A Resilient Honors Community
Adapting to Life During a Pandemic

THE HONORS COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
This year, the Honors College has been committed to providing an engaging curricular experience and building student communities. During the COVID pandemic, both class delivery and community building require innovative approaches. Our classes in Fall 2020 were a mix of face-to-face classroom seminars as well as remote classes held synchronously via Zoom. Faculty and students report that they miss the comparative easiness of being in a physical classroom as was the norm in pre-pandemic times, yet we have adapted to our situation and have created innovative methods to teach, learn, and thrive as a community. In this Minerva issue you will read about two faculty members who have tried new techniques in both face-to-face classes and remote learning settings.

Many highlights of the year focused on learning about fighting racism and discrimination. This included an Honors College webinar for first-year students with Derek Black, subject of Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist. This online event was enthusiastically greeted by students and faculty, and was reported to be timely, moving, and thought provoking. We joined many across the nation and globe in speaking out against racism and hate in a joint statement with former Dean Amar and myself. This focus on racism and other forms of discrimination continues with the 2020-2021 Rezendes Ethics Essay Competition theme of “Deconstructing Systems of Oppression.”

Students have played a major role in community-engaged work, with two student groups—the Student Advisory Board and the Honors Ambassadors—taking leadership roles. For instance, student Ambassadors Katie Tims and Bailey West organized a personal care item donation program in partnership with members of the Student Advisory Board for those who need items such as shampoo, soaps, and other various care items. On “Giving Tuesday” students, faculty, and staff contributed over 500 donations to be distributed by the Black Bear Exchange. Honors students also led the October Walk to End Alzheimer’s, amassing over $2,000 and 22 team members in support of this worthy cause. You can read more about the Honors Ambassadors program on page 40 of this issue.

Honors faculty have also had notable achievements. You will read about Dr. Rob Glover’s work with UVote, a nonpartisan effort to help students understand voting procedures, as well as resources important to investigating issues. Additionally, the INBRE teaching lab in Hitchner Hall is almost complete and ready for Dr. Sally Melloy’s HON 150 Phage Genome Discovery and HON 155 Genome Discovery: From DNA to Genes courses.

Also key to the COVID era is helping students form connections with each other. Associates Kim Crowley and Cara Doiron have created experiences that have connected many students through events like a virtual Talent Show, a Murder Mystery, a virtual meeting space called “Fast Friends,” and interviews of Honors students in “Feature Friday.” These events have been great successes and allowed students to safely meet each other, have fun, and perhaps grow new friendships.

Also this fall we have debuted the Honors Outdoor Program Series (HOPS), which is a new partnership between the Honors College and Maine Bound Adventure Center. You can read more about HOPS on page 20 of this issue.

I think it’s fair to say that this year has been one requiring nimbleness, flexibility, compassion, and emotional intelligence, and I give massive recognition and appreciation to the Honors College staff team—Melissa Ladenheim, Kristin Beebe, Katie Kurz, Cara Doiron, and Kim Crowley—for their energy, impressive skills, and unfappable goodwill—it has been a true pleasure being part of the team.

Stephanie Welcomer
Interim Dean
Rising Out of Hatred by Eli Saslow

The 2020 Honors Read

Rising Out of Hatred by Eli Saslow is the compelling story of Derek Black, son of Stormfront founder and avowed white supremacist Don Black and godson of David Duke, onetime Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, and Derek’s eventual renunciation of white nationalism altogether.

Derek Black began contributing to Stormfront as a child, and ardently believed that the U.S. was founded by and rightfully meant for those of white, European ancestry. His interest in pursuing medieval studies led him to Florida’s New College, a small, progressive liberal arts college. He enrolled, confident that this experience would only strengthen his commitment to white supremacy.

Instead, New College exposed Derek to people and perspectives that challenged his deeply held beliefs. He became friends with an immigrant, got romantically involved with a Jewish woman, and befriended classmates whose views were radically different from his own. Through compassion, tolerance, friendship, and love, Derek came to understand the deep and damaging repercussions of his views.

Rising Out of Hatred was nominated by Associate Dean Melissa Ladenheim, who noted the text “addresses critical and timely topics in our contemporary social and political world, where we as a nation are deeply divided. The issues at the heart of these divisions are fundamental to the Honors endeavor.” In a letter to the incoming class, the Honors students who chose the 2020 Honors Read exhorted them to consider how their education would change them: “As Derek learns, discovering yourself is a journey… How do you think your journey will change you?… As you begin your time as a UMaine Honors student, you are embarking on an exciting and transformative journey. With the Honors College community, you will discover new ideas, you will change old perspectives, and you will grow as a student, a scholar, and a person.”

Thank you to the Maine Masonic College for their generous support of the Honors Read.
In March 2020 when COVID-19 arrived on our doorstep, the Honors College, like all of UMaine, was forced on very short notice to change the way we taught our classes. Little did we know that the nimbleness and creativity in that pivot would become the norm for the next academic year. Though we had more time to prepare for fall 2020, anticipating all the challenges of teaching and learning remotely, or even in the conventional in-person mode we had so taken for granted, stretched our capacities—academically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally. University in these times is “not for the faint of heart,” as preceptor Katie Quirk notes in her essay. But, both she and fellow preceptor Mimi Killinger movingly capture how teaching in a pandemic, either live or remotely, gave them opportunities to take intellectual risks, problem-solve, implement creative pedagogies, and build strong communities of engaged and thoughtful learners. Our bucolic campus became an extended classroom for students learning safely in person. The remote classroom extended even further, enabling students from Minnesota to Massachusetts to Maine to learn with classmates from Nigeria and Vietnam. Whether separated by six feet or six hours, these faculty and students were united in their shared dedication to the Honors endeavor.
Teaching and Learning in a Pandemic

MIMI KILLINGER
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND REZENDES PRECEPTOR OF THE ARTS (HONORS)

COVID-19 COMPelled us to flex our Honors creativity, adaptability, and propensity to take intellectual risks, as we headed outdoors for Honors Civilizations I (HON 111) this fall. I had written to my prospective students in July, explaining that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data indicated the safest place to gather is outside, so, weather permitting, we would be outdoors. I explored a number of possible open-air sites for class—looking for shade, beauty, and reliable WiFi—and decided to explore a number of possible open-air sites for class—looking for shade, beauty, and reliable WiFi—and decided to explore a number of possible open-air sites for class—looking for shade, beauty, and reliable WiFi—and decided to explore.

