amid the coronavirus pandemic. Sure, our meetings have moved to Zoom, but the challenges and rewards of Honors mentorship are as dynamic as ever. Read on to meet our Mrs. Hoovers.
Thoughts From a Mentor: Luke

The Honors Mentor-Mentee Program is pivotal. So pivotal, in fact, that I texted my mentor—Rachel Smith—two weeks ago about grad school options. She graduated from SU a year and a half ago, and I’ve had two rounds of mentees myself. This program can form bonds that last well beyond the four years of undergrad. I want to be as good of a mentor for my mentees as Rachel was for me, but I fail at this goal daily.

I met my mentees for this year—Emily and Hannah—over Zoom. I’m awkward meeting people face-to-face, so you can just imagine the painful virtual silences that took place at my behest. We fought through the first-meeting blues and bonded over conversations about great high school teachers and the election. The weekly Zoom chats we had were always moments of reprieve amid the onslaught of the semester.

What my mentors soon figured out is that I’m much better at responding on Zoom than I am over text (I always respond eventually—it sometimes just takes me a bit). Oftentimes, when I do respond, my answer is “Darn IDK.” I can only hope that I haven’t done irreparable damage to Emily and Hannah (they’re both incredibly bright—they will soar like eagles). I’ve learned as much from failing to be a good mentor as I did from mentee-ing. I’ve learned that leadership isn’t about having all the answers; it’s about being able to find the answers when you need them. Our text convos didn’t end with my “Darn IDKs.” Emily, Hannah, and I worked together to discover the secrets of SU and the universe. I’ve learned that enthusiasm and an eagerness to help can go far when you have no idea what the cuss you’re doing. I’ve learned that texting is Gen Z’s preferred mode of communication, whether it makes me want to scream at the clouds or not.

The Mentor-Mentee Program glues the Wood Honors College together. It creates a culture of unity, not a culture of competition. It promotes admitting defeat when you don’t know what to do (this isn’t most Honors students’—my—strength). It pushes us to push each other to always be our best selves. Emily and Hannah—thanks for making me better.

My name is Luke Hershey, and I’m so proud and so lucky to call myself a mentor-mentee.

Luke Hershey (upper-right ghost) and his two mentees, Hannah Borkenhagen and Emily Dziennik (upper-left and lower ghost, respectively), reigning champions of the Honors Mentor-Mentee Photo Contest.

Thoughts From a Mentee: Emily

Luke and I started off our relationship with him asking me about my favorite music and telling me that he would do his best to help me during my time at Ship. I remember him asking me if I was a “worrier” and if there was anything he could do to help—to which I responded yes, I worry about everything.

Quickly, Luke became someone that I could ask my random questions and, even if he didn’t know the answer, he could direct me to someone who did. Hannah (his second mentee—my good friend and roommate) and I definitely bothered him late into the night sometimes, panicking about random things like scheduling or how tall he actually is, and he never once let us down or admitted how annoying we were probably being.

As a freshman in college, I think everything can be scary. It can be incredibly intimidating to show up to a campus filled with people who look and act like adults when you feel like you are still so much of a child. Having a mentor bridged that gap for me. The mentor-mentee program gave me a resource that helped me to understand that while college can be scary, it can also be so much fun when you make the most of it.

I can appreciate that there are times mentors are worried they are guiding us in the wrong direction or giving us the wrong information, but I think Luke and all of the other mentors should realize that we could never blame them for making a mistake—after all, they’re the ones who taught us that even if someone looks and acts like an adult who has everything figured out, they definitely don’t. And that’s totally okay.

If I were to give any advice to an incoming student, I would encourage them to also reach out to their mentor and form a relationship; it can make college a lot less scary, and a little more fun.

To conclude this little response, here is a quote from Hannah Borkenhagen herself: “Luke’s an idiot. But that shows us that we can be idiots and be good students, too.”

