



Wood Honors College



The Newsletter of The Wood Honors College
at Shippensburg University

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Hard Work Pays Off: SU Honors Program Becomes The Wood Honors College

By Luke Hershey, Honors Sophomore



Photo Courtesy of Shippensburg University

Rachel Smith, Meg Dameron-Christenson, Nick Bigham, President Laurie Carter, Dr. Kim Klein, and Dr. Christine Senecal prepare to cut the ribbon to officially open the Wood Honors College.

On Sunday, September 30, 2018, Honors students, alumni, professors, and administrators gathered by Harley Hall for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the official opening of the Wood Honors College at Shippensburg University.

Dr. Kim Klein, Director of the Wood Honors College, opened the ceremony by noting that the transition from Honors Program to the Wood Honors College represented the culmination of a nearly decade-long effort by Honors students, staff, and professors. She thanked university administrators, including President Laurie Carter and Provost Barbara Lyman, who have been constant supporters of Honors education. Dr. Klein also recognized several donors who have provided critical financial support, including Mr.

and Mrs. Charles and Miriam Wood, after whom the college is named; and retired Shippensburg professors Drs. Vera Reber and John Offner—who created an endowment to fund undergraduate research opportunities for Shippensburg Honors students.

After remarks by Shippensburg University President Laurie Carter, representatives of the Honors community, including Honors alumna Meg Dameron Christenson, Honors professor Christine Senecal, and Honors student leader Nicholas Bigham, spoke briefly to commemorate the historic occasion. Then all participated in cutting the red ribbon that spanned the college's Harley Hall entrance, and an exciting new chapter in Honors education at Shippensburg University began!

A Week in the Woods: A Partners in the Park Experience

By Emily Schoenberger, Honors Senior



Photo Courtesy of Emily Schoenberger

Schoenberger spent a week in Acadia National Park located within Maine's Mount Desert Island. Pictured above, Schoenberger was able to snap a picture of the vast beauty Echo Lake's shoreline, a popular destination on the western side of the island.

I knew from the twelve-hour drive—completed alone, with only a bushel of green grapes and a bag of pretzels for company—that the upcoming week in Maine would be transformative. From the very beginning, I had to push myself further than I'd ever gone before (twelve hours of driving by yourself is a lot). When I thought about what I was driving toward, part of me wanted to speed up, get there sooner, while another part of me wanted to pull a U-turn right there in the middle of Interstate 95 and high-tail it back to Pennsylvania.

I was heading to Portland, where I would meet the group with which I would spend the next week in Acadia National Park through the Partners in the Parks program, an experience supported by a scholarship from the Northeast Regional Honors Council. Although such a trip was out of my comfort zone, I was looking forward to a week in the woods with fellow honors students, learning about the National Parks system and exploring all that Acadia had to offer. I could've hardly known that over the course of only a few days, the other students on the trip would become close friends who left me inspired by their kindness, hilarity, and personal stories.

Together, we climbed rung ladders up mountains. We "showered" in Echo Lake. We built campfires and made s'mores and walked to the sea wall for sunset. We were seasick together. We saw a humpback whale breach. We lived in luxury for an afternoon in Bar Harbor, indulging in iced coffees and gourmet ice cream and tacky souvenirs. We suffered through rainy nights in wet tents, hanging our sleeping bags to dry on picnic tables in the morning. We built a trail with park rangers, wheel

barrow after wheel barrow of dirt, gravel, and moss.

We also took time to learn from ourselves and others. We discussed environmental ethics, bunched together under a tarp while the rain poured all around us. We considered environmental justice. We learned about the history of Acadia, of the National Parks System, came to understand why it's so important and why such treasures much be preserved. Afterward we ran in the rain.

Even so, the memories I recall most fondly are not those in which we were together as an entire group but rather the small moments spent with individuals. Sitting atop a rock on the shore, watching the sunset and talking about the strengths and shortcomings of the college experience with two women I never would have guessed could be so much like me. Daring to touch the edge of Cadillac Mountain with my tent-mate, our feet dangling below. Comparing reading progress with an English major as we read in camp chairs every morning and encouraged each other to finish our books by the end of the week.