The T orah shrubs, a resident chipmunk, and a green ash that shed leaves on us like manna from heaven as we read The Tao Te Ching and other ancient texts. My intrepid, in-person HON 111 students were wholly unprepared for this outdoor experience, bringing towels and lawn chairs for seating. Many of them were outdoorsy by nature: We had among us fresh members of the UMaine Outing Club and the Backcountry Squatters; we had hikers, bikers, skiers and even an Eagle Scout. We also had adventurously introverted types willing to try something new. UMaine Sustainable Agriculture colleagues, who know well the challenges of outdoor communication, loaned us an excellent amplification system, along with stake flags to mark our six-foot physical distancing. We had an indoor classroom for rainy days, so I polled students a few weeks into the semester, asking which they preferred. They expressed resounding approval for more interactive, meaning-making activities. These workshops, a mindfulness exercise tied to concepts introduced in The Tao Te Ching, were well received. I started each session with an “attendance” question—purposely to have a record in our text chat of everyone who attended class that day, though, given Honors students’ near perfect and timely attendance, this practice served more as a tool for warming up conversation and establishing a pattern of hearing from everyone. Some days the attendance question nudged them to reflect on recent readings: “Name one way in which you appreciate the comparison of our current moment to the 14th century Italian plague?” or “If you were a highly skilled artist, what character or place from The Odyssey would you choose to draw?” Other days, we used the question as an emotional check in: “Write one (or a few) words to describe your experience of college so far.”

On that occasion answers included fun, stressful, amazing, disorganized, unique, and lonely. From the get-go I was impressed by students’ honesty, their enthusiasm, and their courage—beginning college in the midst of a pandemic is not for the faint of heart.

My approach in teaching Honors has always tended toward a flipped classroom, but this semester my preceptors’ complete reliance on technology emboldened that approach. Before class sessions, we studied new material online with short introductory videos and student-written study guides for each week’s text. This left class time for more interactive, meaning-making activities. These included student-facilitated discussions, thesis-development workshops, a mindfulness exercise tied to concepts introduced in The Tao, poetry writing inspired by Sappho, analysis of contemporary political speeches with an eye to Pericles, and guided peer review of papers.

One of the privileges of teaching in Honors is the ability to explore classic texts with students, but I also relish the challenge to create opportunities for them to connect this ancient material to their contemporary experience. This semester that involved reading an article about racial justice and reparations in conjunction with our study of Polypheus in The Odyssey. Later, we read stories from The New York Times’ “Decameron Project,” a collection of COVID-related short fiction. Finally, students wrote and then shared audio recordings of themselves reading their own pandemic-related nonfiction.

The week of Thanksgiving, just before these recorded stories were due, I worried I was asking too much of students with this extra creative writing assignment. Many of them had shared their struggles with anxiety, insomnia, distraction, and burnout during this most unusual semester. But as their stories flooded in, I was freed of my doubts. Their tales were stunning—some of them sad, a few of them funny, many insightful, and all deeply honest. Each audio clip felt like a gift of connection.

William wrote about sitting in a parked car with the heater cranked in November, reading picture books in silly accents to his young cousins over Zoom. Katherine described assembling her Red Queen costume for the ballet she would never perform after concert halls closed. Another student wrote about her dalliance and eventual break up with a character named Loneliness, and yet another about his relationship—this one more joyful—with a guitar. In a regular semester with first-year Honors students, I witness tremendous growth, but this term I saw something more. By starting college in the fall of 2020, these students courageously stood right up to many of the pandemic’s demons, not to mention some of their own. And they overcame them.

Listen to Honors students’ pandemic stories at honors.umaine.edu/pandemic-stories/

Below: Katie Quirk (top row, center) and her first-year students in their HON 111 Zoom class. Photo courtesy of Katie Quirk.
international Student Perspectives
The Honors College is proud to have students from all over the world as part of our community. We asked a few of these international students to share their perspectives on the value of Honors.

Maria Vina Lopez, ’23, Biology
Santiago de Compostela, Spain

“I came to college looking for opportunities and that is what the Honors College has given me. It enables me to learn about history and different cultures, to improve my writing and arguments, to network and meet alumni, and more. But most importantly, Honors introduced me to two of the best professors I have ever had. They made me grow personally and professionally by always providing strong feedback, having dedication, respect, and by caring not only about my learning but also about my life! One of my professors has helped me write the essay that I am most proud of. Another professor was there for me when the school closed due to COVID-19 and I had to remain on campus. They make the difference.”

Phuoc Le (John), ’24, Accounting
Da Nang, Vietnam

“I would say that my experience in the Honors College is completely different compared to other classes. First of all, the class materials are more intense than normal, which requires lots of reading and researching time. Sometimes, I struggle with keeping up with the class because of the language barrier. Fortunately, in a small class with fewer students, I have the chance to work closely with my preceptor, Katie Ovsh, and other classmates. With their help, I have become more comfortable expressing my ideas and opinions using English, which I didn’t used to be. Also, I’m getting more confident in doing the Civilization classwork. I think that the Honors College is very beneficial to me as it is a perfect environment to develop language skills, which is important for study abroad.”

Iaryna Iasenytska, ’21, International Affairs
Kyiv, Ukraine

“The Honors College, at first, might not seem very interesting to many international students because it requires a lot of extra reading, dedication, and for some, it doesn’t seem like a meaningful experience to acquire. Although I didn’t think much about joining Honors at first, I am very grateful for the knowledge, conversations, and people I have met along the way. However, what has really solidified my decision to stay and continue with the ‘extreme-reading nights’ was my first preceptor, Michael Palmer. He became one of my favorite professors at UMaine since he often let conversations flow independently and wasn’t afraid to talk about controversial topics. Professor Palmer taught me that thinking differently or having a contrary opinion might be old-fashioned, but isn’t always wrong.”

Why I Teach in Honors
by Dr. Jennie Woodard, Honors Preceptor and Adjunct Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Peace and Reconciliation Studies

I teach in Honors because it allows me to stretch my creative and intellectual imagination. I might be on the high seas with Prospero about to crash onto the island shore or trying to see the Civil War through the eyes of Walt Whitman. On any given week, I am a philosopher, scientist, writer, political theorist, or poet. The interdisciplinary nature of Honors opens the door to a new way of seeing the world around us. It’s not looking for the right way to interpret literature and other texts. It’s about finding a way of seeing.

The critical imagination is a core element of my teaching philosophy. It’s when we imagine that we can begin to find our way into the texts we read. This happens frequently with literature, especially as students might put themselves in the shoes of Victor Frankenstein or Clarissa Dalloway. When a text requires more imagination, such as the poetry of Emily Dickinson, I encourage students to listen to one another’s interpretations. What did they imagine Dickinson’s “A clock stopped” — to look like? Was the stopped clock literal? Grandfather or cuckoo? What does it mean for time to stop? In this way, they not only had their own way of reading the poem, but had to describe what was in their imagination in order to articulate their interpretation.

For me, the critical imagination stems far beyond literary symbolism and identification with fictional characters. It is also a bridge to empathy and compassion. Listening to and understanding other people’s stories and experiences are keys to compassion, but we can’t really listen if we don’t allow ourselves to imagine the story and the circumstance. The more we understand about the complexity of the human experience, the more we can imagine potential solutions. At least one assignment per semester asks students to do a creative project that tackles complex issues. A few years ago, in a third-year tutorial about the presence of social justice on television, students created a pitch for a television show of their own design. The aim was to move beyond criticizing television for lacking representation and/or inclusivity, and to imagine what it would be like to create a more inclusive world of entertainment. Inspired by Kimberlé Crenshaw’s notion of intersectionality, students created pitches for television shows that would be more inclusive of race, class, sexuality, gender identity, age, bodies, mental health, and physical ailments. It was a truly remarkable showing.