By Luke Hershey, Honors Senior and Emily Dziennik, Honors First-Year
Commuter Committee

When a few other Honors students and I decided to form a committee to bridge the gap between commuter and resident students, we never thought we’d be facing all the challenges of committee startup amidst a global pandemic. We knew at the beginning of Spring 2020 that the Honors College needed a group devoted to 1) providing resources to commuter students and 2) utilizing commuters’ knowledge of the local area to make Ship feel more like home for resident students. However, by spring break, the Honors Commuter Committee’s mission had expanded, as the COVID-19 pandemic essentially made a “commuter” out of pretty much everyone.

With plans like a carpool schedule and van tours of nearby cities scrapped, we redirected our efforts towards a commuter-themed blog. The Dorm-less Diary was originally intended to be a platform to share thoughts and resources relevant to students who drive to campus every day (with topics like music and podcast recommendations, where to hang out on campus between classes, etc.). But as classes moved to Zoom and students began working from homes/residence halls, we broadened our range of topics in response to the new circumstances. As “study hacks for working from home” became relevant to all students, the purpose of our “Commuter” Committee became mentoring students who were used to being on campus most of the time as they adapted to the college lifestyle we commuters were already accustomed to.

As everyone knows all too well by now, the state of the pandemic changes rapidly, and there has been a constant waffling between calm and chaos. In the times of the semester where chaos prevailed, our committee took solace in meeting weekly on Zoom to discuss new blog post ideas and just enjoy the “laidbackness” of each other’s company, as Jeremy (one of our blog’s certified foodies) described it. But in the calm times where it was reasonably safe to meet outdoors, we were blessed to be able to host a couple socially-distanced events where we really bonded as a committee. From our Outdoor Game Night at the SRC Pavilion (hands-down the most wild game of Pictionary I’ve ever taken part in) to our Halloween trip to Gettysburg (I don’t eat many sandwiches, but that open-faced Rueben from the Dobbin House Tavern was QUALITY), some of the most enjoyable times I’ve had throughout quarantine have been with this awesome group of Honors students.

You could say that nothing this semester looked like we thought it would. But I’m not so sure—I always imagined college as a place where I can be mentored by those wiser than me and mentor those who need my wisdom; a place where resources are shared to ensure that everyone who wants to succeed can; and a place where schoolwork is tough, but good friends and fun times make the hard work a little less hard. And even in what feels like a dystopian world, that’s exactly the kind of college experience the Honors Commuter Committee is contributing to.

Head to www.dormlessdiary.blogspot.com to read our blog posts!

Music & Podcast Recommendations (Madison Cosey, Co-Chair)
Study Hacks at Home (Shianne Reaves, Co-Chair)
Food Reviews (Jeremy Satyawan Putra & Matthew Morine)
Literature Reviews (Ashleigh Kennedy)
Top 10 Lists (Christian Spitler & Madeline Cardinale, Co-Chair)

Matthew Morine, Allyson Ritchey, Madison Cosey, and Jeffrey Grimes in downtown Gettysburg on the Commuter Committee’s Halloween trip, which included food, history, and a spooky ghost tour.

Commuter Committee

By Madeline Cardinale, Honors Junior

Outdoor Game Night was the perfect fall event, complete with phone-flashlight-water-bottle lanterns.
Faculty Mentorship

When I came to Ship, I came to be a Computer Science faculty member. As our programs have grown, I’ve been able to focus on Software Engineering—and as our programs have grown, so have I. Like most faculty at Ship, I came here because I really wanted to teach. I enjoy sharing the beauty of Software Engineering, but, more importantly, I really like knowing that lighting that joy in students gives them great opportunities for a strong future where they can have a big impact on the world.

When I started, I knew I needed to be able to teach technical skills, and I was a little intimidated about having to talk to students as an advisor about their career aspirations. What I didn’t know is that being a faculty member gives me the potential to teach so much more. It took me a while to notice that, when students share their struggles in my classes, if I take the time to listen, students will take suggestions and try new things. That gave me the opportunity to coach skills like time management and study skills. Then, if I keep the conversation with a student open over time, we both can share other life experiences and learn from each other. Reaching out to keep in touch when the students aren’t in my classes only takes a minute, but it keeps those conversations alive throughout the time a student is at Ship, and it gives me the possibility of building relationships with students that I will remember forever.