As I get older, there are fewer opportunities to create friendships out of nothing, to meet someone one morning and be best pals by the end of the day. My Partners in the Parks experience was like kindergarten—it took all but twenty four hours for me to feel like I had great friends surrounding me. We embarked on adventures that tested our personal limits and opened our minds and hearts to everything Acadia offered. We accepted our ignorance in the face of nature and agreed to learn about the world together. We decided to be kindergarteners, and the park welcomed us into her classroom.

Model Organization of American States

By Luke Smith, Honors Senior

I have taken part in the Model Organization of American States (MOAS) two spring semesters in a row and I am still awful at explaining what it is and what we do. The professor, Dr. Sachleben, and my classmates have had to stop me on more than one occasion from explaining the course to death and scaring away prospective students from the program. So let me predicate everything I am about to say with the following: 1) I love this class so much I've taken it twice and plan on taking it again and 2) this class is hard to fit neatly in a box (especially when you've taken it more than once), but the fact that it defies easy description is part of what makes the class so multilayered and engaging.

The Organization of American States (OAS) is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) through which countries in the Western Hemisphere may communicate with their neighbors regarding issues of mutual concern. The purpose of the OAS (after originally being a way for the United States to involve itself in Latin American affairs) is to fight for and preserve democratic principles in the Western Hemisphere. And, yes, that is a wildly compressed version of the OAS's responsibilities.

The Model OAS occurs once a year during the spring semester in Washington D.C., and students from schools from Canada to Argentina take part. There are five committees that concern themselves with everything from election integrity to money laundering to health and human services. Students in the class spend the year researching a topic that the organizers of the Model have listed as an agenda topic, and the purpose of their research is to use it to back up a Proposed Draft Resolution (PDR, you'll learn the lingo as you go), which can roughly be compared to a bill that might be proposed in a legislature. For example, we were the delegation of Venezuela last semester and I did a resolution on money laundering, specifically through cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin. Student participants may involve themselves on any of these committees as delegates, a chair or vice chair, or a rapporteur, who records the votes and reads off the resolutions for the committee to hear.

The Model provides many opportunities to meet other people from around the hemisphere. While much

of the procedural stuff is done in committee, the time you spend around the hotel and between sessions allow delegates a chance to talk amongst themselves, and the people you can meet often have incredibly moving stories. For example, it is relatively easy for Ship students to get to D.C., we just carpool down to the Metro station, but it is important to keep in mind that there are some people there who flew thirteen to sixteen hours to travel to D.C., who are just barely able to afford to go and also barely allowed to go at all due to international tensions. If you know anything about Venezuela, you may be aware that their economy is in disarray and their public officials like blaming the U.S. for everything that goes wrong. However, my personal

experience with the Venezuelan students whom

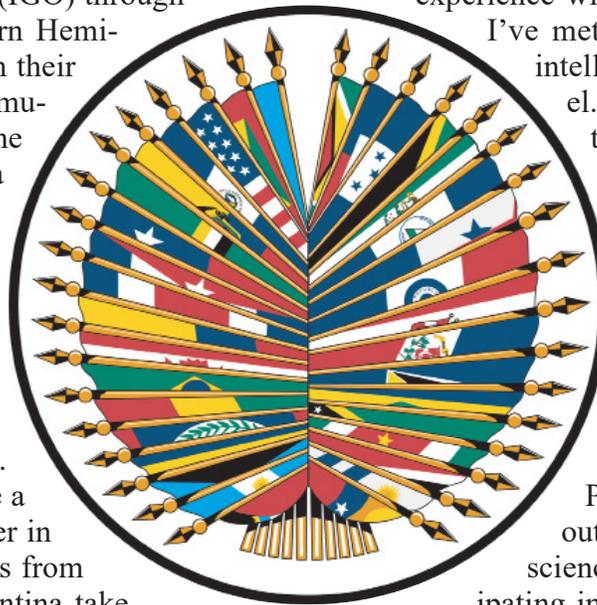
I've met is that they are incredibly kind, intelligent, and an asset to the model. I remember sitting on a couch in the lobby with one student, and he rummaged through his book bag and pulled out some Venezuelan chocolate for me to try as he told me about his life there and the difficulties his country faces.