I love Honors. I love the students, my colleagues, our traditions, and our celebrations. But what I love most is how Honors provides a space for us to come together, learn collectively, and share our unique ideas and imagination.”
IN MARCH of 2020, as UMaine transitioned to remote instruction in the face of COVID-19, we met to discuss how this would impact efforts to ensure strong student voting in the upcoming election. It seemed probable that the pandemic would constrain our non-partisan efforts to register, educate, and turn out student voters. Lower turnout at UMaine seemed inevitable.

We are proud that this gloomy scenario did not come to pass. That is in part the result of the unprecedented ways in which UMaine Honors students stepped up to serve their democracy in the lead-up to the 2020 election and on Election Day itself.

In recent years, a robust effort involving the UMaine Office of Student Life, its elections initiative UMaine UVote, and faculty, staff, and students across campus have helped ensure robust voter turnout. The results of those efforts have been astounding.

In 2016, UMaine students voted at a rate roughly 17% higher than the national average for 18-29-year-olds (and nearly 10% higher than we’d seen on campus in the 2012 presidential election). The 2018 midterm elections saw UMaine’s turnout climb over 14% from the last midterm election in 2014. This cross-campus effort is ensuring that more UMaine students than ever are registering, voting, and even working at the polls on Election Day.

But previous years’ strategies had been driven by in-person interaction: recruiting volunteers; giving thousands of students the opportunity to register to vote in their classrooms; registration drives where students crowded around tables to complete voter registration cards; candidate debates and events where students learned about the issues in person. Amidst a global pandemic, this strategy would change entirely.

In late summer 2020, we successfully applied for a small grant from the national, non-partisan Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition. This support was a game-changer this year. Most notably, we were able to recruit, hire, and train a team of 10 UMaine UVote Student Voting Ambassadors.

Many of the Voting Ambassadors were Honors students. Over the next three months, they worked to ensure that we reached even more UMaine students with information about the election than in previous years’ efforts. Through a mixture of in-person and online outreach and socially distanced events, we were able to reach thousands of students, and all of our first-year students living on campus.

The Voting Ambassadors also supported Orono Town Clerk Shelly Crosby and her team of election administrators. They needed skilled poll workers to deliver and process unprecedented numbers of absentee ballots. Ramped-up early voting required dozens more volunteers than they’d employed in past years. Again, dozens of UMaine students (many of them in Honors) stepped up to ensure that the 2020 election went off without a hitch.

Naturally, many were initially hesitant about this work. When we hosted our first on-campus early voting day on October 17th, most students were registering their peers for the first time. There were a few errors and many questions throughout the day. But they slowly became more comfortable and confident with the process. By Election Day, the students were skillfully moving voters through the lines. They quickly processed voter registrations and maintained the integrity of the process. It was a joy to see the once-timid newcomers wave folks on and answer questions like seasoned poll workers.

Watching students take on these leadership roles was undoubtedly the most rewarding part of this strange, unprecedented election. Our Voting Ambassadors built
Honors and an Election Year Like No Other

relationships with Orono officials, gaining invaluable experience with local election protocols. They played a vital role in this aspect of the election process, but were also able to understand the importance of the relationship between UMaine and the town of Orono. These students contributed to the mutual collaboration that is vital to our strong campus-community partnership.

The involvement of our Honors students is no surprise. As we both have been deeply immersed in honors education, we understand the value of collaborating with diverse others and having meaningful conversations with individuals that have different perspectives than we do. Learning to ask questions and being eager to hear someone’s story is one of the most important components of the Honors experience.

This core element of a humanities education is equally vital to non-partisan political work. Regardless of the political identities our student voting ambassadors and campus volunteers hold, they hosted events and visited different classrooms and organizations to share the importance of voting. They built skills focused on interpersonal relationship-building in order to effectively engage and support voter turnout.

Many of those involved were first- or second-year students who expressed eagerness at being involved in future elections for the duration of their college careers. In elections to come (hopefully more conventional ones) they will once again rise to the occasion, assisting their fellow students and all Orono residents in exercising their democratic voice.

It is challenging, but, simultaneously, an opportunity for growth. It is honestly hard to believe that so much time has passed since COVID changed our lives. The week where everything became real (we all know the one I am referring to—that fateful mid-March week) is one I will never forget.

We had to cancel the D.C. trip that we had spent months planning. We held the last in-person HON 212 lecture of the semester the day before students started to leave campus. I had many surreal, emotional interactions with my co-workers and our students. Saying goodbye to people when you don’t know when you can safely see them next is a terrible thing.

Since then, I have acclimated to our “new normal.” I work every day and do my part to make the best of our current circumstances. We continue to support our students via e-mail and Zoom; we have tried out new social media initiatives and virtual events to keep our community intact. The pandemic has pushed us to develop innovative ways to keep Honors feeling like the supportive second home we strive to be.

Associate Reflections on COVID-19

Kim Crowley ’19H and Cara Doiron ’18H joined the Honors College staff in August 2019 as the new Honors Associates. Both Cara and Kim approached the role with warmth and fervor, finding joy in the part they played in the Honors community. Shortly after they both confirmed that they would stay on for the 2020-2021 academic year, the COVID-19 pandemic transformed the nature of the Associate role. Kim and Cara were asked to reflect upon the challenges and successes of working as an Associate during pandemic times.

KIM CROWLEY ’19H

Back in March, in many ways, it felt like I was finally feeling comfortable in my role as an Honors Associate. Then, all of a sudden, everything changed. We found out on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, that the University would transition to remote learning and working due to COVID-19.

Each Wednesday I send out the Honors Weekly, our email newsletter for students. I remember learning that the campus would go remote mere moments before sending out that week’s newsletter. That Honors Weekly was created before the idea of our campus going remote had even entered my mind, so as I pressed “send,” I suddenly knew that it would be the last truly normal thing I would do that semester.

In the months since, we have adapted to a new normal. We are finding new ways to work together, build community, and form human connections. As uncertainty has become a factor in every decision, so has increased understanding and flexibility.

Though much has been lost over the past few months, we have encountered an unprecedented opportunity to try new things, both in and out of the classroom. We have switched from in-person Honors lectures to live webinars and videos. We have hosted fun new events over Zoom like a murder mystery party, and “speed-dating” but for friendship. Even though almost everything is different, one thing has remained the same: the supportive and resilient nature of our Honors community.

CARA DOIRON ’18H

In the last in-person HON 212 lecture of the semester the day before students started to leave campus. I had many surreal, emotional interactions with my co-workers and our students. Saying goodbye to people when you don’t know when you can safely see them next is a terrible thing.

Since then, I have acclimated to our “new normal.” I work every day and do my part to make the best of our current circumstances. We continue to support our students via e-mail and Zoom; we have tried out new social media initiatives and virtual events to keep our community intact.