I have seen the power faculty members can have by building these relationships. Students who come to us struggling can thrive. And if you ask most Ship students, I bet they can list multiple faculty members who they have had these mentoring relationships with. So, when we went remote last spring, it was really important to me to find ways to continue having these conversations even though students would never walk into my office and I wouldn’t see them hanging out in our labs.

I guess I’m lucky because, in the Software Engineering Department, our students were ready to rely on the technology for our classes and we could leverage some technology we already had in place to stay in contact with each other. In the School of Engineering, we use a Discord server to create a discussion area for every class and activity.

The Software Engineering students have really embraced this and built a community there, and Discord’s direct messaging features have made it so much easier for a student to ask me a question. They essentially text me, my phone rings, and I text them back. I’ve been surprised how many times a single text response from me will get the student over a hurdle. If a conversation is necessary, we can jump into a Zoom room, we can share a screen, and we can fix whatever is making them struggle. This leads to LOTS of short, targeted conversations and a few longer interactions—both types of conversations which help students succeed.

This fall, still remote, I worried about creating relationships with my freshmen, so I required them to be on our Discord server and send me text messages. That worked better than office hours have ever worked. In hindsight, I realize that those short conversations with quick responses are so much easier for students than having to trudge across campus to my office. When we get back to being fully on campus, I’ll be using the things I’ve learned from being remote, and the relationships with my students will continue to be the highlight of my job at Ship.

Dr. Wellington, also known as "Merlin" among her students, is a Software Engineering professor and the Director of the School of Engineering.
Alumni Mentorship: Angela Berkosky  
By Luke Hershey

Angela Berkosky has, like millions of others, been working from home since the spring, but she says she doesn’t mind it. No, she can’t go into the office and meet her clients face-to-face, which is one of her favorite parts of the job. However, now that her work is just “ten steps from the kitchen”—her home has been transformed into an office, a school, a restaurant—she gets to spend more time with her two stepdaughters.

Angela is the Chief Investment Officer at Domani Wealth, an independent firm that offers investment management and wealth advisory services in Lancaster, PA. She leads a team of seven people who implement and monitor investment portfolios and do research on the market for Domani’s clients. Zoom has become pivotal to this work amid the pandemic, but the clients seem to like the ease of virtual meetings. The markets are churning more than ever, so Angela’s daily hustle and bustle is at an all-time high. Before this life of mutual funds, bears, and bulls, Angela was an undergrad at Shippensburg University in the Honors Program.

Angela, a native of the Lancaster area, was first drawn to Shippensburg University because of its idyllic campus and the Grove College of Business. She heard about the Honors Program after she’d already committed to the school and decided to join for the different classes and the camaraderie that came along with them. Honors at SU has changed so much in the last three decades. When Angela was an undergrad—she graduated in 1996—the Honors Program had a fraction of the students it has today, and study abroad and scholarship opportunities were few and far between. There wasn’t an Honors capstone project. There wasn’t an Honors Symposium.

There weren’t opportunities to participate in Honors conferences. Nevertheless, Angela enjoyed her time in the Honors Program because it “allowed [her] to be part of a group.” She also credits the Honors Program with teaching her pivotal soft skills like leadership and collaboration. Angela said, “You don’t study in a vacuum. You don’t do your job in a vacuum. The Honors Program taught me how to work well with others, and I’m using that skill every single day.”

Dr. Klein asked Angela to join the Honors College Alumni Advisory Council in the fall of 2019, and she’s enjoyed taking part in the council’s Zoom conversations about mentorship. Angela attributes a big portion of her success in life and her career to a handful of incredible mentors, but she’s long since transcended mentee-ism to become an incredible mentor herself at Domani. She offered several nuggets of mentorship wisdom that we’d all do well to heed. She said, “Mentorship is one of the most important tools throughout your career. Mentors can get you in touch with great resources. They can help you with technical skills and soft skills, and they’ll be there for you when you face critical decisions.”