The Model has provided me with a cultural experience that I have never really gotten a chance to have growing up in central Pennsylvania. I've never travelled outside the country, and as a political science major, the experience of participating in an international decision-making

body has been a great way to expose myself to the way IGOs operate, all while having fun and meeting a multitude of really interesting people along the way.

You need not be a political science major to enjoy this course. This will be one of the most unique seminar experiences you ever have as an Honors student, and you will get roped into your research as you watch it actually be applied in committee and with all the amazing friends you will make in D.C.

Put simply, not only political science majors like making really cool friends and going sightseeing in the capital. Dr. Sachleben is always looking for new candidates to enroll in PLS 348 (Applied Diplomacy), so drop him an email or catch him during his office hours about applying, and maybe I'll see you next semester as you embark on the best international experience you never need to get on a plane for.



Senior Spotlight

By McKenzie Horn, Honors Senior

In high school, if someone had told me that I would go on the adventure of a lifetime in college, I wouldn't have believed them. Initially, I wasn't even considering going away from home for school. Nevertheless, here I stand, a few months shy of graduation, and I realize now that the high school version of me was completely wrong. I left my comfort zone, and I had some of the best experiences of my life. In fact, the Honors College presented me with many of these opportunities. During my first year at SU, I was not a member of the Honors Program. Coincidentally, Dr. Klein taught one of my general education classes. She knew I was an education major, so she jumped at the opportunity to introduce me to Reach Out. Reach Out was created by students in the Honors Program in an Honors interdisciplinary seminar. Reach Out is an Honors educational initiative in the Dominican Republic. It truly defines my college career and my Honors experience.

I joined Reach Out in my sophomore year, and I helped develop one of the teaching manuals for our partner school in the Dominican Republic. I was inspired to push myself, so that same year I decided to apply to teach in Reach Out during my junior year. I was lucky enough to be accepted. In January of 2017, I hopped on a plane headed for the Dominican Republic with a suitcase full of school supplies. It was a euphoric feeling. I was on the verge of meeting so many students who would fill my heart with joy. One of the best memories of the trip was watching all the students and teachers clean up their local community as an ode to environmental stewardship. The students ran around

and collected as much litter as they possibly could. We filled the whole patio with trash bags that day!

Throughout that first trip, I knew I wanted to write a curriculum manual for the following year, in hopes that

it would be my Honors capstone project. I met with the principal of the school in the Dominican Republic, and we discussed the school's greatest needs.

I was tasked with the challenge of writing a social studies curriculum, mainly in the branches of history and civics. The summer before my senior year arrived in the blink of eye, and after several months of preparation, I was fully prepared to return to the country, school, and community I had fallen in love with. I developed a new personal goal: to intentionally speak more Spanish. We entered the school. I was wildly nervous, until a small group of students remembered who I was from the year prior and greeted me with huge, unmistakable smiles.

I started to play games with the kids that focused on cardinal directions. I was forced to tackle the completion of new goal right out of the gate; I conducted the game on-the-spot, entirely in Spanish. I will never get the feeling of elation that accompanied watching the students excitedly shout the answers and showcase what they had learned.

Reach Out has had an almost-indescribable impact on my life, and I cannot begin to thank the Honors College enough for providing the opportunity. I will never regret my decision to come to Shippensburg because of the Wood Honors College. I will never be able to thank Dr. Klein enough for believing in me and helping me get to where I am today.



Photo Courtesy of McKenzie Horn

Throughout the past four years, Horn has been involved in many on-campus clubs and activities, including Reach Out, the Honors College Mentor-Mentee Program, and as a Resident Assistant for the Department of Housing & Residence Life.