The pandemic has pushed us to develop innovative ways to keep Honors feeling like the supportive second home we strive to be. It is challenging, but, simultaneously, an opportunity for growth. And I am along for the ride, ready to see where the rest of the academic year takes us.

Rob Glover is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Honors at UMaine. Jenny Desmond ’14H is an alumna of the UMaine Honors College and the Coordinator for Leadership Development at the UMaine Center for Student Involvement. Headshot photos courtesy of the University of Maine.
Santiago Tijerina ’23
International Affairs

My name is Santiago Tijerina. My major is International Affairs with a concentration in language, culture, and the humanities. I am also taking graduate courses at the School of Policy and International Affairs (SPIA). I consider myself a global citizen; intellectually driven to learn about and experience world cultures. I have always been drawn to befriending international students, and others with a similar worldview. Recently, the idea of earning a second master’s degree in sports management has caught my attention. I could see myself working for the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) or any football club associated with FIFA. I speak both French and Spanish fluently, and I am currently exploring Portuguese. Above all, I enjoy traveling. I have been to several countries including Colombia, Russia, Spain, and England, to name a few.

The Honors College is a welcoming environment, where the faculty and staff prioritize students and are willing to help them succeed and perform at their best. I have been empowered by my former preceptor Dr. Robert Klose to pursue academic challenges such as taking graduate courses at SPIA and considering studying abroad in Montréal during the Fall of 2021. I have felt equally supported and academically challenged by my current preceptor Dr. Jennie Woodard, and I look forward to the rest of my experience here at the Honors College. Being a member of the Honors College has granted me the opportunity to seek mentorship and guidance, and I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to be surrounded by the brilliant minds of my fellow classmates.

Elaine Thomas ‘24
Management; Music Performance

Being part of the Honors College has given me the chance to get out of my comfort zone and see the world in new ways. I enjoy engaging with peers from all disciplines as we read the same texts and share diverse perspectives. This semester, I started working as a research assistant with the Honors College Servant Heart Research Collaborative. A few years ago, the Attachment Theory team developed a training for Sierra Leone that helps caregivers form healthy attachments with children who have experienced trauma and are being reintegrated into family settings. Now we are working to bring the training to other countries, including Haiti, Uganda, and Tanzania. I am so grateful that as an undergraduate I have been given the opportunity to be part of a dedicated team of students and faculty doing work that will have transformational implications for families around the world.

I feel fortunate that my education is not only shaping me academically, but also showing me how to look beyond myself. Honors gives students opportunities to interact with communities outside of UMaine, which is a unique experience in the often insular environment of college. Last year, I loved engaging with the Orono community in a book discussion on my Honors Read, Educated by Tara Westover. The broad life experiences of the participants informed their understanding of the book, so listening to them share their impressions greatly enriched my own thoughts about the questions Westover’s story raises.

Through interdisciplinary discussions, collaborative projects, and community engagement, I am learning how to join with others to grapple with important issues. I hope to carry an Honors mindset with me for the rest of my life.
**Student Spotlight**

**Abigail Muscat ’22**

**Marine Science**

HELLO! MY name is Abigail, and I am a third-year undergraduate student pursuing a B.S. in Marine Science with a minor in International Affairs. My research interests lie in studying the interactions between marine and bird species in the Pacific Northwest or Arctic environments and influencing policy-making in these areas. The Honors Civilizations sequence allowed me to interact with peers from a variety of backgrounds and explore my own interests. During this time, I investigated the ethics of scientific exploration through the lens of Frankenstein and broke down the relationship between humans and nature by analyzing the words of Marx, Darwin, and more.

In 2019, I had the pleasure of traveling to New Orleans, LA with other members of the Honors College to present at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference. This was an amazing experience and one that I highly recommend! Being a part of the Honors College has also provided excellent research opportunities. Earlier this year I participated in the Honors course HON 550: Molecular Mechanisms of Human Disease at the MDI Biological Laboratory. This experience inspired me to get involved with similar projects, such as investigating the impact of mixed well water contamination on zebrafish embryos in the Jayasundara lab. I have also experienced personal growth as a facilitator for the Honors course HON 170: Currents and Contexts.

Recently, I was awarded the NOAA Ernest F. Hollings Scholarship and the Fulbright Canada Killam Fellowship. I’m grateful for the support that I received from the Honors College during these processes. Outside of research, I enjoy scuba-diving, traveling, hiking, skiing, and photography. I’m looking forward to working on my thesis over the next year.

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**Cameron Spicer ’21**

**Finance; Financial Economics**

CHOOSING A university can be a decisive part of a person’s life. There are seemingly limitless options around the world, each one with unique opportunities that demand sacrifice. My decision to attend the University of Maine occurred nearly 8 years ago when I accepted a commitment from the varsity hockey team. Choosing to pursue athletics led me all across the United States during three gap years as an amateur hockey player. I had amazing experiences during this journey, but it also removed me from the classroom for a long time. As a result, the thought of returning to school was ominous to say the least. Despite my fears, I wanted to break free from an athlete stereotype and challenge myself. I enrolled in the Honors College and was greeted by a welcoming, thoughtful, curious, and powerfully smart community. I must say that having the chance to compete as a Black Bear on the ice is one of the best opportunities I have had in life. However, the opportunities I’ve had in the Honors College have been equally important to me. I am now completing an Honors thesis while continuing to participate in athletics. My project is based on a nascent securities exchange called the IEX that emerged in rebellion to High-Frequency Trading behaviors in the stock market. I am working under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Jurich to discover how the IEX fits into a rapidly evolving market system, and how it impacts stakeholders of security exchanges.
Christine Gilbert Alumni Profile

Christine Gilbert graduated in 2014 as an International Affairs major with a German minor. Christine won the 2013 National Collegiate Honors Council (NCCHC) Top Student of the Year award and her Honors thesis was titled “Sustainability: Investment Discover.” She earned an MA in Communication from the University of Idaho with her Master’s thesis “Analysis of Newspaper Coverage of Offshore Wind Energy in the United States.” She is now a Ph.D. student in Communication at the University of Connecticut. She is advised by Interim Dean Dr. Stephanie Webenmeyer and Honors Preceptor Dr. Mark Haggerty.

What have you learned since being an Honors student?

The Honors thesis had a very specific question and my advisor helped keep the work manageable. As graduate level it feels like—using a bowling metaphor—the “bumpers” have been taken away, so that the questions are broader and have more implications and can potentially have more applicability in the wider world. The Honors thesis was a jumping-off point for this.

You studied sustainability in your Honors work. Do you see changes in sustainability since then?

The good news is that we are now seeing positive changes towards sustainability—the frames are changing. For instance, we are now talking about wind energy. I am listening to a podcast called How to Stay Adir Wel and it’s looking at aspects of climate change. Though there are huge challenges, there are good things—one AOC [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez] being with climate change protesters from day one. We see politicians starting to talk differently about the influence of media and how it predicts behavior. For instance, the differing frames of COVID-19 in the media and how it influences how we think about it.

How do you see changes in the influence of media since then?