“Mentorship is one of the most important tools throughout your career. . . . [Mentors] can help you with technical skills and soft skills, and they’ll be there for you when you face critical decisions.”

To aspiring mentors, Angela said this: “It’s important to remember that mentors are guides. They’re not there to give away all the answers. Offer resources. Don’t just tell your mentees what to do.”

To people seeking mentors, Angela said this: “Mentors aren’t just people you work with. Anyone can be a mentor. Always be on the lookout. Be sure to keep a diverse crew of mentors.”

We’d like to say a huge “thank you” to Angela for her continued investment in the success of Honors students. Her work and words of wisdom are an inspiration to all. Her connection to mentorship is something we’d like to emulate here in the Honors College on a macro scale.

The Honors College has a massive network of amazing, talented alumni, which serves as a reminder that Harley Hall is truly a gateway to anywhere our students want to go.
Honors and the Pandemic

By Honors Students and Faculty

Honors Read

"Like many other clubs, COVID impacted Honors Read by forcing us to move completely online. We did this by finding online resources for the passages we wanted to read and then would have a discussion over Zoom. We were able to still have some awesome discussions over Zoom, as well as have fun events such as book trivia."

~ Allison Zaremba, Honors Read Co-Chair

The Honors Read Committee hosting their first online Book Trivia event.

Honors Classes

"Teaching was surprisingly wonderful this fall. My Honors classes were able to meet outside for almost the entire semester because the weather stayed mild. I was inspired by how much all of us seemed to value each other and the course because we were aware of how fortunate the opportunity to have it was, given the times."

~ Dr. Christine Senecal, Honors Professor

The Honors Read Committee hosting their first online Book Trivia event.

Honors Ambassadors

"It’s been a lot different this year but we’ve adapted by communicating with prospective students over Zoom to try and get as much of an in-person experience as possible. We’ve also prioritized phone calls, which have been really successful and we’ve had a lot of great conversations with prospective students!"

~ Jamie Smith, Honors Ambassadors Co-Chair

Honors students during their outdoor Honors First-Year seminar class taught by Dr. Senecal.

Activities Committee

"Depending on what the overall climate and the co-chairs’ attitudes about COVID have been, we have planned activities to suit. In the fall, we did a virtual pumpkin carving that encouraged Honors students to carve a pumpkin and submit their pictures anonymously. We have decided to stick with the virtual for this winter, which is great because we can do activities during the break, which to my knowledge had never been done."

~ Ellie Piper, Activities Committee Co-Chair

The Co-Chairs of the Honors Ambassadors hold their first virtual information session at an online Ship Open House.

Madeleine Davis won the Activities Committee's virtual pumpkin carving contest with this Zoom-themed pumpkin.
The Honors College LLC has held true to our values of academic excellence, service, community, involvement, diversity, and sustainability throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: ensuring a safe environment for all, while meeting almost entirely in-person. Despite barriers to our ‘normal,’ we ‘enjoyed the journey’ and adapted through some hybrid programs and a more small-group-based experience."

~ Chase Slenker, Honors LLC RA

**Commuter Committee**

"Since I’m a freshman, for me the semester was less about adapting to the pandemic and more about adapting to all of college. Even so, I think the Commuter Committee helped with both."

~ Matthew Morine, Commuter Committee Member and Blogger

**Alumni Relations Committee**

"We haven’t been able to hold our normal in-person events with alumni speakers, but we’ve been hard at work coordinating with alumni for virtual sessions, as well as developing an Honors alumni mentoring program that can be accessed entirely through virtual means. It’s certainly been different, but we’re doing our best to create opportunities for current students to connect with alumni safely."

~ Spencer Hood, Alumni Relations Committee Co-Chair

"It was both surreal and joyful to see such terrific faces of my former Honors students, and to hear about their various life adventures!"

~ Dr. Christine Senecal, Honors Alumni Trivia Night Host

**Service Committee**

"The Service Committee started the semester off by teaming up with the Environmental Committee to lead a Rail Trail cleanup. We also did a passive service project later in the semester where we collected cards and books to give to the local nursing home. Despite being somewhat restricted in our service to the campus and community, holding our projects outside and having projects where people didn’t need to meet up at one time were great ways to engage the Honors College amidst the pandemic."