Summer 2018 Experiences in Scientific Paradise

Conducting research has become a staple of Honors undergraduate education. In summer 2018, three Honors College students traveled to California, Alaska, and Wisconsin to undertake research projects. Learn more about their projects by reading their reflections below.



Andrew Aumen
Honors Junior

I participated in a national nuclear chemistry summer school in San Jose, California, and the program was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. I took seven credits of nuclear chemistry courses at San Jose State University with eleven other students from around the nation. The program's purpose was to expose students to nuclear chemistry who cannot study in this field at their home institutions. Some broad topics included were: Nuclear Medicine, Nuclear Forensics, Nuclear Research, Nuclear Energy, Radiation Safety, and the Origins of the Universe. There was also a laboratory course that taught students the proper techniques for working with radioactive chemicals. In this course, several instruments and techniques were utilized in order to understand the basics of working in a nuclear chemistry lab. This program has completely changed my career goals; I previously wanted to pursue physical chemistry or organic chemistry in graduate school, but I am now looking into nuclear chemistry.



Olivia Turner
Honors Senior

This past summer, I had the amazing opportunity to work with the U.S. Forest Service as a Botany Intern in the Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska. My primary job was to take inventory of invasive and rare plant species present within the timber sale units on one of the many islands that make up the Tongass. I spent my entire summer outdoors, boating and flying to field sites, surveying road systems, and hiking through Alaska's temperate rainforest on the hunt for plants. I was able to work with and learn from professional botanists, biologists, and ecologists. It was great being able to tap into their knowledge and ask all the questions I wanted. I was also surrounded by awesome co-workers who became close friends. My Alaska experience was full of everything I love: plants, ecology, wilderness, new friends, and new experiences. I have come back to Shippensburg filled to the brim. I'm eager to graduate and start my career caring for our nation's wildlands.



Nick Bigham
Honors Senior

This summer, I had a one of a kind opportunity to participate in a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. For ten weeks, I worked in a computational chemistry laboratory, performing molecular simulations on crystal structures. It was my job to determine if these crystal structures are effective catalysts for an important reaction in the renewable energy process known as biodiesel. I gained valuable research experience in the realms of both chemistry and computation. I made new friends from around the country and explored a new city that I ended up really loving. At the end of the summer, I presented my research at a poster session in front of the university's scientific community. This program gave me an opportunity to snatch a glimpse of what graduate school could be like. I have definitely determined that I would like to go to graduate school, and a lot of that motivation can be attributed to this program.

European Euphoria with PASSHE Summer Honors

By Rachel Smith, Honors Senior

In May and June 2018, I had the chance to study abroad in Vienna, Austria and Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina through the PASSHE Summer Honors Program. Sophomore Rhiannon Leonard and I were selected as the participants from Shipensburg, and we traveled with twenty-one students from other PASSHE schools. Our group met at Indiana University of Pennsylvania the week after finals in May and spent four days attending intensive classes, studying history and music.

We then began our twelve-day visit to Vienna. We toured countless palaces and museums to learn about Austrian royalty like Archduke Franz Ferdinand. We also visited places of worship, including a variety of Catholic churches and cathedrals during a festival called "The Night of the Churches." There were wonderful art museums with classical paintings as well as contemporary exhibits. In the evenings, we often would attend a musical performance like a symphony or an opera.

One of the most moving experiences was having dinner with a Syrian refugee who has lived in Austria for almost two years. He told us about his experience leaving his home country and trying to find safety elsewhere in Europe during the refugee crisis. He had to cross borders in the dead of night, go days without food, and trust his life to strangers who were paid to lead the way. His family settled in Egypt, but when it became clear they could not stay there permanently, he went

ahead to Austria, leaving his wife and two small children behind.

He navigated the difficult immigration system in order to find work and housing. Back in Syria, he

had advanced degrees and a high-paying job, but he had to start over at an entry-level position. After living apart for a year and a half and only seeing his family twice in that time, they were able to all eventually move to Vienna

and connect with a network of refugees and Viennese volunteers. Today, he has a job he likes and his children are enrolled in school, but he is just glad they can all be together again. When asked if he thought they would get to return to Syria any time soon, he shared that he does not believe the war will end for at least the next fifteen years. This was a chilling yet hopeful look at what the civil war has done to everyday citizens, and how they plan to make the most of their situation.