For me, the most important thing about the Honors experience was my preceptors’ comfort with ambiguity—that there is not a right answer, and our conversations were not being spoon-fed through it. The things that made the thesis hard are the things that are so important—for example, having to think of my own questions, what about those questions is interesting, and which is the most interesting question? The thesis is complicated, ambiguous, and messy, and you do have to think critically about it.

How do you envision your Ph.D. dissertation?

I have been interested in how we talk about something and how it influences how we think about it. How do the words we use as well as phrases influence our attitudes and beliefs? I may be using content analysis (maybe Wall Street Journal, New York Times) about something related to the influence of media and how it predicts behavior. For instance, the differing frames of COVID-19 in the media influences mask-wearing, following social distancing, and more.

Alumni Achievements

Binder-Hathaway ‘12H and Desmond ‘14H Recognized with Alumni Achievement Awards

Rachel Binder-Hathaway ‘12H and Jenny Desmond ‘14H were among the winners of the UMaine Alumni Association’s 2020 Alumni Achievement Awards.

Rachel Binder-Hathaway received the Spirit of Maine Achievement Award. The award recognizes a young alumna or alumnus who has achieved exceptional professional success in the years since graduation. In her time at UMaine, Rachel pursued a dual degree: a B.A. in financial economics, and a B.S. in finance and accounting. She was the 2012 class valedictorian and went on to receive a Master in Public Administration from Harvard University. Rachel now works as a behavioral economist and research consultant with the United Nations and The World Bank.

Jenny Desmond received a Rising Star Award. The award honors recent graduates who have demonstrated outstanding commitment to advancing the strength and success of the Alumni Association and its members. As an undergraduate, Jenny studied political science and went on to pursue a master’s degree in Student Affairs at Ball State University. Jenny also served as an Honors Preceptor for the Honors College during the 2014-15 academic year. She is currently the coordinator for leadership development in UMaine’s Center for Student Involvement as well as the advisor for All Maine Women.

Congratulations to both Rachel and Jenny for their outstanding accomplishments and their Alumni Achievement Awards!

2020 Honors Graduates Yost, Smith named Valedictorian, Salutatorian

Honors College graduates Sierra Yost and Grace Smith were the 2020 class valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively.

Sierra majored in chemical engineering and completed an Honors thesis titled “Cellulose Nanofibers and Calcium Carbonate in Single-Use Utensils,” which explored the application of cellulose nanofibers as an alternative to plastics in disposable utensils. She is currently in her first year of a chemical engineering Ph.D. program at The Pennsylvania State University.

Grace studied molecular and cellular biology. Her Honors thesis, titled “The Link Between Non-Coding Regulatory RNAs and Phenotypic Severity in a Zebrafish Model of gmp1b Dystrophia Myotonica,” focused on identifying novel regulatory genes that mediate phenotypic severity in muscular dystrophy. She is currently in her first year of a two-year post-baccalaureate research program at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

The Honors College extends its congratulations to Sierra and Grace for their accomplishments achieved while at UMaine, and wishes them the best of luck in their current and future pursuits.

Sierra Yost (left), the 2020 UMaine Valedictorian, and Grace Smith (right), the 2020 Salutatorian. Photo courtesy of the University of Maine.

Sierra Yost (left), the 2020 UMaine Valedictorian, and Grace Smith (right), the 2020 Salutatorian. Photo courtesy of the University of Maine.

Sierra Yost (left), the 2020 UMaine Valedictorian, and Grace Smith (right), the 2020 Salutatorian. Photo courtesy of the University of Maine.
Honors Outdoor Program Series
by Stephanie Welcomer

Honors students were able to get outside and meet other Honors students this fall via the Honors Outdoor Program Series (HOPS). In an effort to build student connections and provide a physical outdoors experience, the Honors College partnered with Maine Bound Adventure Center. With the generous support of donor Bill Leitch, Maine Bound hosted 16 HOPS sessions in September, October, and November. These sessions gave students a chance to experience some of the beauty and demands of Maine’s great outdoors in a safe way.

Guided by trained Maine Bound personnel, over 160 students participated in canoeing, paddle boarding, yoga, the high ropes course, and mountain biking. Typically these sessions were held on either Friday afternoon or on Saturday, and were from one to three hours, depending on gear used and instructional demands. All students and staff followed COVID-19 protocols, wearing masks and social distancing, and all gear was sanitized so that potential virus exposure was minimized. During September the HOPS sessions were focused on first-year students, so they had a chance to connect with others in their cohort, and in October and November other cohorts could sign up for sessions.

We designed these HOPS experiences to build physical skills as well as foster emotional well-being. Crucial to these experiences was the Maine Bound team’s knowledge and experience. Maine Bound Director Chris Bartram states, “Maine Bound partnered with the Honors College over 10 weeks to facilitate a range of outdoor education programs that increase a sense of belonging, build lasting relationships, enhance personal growth, and establish a connection to outdoor spaces that supports the health of our students. Maine Bound student leaders function as near-peer mentors that foster confidence in new students’ ability to seek out leadership opportunities in their futures both on and off-campus.”

In underwriting this series for the 2020-2021 academic year, Bill Leitch continues his broad and deep support for the Honors College through the Bill and Betsy* ’55 Leitch Campus Activities Fund. We thank Bill for his generosity.

Honors students are pictured enjoying a wide range of HOPS activities during Fall 2020. All photos courtesy of the University of Maine.
INBRE Research Awards
The 2020–21 IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) research fellowships are supported by a grant from the NIH and are awarded for projects in biomedical research.

SUMMER 2020 IDeA NETWORK OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE (INBRE) FELLOWSHIPS

Erika Bradgon '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))
Emma DeFederico '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))
Sarah Latario '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))
Gina DiFederico '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))

Honors Thesis Scholarships and Fellowships

CAROLYN E. REED PRE-MEDICAL THESIS FELLOWSHIP
Bailey Woodard '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))

RENDLE A. JONES ’65 AND PATRICIA K. JONES ’65 HONORS THESIS FELLOWSHIP
Caitlyn Rooms '21 (International Affairs; Political Science)

THOMAS E. LYNCH ’38 THESIS SCHOLARSHIP
Caleigh Charlebois '21 (Zoology)
Ivy Flessen '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))
Miranda Snyder '21 (Secondary Education)

BARBARA A. OUELLETTE HONORS THESIS FELLOWSHIP
Peter Berube '21 (Mechanical Engineering)

STEVEN F. COHN THESIS FELLOWSHIP
Aidan Ciaffaglione '21 (Sociology; Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)

Charlie Slavin Research Fund Awards

SPRING 2020 AND FALL 2020
Julia Casey '20 (Political Science)
Jazlynn Dumas' 21 (Marketing)
Maia Overturf '22 (Elementary Education)
Christian Potts '21 (Molecular & Cellular Biology)
Bailey West '21 (Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE))

Special Recognition
The Honors College would like to recognize the following Honors students for their outstanding achievements.