~ Chris Higgins, Service Committee Co-Chair
Dr. José G. Ricardo-Osorio joined the Department of Global Languages and Cultures in 2005. He is a firm believer in hands-on learning, especially when the learning takes place in a multicultural context.

In 2010, he was invited to participate in Reach Out as a curricular advisor as well as a language translator. His first trip to the Dominican Republic afforded him with the opportunity to see Ship students immersed in quality hands-on learning and most importantly, learning through service. From that moment on, he continues to support Reach Out.

The Dr. José G. Ricardo-Osorio Honorary Endowment, established by Mr. Timothy Long in honor of Dr. Ricardo-Osorio, provides access for Ship students to experience first-hand service learning and can be used to support student travel and other expenses associated with Reach Out. Funds are available for 2020-2021.

Dr. Kim Klein, Director of the Wood Honors College, noted, "In the decade that has passed since the founding of the Reach Out project, I have been continually impressed by the commitment of our students and faculty advisors. Mr. Long's gift in honor of Dr. Ricardo-Osorio will multiply the project's impact on Shippensburg and Dominican students for years to come."

Consider Establishing an Endowment

Endowments provide scholarships, research, national and international travel, and service-learning opportunities for students. If you are interested in establishing an endowment, such as the ones listed below, that will change the life of an Honors student, please contact Lani Longarzo at 717-477-1377 or LALong@SUFoundation.org or visit SUFoundation.org to learn more.

- Dr. Hugh and Kathryn Aberman Scholarship
- Dr. Ronald K. And Debra A. Taylor Marketing Scholarship
- Reber-Offner Honors Research Endowment
- Wood Honors College Endowment

Consider an Annual Gift

Please consider making an annual gift in support of these important funds. To make a gift, please visit http://www.sufoundation.org/initiatives/academics/honors/.

- Wood Honors College Endowment: Supports Honors students’ undergraduate research projects, participation at national and regional conferences, and other educational opportunities that are central to the Wood Honors College experience.
- Wood Honors College Scholarship Fund: Supports merit scholarships for incoming Wood Honors College students
- Wood Honors College Colloquium Fund: Supports Honors interdisciplinary service-learning projects around the world
- Wood Honors College Study Abroad Scholarship Fund: Supports students who desire to expand their academic experience and cultural horizons by studying abroad
- Wood Honors College Associates Fund: Supports the most urgent needs of the College

Thank you for your generosity!
Congratulations, December 2020 Graduates!

Brianna Kinner
- Mathematics Major, Business Minor
- Honors Capstone Project: “Research Internship at the United Way of Bradford County, Pennsylvania”
- Honors Contribution: Honors Mentor
- Future Plans: Employment in her field

Olivia Miller
- Biology Major
- Honors Capstone Project: “Regulation of RRP6: Expression in Saccharomyces Cerevisiae”
- Honors Contributions: Honors Ambassador and Honors Mentor
- Future Plans: Graduate school for Physician Assistant

Erika Otthofer
- International Studies and Political Science Majors
- Honors Capstone Project: “An Examination of the Complex Relationship Between Democratic Governance and Food Security”
- Honors Contributions: Co-Chair, Honors Read Committee, and Honors Mentor
- Future Plans: Employment in her field and Master’s degree, Latin American Studies or International Education

Madelyn Snyder
- Early Childhood and Special Education Majors
- Honors Capstone Project: “Impact on Student Learning: Math Fluency in a Fourth-Grade Class”
- Honors Contributions: Honors Orientation Volunteer and Honors Mentor
- Future Plans: Special Education Teacher, East Pennsboro School District

Paige Steffy
- Geoenvironmental Studies Major, Geographic Information Science Minor
- General Education Honors
- Honors Contributions: Honors Ambassador and Honors Student Assistant
- Future Plans: CAD Technician, FSA Engineering

With all best wishes for your future success!
Season's Greetings and Happy New Year!