We finished out our trip with three days in Sarajevo, where we learned about the recovery from the Bosnian War as well as the city's rich history of religious and cultural diversity. Sarajevo is an amazing epicenter of Eastern and Western cultural convergence. While the city is primarily Muslim, there was a Catholic church, a Bosnian Orthodox church, a synagogue, and a mosque all in the center of the Old City where we stayed. We also saw reminders of the ongoing recovery from the war and genocide that took place in the 1990s. Buildings still carry markings of gunfire and violence, and many people we met can remember growing up during this horrific time. We visited the Museum of Crimes Against Humanity, which documents the experience of the war in a very visceral way.

One of the best parts of the trip was getting to meet students from across the PASSHE system and learn from one another along the way. We had lots of free time to sightsee in these amazing cities, and having a great group of students to explore with made the trip that much better.



Photo Courtesy of Rachel Smith
Smith and Rhiannon Leonard joined other students on a cable-car ride to visit a site of the 1984 Winter Olympics.



Photo Courtesy of Rachel Smith
Before entering a mosque in Sarajevo, Bosnia, Smith and Leonard --along with the other women on the trip-- donned scarves out of respect and modesty.

Pessimistepiphany

By Luke Hershey, Honors Sophomore

As a devout pessimist, it's extremely easy for me to admit that I am, in fact, a pessimist. The goings-on of the present age have rendered moments of positive perception few and far between. As if the war, intolerance, and inequality in the world wasn't already bad enough, the big rock that we call home is literally tumbling, at an incomprehensible speed, through an endless, dark, cold, unfamiliar void toward only one thing: inescapable decimation. I sincerely envy those bushy-tailed folk that can always look at a dead body and see a scientific opportunity, look at a cow pie and see fertilizer, or look at a billionaire and see a "people's president."

My brain, in its unaltered state, is nearly incapable of recognizing the bright side, the silver lining. I'm proud to profess, however, that, with the assistance of a high level of personal intentionality, my overall outlook on the universe is getting closer to something my granny would be proud of. It all started a few months ago.

Summer vacation was a revelation. In May, two of my closest pals and I piled into a hippie van and set s a i l for Los Angeles. Sure, the city was pretty great, but the half-month journey made the trip worth it. The untamed lands west of the Mississippi River shimmered with a sort of spiritual glow. It felt like Narnia. We threw stones a hundred miles in Kansas. We got stranded at the tip-top of Wolf Creek Pass. We spoke to Death in Idaho. We peed into the Grand Canyon. (I would like to take a brief recess to apologize to those hikers below.) We ate White Castle on the Vegas Strip while listening to a crackhead freestyle about the wage gap. We got pulled over for going sixty-nine in a sixty-five near the Badlands. We named buffalo in Yellowstone. (Mike Byson, wherever you are, godspeed.) Above all else, we (I) began to understand the importance of optimism during a brief stint in Chicago.

My friends were off buying hot dogs from a street vendor. I was sitting on a bench near The Bean, gazing out over the oceanic expanse of Lake Michigan, when it (the surface of the water) hit him (some stranger kid). He was kneeling at the edge of the

cement pier, about twenty yards to my left, tossing tiny chunks of a Snickers bar to the quacking vultures buoying on the lake. He was no older than ten, and there appeared to be no legal guardian in sight. My spidey senses began tingling, so I watched the boy intently out of the corner of my eye. A sharp breeze torpedoed off Michigan that sent the kid's ball cap fluttering across the pavement like a spasming bird. In a valiant, pseudo-athletic effort to capture the fleeing hat, he snatched violently at empty air. His unbalanced foot whisked off the slippery edge, and he tumbled into the depths, which sent his fowlish friends fleeing in a panicky scatter.