2020 VALEDICTORIAN
Sierra Yost '20 (Chemical Engineering)

2020 SALUTATORIAN AND OUTSTANDING GRADUATING STUDENT, COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES, FORESTRY, AND AGRICULTURE
Grace Smith '20 (Molecular & Cellular Biology)

OUTSTANDING GRADUATING STUDENT, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
Cormac Coye '20 (Philosophy; French)

2020 HONORS COLLEGE SERVICE AWARD AND HONORS COLLEGE LEADER AWARD
Lauren Ryan '20 (Biomedical Engineering)

2020 SENIOR DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS
Lilia Bernheim '20, Outstanding Senior in Anthropology
Olivea Bradstreet '20, Outstanding Senior in Art
Cormac Coye '20, Outstanding Senior in Philosophy
Arianna Giguere '20, Outstanding Senior in Psychology and Astronomy
Raegan Harrington '20, Outstanding Senior in Psychology
Madylin Jackson '20, Outstanding Senior in English
Meredith Stephens '20, Academic Achievement in Marketing
Jessica Sweeney '20, Outstanding Senior in Sociology
Elizabeth Theriault '20, Outstanding Senior in Communication and Journalism
Samuel Varga '20, Academic Achievement in Finance
Honors Awards and Fellowships

ROBERT B. THOMSON MEMORIAL HONORS AWARD
Abigail Despres ’21 (Political Science)
Caroline Strolic ’21 (Art History)

ASPIRATIONS SCHOLARSHIP
Caeli Connolly ’23 (Earth Sciences)

REZENDES GLOBAL SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP
Thomas Adams ’21 (Secondary Education; Spanish)

BILL AND BETSY PULLEN LEITCH ’55 TRAVEL FUND SPRING 2020 AND FALL 2020
Alexander Cross ’23 (International Affairs; Mechanical Engineering)
Raegan Harrington ’20 (Psychology; English)
Avery Gosselin ’23 (Exercise Science; Environmental Sciences)

STEINMETZ BOOK AWARD
Patty Andersen ’23 (Secondary Education; French)
Tamra Benson ’23 (Biology; Engineering/Physics)
Caeli Connolly ’23 (Earth Sciences; Political Science)
Victoria Eichorn ’23 (Biology; History)
Tara Flubacher ’23 (Exercise Science; English)
Loren Genrich ’23 (Exercise Science; History)
Grace Smith ’20 (Molecular & Cellular Biology; Chemistry)

JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL
Hannah Yelle ’23 (Computer Science)

MARK R. HASKELL AND KATHERINE Z. HASKELL SCHOLARSHIP
Dominique DiSpirito ’22 (Politics; Political Science)
Jillian Haggerty ’23 (Political Science)

PROFESSOR MELVIN GERSHMAN SCHOLARSHIP
Emily McLaughlin ’21 (Microbiology; Spanish)

2020 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference
This year’s conference was held virtually and with a reduced program due to COVID-19.

PRESENTATIONS:
Big Hearts, Big Minds: Learning Leadership Through an International Community-Engaged Project—François Amat, Melissa Lademane, Avery Gosselin, Stephen Kaplan
Honors and Eating Concerns—Mimi Killinger, Jaimie Giguere, Bailey Lewis, Ailin Liebler-Bendix, Ethan Lowell

STUDENT POSTERS:
Genetic Variation Responsible for Resistance to PAH Toxicity—Anna Briley

Honors College Scholar-Athletes 2019-2020
Hannah Belleville
Samuel Bonnevie
Kelby Drews
Daisy Johnson
Emmae Jourdain
Madeline Kimble
Kara Kuk
Antonia Kriljanov

Thomas Lafrance
Allie Liebler-Bendix
Abigail Mulligan
Tulsi Overturf
Andrew Pluse
Valentina Regina
Kendra Willard

Dallon Souza
Cameron Spicer
Caroline Strolic
Kendra Willard
Sierra Yost
Mackenzie Young

2020 Honors Index
71 graduates from the 2020 Honors class at a glance

3.71 Average GPA
83 Graduates who presented at an academic conference
14 Graduates who are published authors
10 Graduates nominated to Phi Beta Kappa
15 Graduates who studied abroad
47 Graduates from Maine
12 Graduates who were members of a Greek organization
15 Graduates who participated in theater, dance, music, or club sports
11 Graduates with a double major
47 Graduates who lived in Honors housing at least one semester

63 Graduates who worked while in school
35 Graduates who were officers in a student organization
25 Graduates who attended an Honors trip
37 Graduates who completed a tutorial alternative
24 Graduates from out of state
1 Graduate from the College of Education and Human Development
34 Graduates from the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture
25 Graduates from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
7 Graduates from the College of Engineering
4 Graduates from the Maine Business School

33 Graduates who were first-generation college students

Graduates from the College of Engineering

Graduates from the Maine Business School

Minerva 2020
Biomedical Engineering
Addis Abeba, Ethiopia
Natalie Geh’s School
THESIS: Exploration of Correlations Between the Fractal Dimension of Microcalcification Clusters and Background Tissue Disruption in Mammograms
Advisor: Andre Khalil

Marshall Abbott
Media Studies
Portland, Maine
Deering High School
THESIS: Can Spoliers in Online Reviews Affect Viewer Enjoyment?
Adviser: Michael Grillo
Thesis Description: My thesis investigated how spoliers affected viewer enjoyment for films. I used two different groups of students; one who would read an unspoiled review of a movie and ones who would read a spoiled review. We then would watch the movie and the participants were interviewed after the film viewing.

Margaret Aydlett
Marine Science
Cullen, Virginia
Talbot High School
THESIS: Examining the Microbes of Porphyra umbilicalis in the North Atlantic
Advisor: Susan Bralley
Thesis Description: The goal of this project was to examine the distribution and ASV diversity of bacteria associated with Porphyra umbilicalis with special focus on some isolates, including studies of their temperature dependence and consideration of how they may affect Porphyra.

Betelhem Abay
August 2020

Alan Baer
Biochemistry
Waterville, Maine
Waterville Senior High School
THESIS: Molecular Mechanisms Underlying the Effects of Antimicrobial Agent Triclosan on Cellular Function and Signaling. Triclosan Disrupts Immune Cell Function by Depression Calcium Influx via Calcium Activation of the Cytoplasm
Advisor: Jake Goeke
Thesis Description: Triclosan (TCS) is a formerly widespread antimicrobial agent commonly used in personal hygiene products. It has previously been shown that TCS inhibits the function of immune cells through an unknown mechanism. Here we show this inhibition is largely due to acidification of the cytoplasm by TCS.

Brianna Ballard
History, Anthropology
Detroit, Maine
Maine Central Institute
THESIS: Other Fish in the Sea: Black Sea Bass (Centropristis striata) and Evidence for Past Environmental Change in the Archaeological Record
Advisors: Bonnie Newsom and Sky Heller
Thesis Description: My research examined archaeological fish remains from the Gulf of Maine as indicators of past climate change. In this study, I examine archaeological samples from the Watershed Shelf Midden (64-7) in Someset, Maine to identify Black Sea Bass (Centropristis striata) within the site’s faunal collection.

Molly Bennett
Wildlife Ecology
Falmouth, Maine
Falmouth High School
THESIS: Characterizing the Range Shift of Two Peninsular Species in Maine
Advisor: Danielle Lavreque
Thesis Description: In a changing climate, white-footed and doe mice in Maine are currently undergoing range shifts. The objective of my thesis is to determine the historical and current range of each species in Maine. This gives insight as to how the two might differ as reservoirs for tick-borne disease, catalysts for forest community development, and models for mammalian range shifts.

Molly Brown
Communication Sciences & Disorders
Bar Harbor, Maine
Mount Desert Island High School
THESIS: Adult Comprehension of Adults With and Without Reading Comprehension Difficulties
Advisor: Christopher Grindrod
Thesis Description: This pilot study sought to answer if customer harassment training can influence server’s turnover intentions. Through five semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire, management involvement and workplace policy that addresses customer harassment were found to be the two most important factors in keeping employee turnover intentions and keeping employees happy.

Lila Bernheim
Anthropology, Human Dimensions of Climate Change
South China, Maine
Erskine Academy
THESIS: Exploring the Intersection of Climate Change and Cultural Heritage: The Case of Croatia's Eastern Adriatic Coast
Advisor: Gregory Zaro
Thesis Description: Humans have coexisted with their environment over the past 5,000 years along Croatia’s Central Dalmatian Coast, leaving vestiges of these engagements in the form of built and landscape cultural heritage. This thesis investigates the impacts of anthropogenic climate change on cultural heritage in Central Dalmatia and their implications for the future.

Olivia Bradstreet
Studio Art
Pawtuxet, Maine
Homeschool
THESIS: Paper, Pulp, and Place: Investigating Connections Through Process Art
Advisor: Ronald Nadeau
Thesis Description: I planned a process art project consisting of the development of a small home studio for handmade paper making. Through the paper sheets and paper cart I made, I explored communicating the body as both a felt object and experience that carries personal narratives through the intertwining fibers of the material itself and the actions of making and immersion joining the material and the artist.

Rachel Brooks
Biology
Clifton, Maine
John Bapst Memorial High School
THESIS: The Potential Roles of Melanopsin Signaling in Mediating the Effects of Environmental Light on Voluntary Ethanol Intake in Mice
Advisor: Alan Rosenwasser
Thesis Description: Our lab has recently found that changes in the laboratory lighting environment can alter voluntary alcohol intake in mice, which may be related to the seasonal variation in alcohol use seen in humans. In this study, we examined the possible role of melanopsin signaling in mediating the effects of photoperiod on alcohol intake.

Mara Budzi
Management
Portland, Maine
Portland High School
THESIS: Can Training Restaurants Servers on Managing Customer Harassment Influence Turnover Intentions?
Advisor: Matt Graham
Thesis Description: This pilot study sought to answer if customer harassment training can influence server’s turnover intentions. Through five semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire, management involvement and workplace policy that addresses customer harassment were found to be the two most important factors in keeping employee turnover intentions and keeping employees happy.

Cole Butler
Mathematics
Auburn, Maine
Edward Little High School
THESIS: A Mathematical Model of the Opioid Epidemic in the State of Maine
Advisor: Peter Stechlinski
Thesis Description: A mathematical model of the opioid epidemic is derived and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of various control measures, determine the optimal response, and project the direction of the opioid epidemic in the coming years.

Clifton Ballard
History; Anthropology
Brianna Ballard
June 2020

Molly Brown
Communication Sciences & Disorders
Bar Harbor, Maine
Mount Desert Island High School
THESIS: Adult Comprehension of Adults With and Without Reading Comprehension Difficulties
Advisor: Christopher Grindrod
Thesis Description: This pilot study sought to answer if customer harassment training can influence server’s turnover intentions. Through five semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire, management involvement and workplace policy that addresses customer harassment were found to be the two most important factors in keeping employee turnover intentions and keeping employees happy.
Bailey Carter

Zoology
Fairfield, Maine
Window High School

THESIS: The role of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, as a haven for non-native species.
Advisor: Marie Hayes

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the role of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, as a haven for non-native species.

Julie Casey

Political Science
Brunswick, Maine
Brunswick High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on political beliefs.
Advisor: Mark Broome

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the influence of social media on political beliefs and how they affect political behavior.

Andrew Cashman

Anthropology
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in relation to cultural identity.
Advisor: Jolene Blair

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the role of social media in relation to cultural identity and how it affects individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

Sophia Crockett-Current

New Media/Television
Actor, Maine
Baxter Academy for Technology and Science

THESIS: The influence of social media on the entertainment industry.
Advisor: Richard Corey

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the influence of social media on the entertainment industry and how it has changed the way media is consumed and created.

Emma Freeman

Microbiology
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of the immune system in fighting off infectious disease.
Advisor: Sally Molloy

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the role of the immune system in fighting off infectious disease and how it affects health outcomes.

Carmen Giguere

Physics
Wells, Maine
Waynflete High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on the mental health of teenagers.
Advisor: Michael Wittmann, John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the influence of social media on the mental health of teenagers and how it affects their well-being.

Hayley Hamlin

English
Manchester, New Hampshire
St. Paul’s School

THESIS: The influence of social media on language use.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on language use and how it affects communication.

Anna Killeen

History
Winthrop, Maine
Winthrop High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Fredric Rondeau

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Morgan Layden

Art History
Camden, Maine
Camden Hills High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on art and culture.
Advisor: Frederic Rondeau

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on art and culture and how it affects artistic expression.

Bryan Liang

Chemistry
Skowhegan, Maine
Skowhegan Area High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the influence of social media on scientific research and how it affects the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Andrea Lione

Spanish
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on language change.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on language change and how it affects language evolution.

Luke Libby

Economics
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping economic trends.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in shaping economic trends and how it affects market behavior.

Katie Martin

English
Manchester, New Hampshire
St. Paul’s School

THESIS: The influence of social media on literary production.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on literary production and how it affects authorship.

Emma McVey

Chemistry
Camden, Maine
Camden Hills High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on scientific discovery.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the influence of social media on scientific discovery and how it affects the process of scientific research.

Julia Mercurio

French
Dover, New Hampshire
Dover High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on language attitudes.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on language attitudes and how it affects language perception.

Kris Miller

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific communication.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in scientific communication and how it affects knowledge dissemination.

Morgan Mitchell

Economics
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping economic policy.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in shaping economic policy and how it affects government decision-making.

Rachel Murphy

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in political campaigns.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in political campaigns and how it affects political outcomes.

Arielle Newell

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on scientific collaboration.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on scientific collaboration and how it affects knowledge sharing.

Molly Ryan

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Caitlin Stimson

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Maddie T/Peak

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The influence of social media on scientific discovery.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on scientific discovery and how it affects the process of scientific research.

Anna Tran

History
Manchester, New Hampshire
St. Paul’s School

THESIS: The influence of social media on historical research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the influence of social media on historical research and how it affects the process of historical inquiry.

Morgan Wainwright

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific communication.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in scientific communication and how it affects knowledge dissemination.