I was shell-shocked, afflicted by a temporary case of rigor mortis. The kid might as well have fallen into the fourth dimension. Fortunately, I wasn't the only person that had watched the tragic scene unfold. A jogger, let's just call him Jesus, immediately recognized the peril and moved to neutralize the threat. Jesus gently tossed his iPhone on the grass and hopped in the water.

Both the savior and the bachelor-in-distress clambered back onto dry land in less than fifteen seconds. The rest of Chicago barely blinked.

The situation reinforced an extremely important cliché: good often goes unseen. Jesus, the unwitting jogger near the pier, didn't save the stranger kid for the sake of himself, he saved the stranger kid for the sake of humanity. As a result, my faith in the latter has been restored. Really, this world provokes pessimism everyday. People only talk about the bad stuff, and it's done a negative number on my worldview. "Whatsername has cancer." "Four people died in that car crash on I-81." "Nuclear fallout is right around the corner." "Brett Kavanaugh is on the Supreme Court." While it's certainly beneficial to know what's going on, we don't give good deeds enough credit. In the midst of all the chaos, great people are doing great things. I haven't completely abandoned my pessimistic side, but now I make a conscious effort to look beyond the negative in search of the glimmers of good that pull me from the pits of pessimism. I invite you to join me on this positivity pursuit. #seethejoggingjesus



Final Thoughts From The Editors

These past few weeks have been extremely hectic for me, both with my academics and my extra-curricular activities, as I can imagine they have been for our readers, as well. They've been so busy, in fact, that finding the right words for my final thoughts has been at the bottom of my to-do list. Moreover, this semester has been the epitome of the quote, "surviving, not thriving." But, it's been worse. As the countdown to the holiday season begins to press an enormous weight on your shoulders, just remember, I'm there with you and we'll all push on together. We've been better, we've been worse, but for now let's *just be* together. In your free time--God knows there's barely enough time to take a deep breath in a day--take a half-second to read about what your fellow Honors peers have been up to these past few months. I promise it'll be worth it.

Katie Sweigart

Ambition often dies with the leaves in autumn. It's a simple fact of chemistry. The earth is made of matter. Humans are made of matter. The separate pockets of matter in the universe are spiritually-connected across the vastness of space and time through a number of natural cycles. Therefore, when the insentient matter on our planet begins changing form, the matter that comprises our bodies feels inclined to morph, too. When you try to be productive in autumn, you are literally going against the tide of the cosmos. That doesn't mean you should stop trying! In a perfect existence, we'd be able to just lay on our backs and float through space like stardust, but unfortunately, society has conditioned us to be persistent in all seasons. It won't be easy. You will have to push yourself to your physical and intellectual limits over the next month and a half. I don't believe in myself. I do believe in you.

Luke Hershey

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The cover photo for this edition of *.hhrs* was taken by Katie Sweigart.

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Calendar of Events

Fall 2018

NOVEMBER

Thursday, November 1

Application Deadline for Spring 2019 Honors capstone project grants

Thursday, November 1

Reber-Offner Summer Research Grant Information Luncheon (C/O)
1:00-1:50 p.m., Honors Seminar Room

Wednesday, November 7

Cultural Coffee Break: Alaska
Hosted by Olivia Turner (C/O)
5-5:45 p.m., Honors Seminar Room

Tuesday, November 13

Honors Read: *The Immortalists* by Chloe Benjamin (C/O)
3:30-4:30 p.m., Honors Seminar Room

Wednesday, November 14

Honors Student Leaders Meeting
12:00-12:50 p.m., Honors Seminar Room

Thursday, November 15

Application deadline for Honors Study Abroad Scholarship for students who plan to study abroad in Spring 2019

Saturday, November 17

Ship Trip

DECEMBER

Wednesday, December 5

Honors Symposium

Thursday, December 6

Annual Holiday Cookie Decorating (C/O)
7:00 p.m., Harley Hall MPR

Monday, December 10

Deadline for Honors seniors to submit an electronic copy of their Honors capstone project

Saturday, December 15

Undergraduate Commencement

Friday, December 14-Monday, January 21

Winter Break