Leah Waddell

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Allison Gould

Physics
Manchester, New Hampshire
St. Paul’s School

THESIS: The influence of social media on scientific discovery.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the influence of social media on scientific discovery and how it affects the process of scientific research.

Molly Kugler

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis investigates the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Alexa Mason

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Alicia McKelvey

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Lauren Olds

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Hannah Ravelo

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Hailey Rogers

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Abigail Ryan

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Alexa Turoff

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Kailyn Wbarnes

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Kaitlyn Willis

History
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in shaping public opinion.
Advisor: Kirsten Jacobson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how it affects political discourse.

Lindsey Wright

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Katie Yang

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Alex Zhang

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.

Alex Zhang

Chemistry
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School

THESIS: The role of social media in scientific research.
Advisor: John Thompson

Thesis Description: This thesis examines the role of social media in scientific research and how it affects the process of scientific investigation.
THESIS: Projecting Imperial Power: The Symphony of Aachen (816-818)
Advisor: Joel Anderson

Advisor: Alicia Cruz-Uribe

Advisor: Deborah Saber

Advisor: Jennie Woodard

Advisor: Alison Nightingale

Advisor: Christopher Nightingale
Honors Graduates

Ashley Kayser
Ecology & Environmental Sciences
Kennebunk, Maine
Kennebunk High School
THESIS: What’s Going to Happen to My Pancakes? The impacts of Climate Change Upon Blueberries and Sugar Maple
Advisor: Senja Birnholz
Thesis Description: An inquisition into the projections of climate change within the state of Maine, and their expected results on the growth and harvesting of blueberries and sugar maples. Discussion for how to address this issue will be included.

Michaela Kuhn
Forestry
Hollis/Brookline, New Hampshire
Salem High School East
THESIS: Effects of Repeated Intensive Harvesting Practices, Prescribed Burning, and Browsing on Northern Hardwood Forest Plant Communities
Advisor: Amber Roth
Thesis Description: This study aims to assess if plant density and ecological integrity are affected by strip-cut harvesting silvicultural practice, prescribed burning on slash left on site and slash residue left unburned, and mammalian browse. It includes an extensive inventory of plant species throughout Compartments 33, on the Penobscot Experimental Forest, a management unit that was recently harvested for the second time.

Katherine Larochelle
Biochemistry
Brewer, Maine
John Bapst Memorial High School
THESIS: Investigation of the Potential Roles of Calpain-5 C2 Domain
Advisor: Dorothy Crowell
Thesis Description: Calpain-5 (CAPN5) is a calcium-dependent enzyme that is important to the nervous system yet remains understudied. My project endeavored to investigate potential roles of one domain of CAPN5, its C2 domain, in mediating protein-protein interactions, lipid binding, and calcium ion coordination using both experimental and bioinformatic approaches.

Salvatore Magnano III
Ecology & Environmental Sciences
Southport, Connecticut
Southport High School
THESIS: Communication on Cultural and Environmental Implications of the Emerald Ash Borer
Advisor: John Daley
Thesis Description: The Thesis presented focuses on developing a communication plan that mainly addresses concerns of the Emerald Ash Borer in both aspects of environmental and cultural communities in Maine. A communications plan is created that is set up to be implemented in the near future as a possible state-wide to country-wide program.

Bryce Nichelman
Finance
Scarborough, Maine
Scarborough High School
THESIS: The Impact of Climate Change: An In-depth Analysis of Warming Ocean Water Temperatures and the Effects on Maine’s Lobstering Industry and Subsequent Effect on the State Economy
Advisor: Stefano Tropiano
Thesis Description: This research aims to highlight the correlation between the effects of climate change on potentially rising ocean water temperatures in the Gulf of Maine, and the possible resulting adverse impacts on Maine’s lobster industry and state economy.

Trey Overturf
Biology: Wildlife Ecology
Clinton, Maine
Central High School
THESIS: Landscape, but Not Weather, Affects Wild Turkey Winter Roost Site Selection
Advisor: Erik Blomberg
Thesis Description: Populations at a species’ northern range extent are often presented with challenges. Wild turkeys (Meleagris gallopavo) are near their northern range limit in Maine, where they nest in trees at night. We predicted that most selection would be affected by changing weather conditions. We also predicted that land cover composition would affect most site selection due to spatial variability in food availability.
Honors Graduates

Sophia Palangas
Communication Sciences & Disorders
Worcester, New Hampshire
Bishop Brady High School
THESIS: Assessing Health Related Quality of Life, Language Impairment, and Psychosocial Factors in Post-stroke Aphasia
Advisor: Christopher Grindrod

Emma Paradise
Biology
Auburn, Maine
Edward Little High School
THESIS: The Functional Role of Glia in Peripheral Metabolic Tissue
Advisor: Kristy Townsend
Thesis Description: With the ever-growing pandemic of obesity comes a number of consequential morbidities, including type 2 diabetes, secondary to which is diabetic neuropathy. The goal of this thesis was to study various cell types in peripheral metabolic tissue that may be contributing factors to nerve health, and how these cell types may be influenced or changed by biological factors, such as aging.

Harley Rogers
Political Science
Lincoln, Maine
Mattanaw converting Academy
THESIS: Female Political Campaigns: Just the Right Amount of Femininity
Advisors: Rachel Snell, Amy Fryd
Thesis Description: This thesis uses contemporary research on gender stereotypes to frame Margaret Chase Smith’s presidential primary race of 1964 in order to understand the ways female politicians shape their public identity in the presence of gender stereotypes.

Lauren Ryan
Biomedical Engineering
Babylon, New York
Babylon High School
THESIS: Comparison of Drying Methods of Cellulose Nanofibrils Low Density Foams and Their Effects on Structural Properties
Advisor: Michael Mason
Thesis Description: The purpose of this work is to compare two preparation methods of cellulose nanofibrils aerogels and quantify the effects each has on the structural properties of the material. These materials are promising in biomedicine, and as the knowledge base around CNF expands, will be able to proliferate into a variety of different industries, benefiting Maine’s economy and our global environment.

Maura Philippone
Communication Sciences & Disorders
Camillus, New York
West Genesee Senior High School
THESIS: The Use of Smartphone Apps as a Supplement to Transgender Voice and Communication Therapy
Advisor: Nancy Hall
Thesis Description: “Voice Analyst,” an app designed to provide biofeedback for a person’s speaking voice, as a supplement to transgender voice and communication therapy. The study was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, some correlations were found between “Voice Analyst” use and changes in participants’ speaking voices.

Bentley Simpson
Marine Science
Waterport, Maine
Hampton Academy
THESIS: A Biographical Assessment of Arctic Marine Funk
Advisors: Lee Karp-Boss, Laurie Connell
Thesis Description: This project utilizes dmiA and contextual data obtained from the Tara Oceans expedition to ascertain trends of marine fungi presence in the Arctic Ocean. Operational taxonomic unit (OTU) community compositions were primarily analyzed as functions of depth and station number. Data analysis was completed in Matlab. Results were then compared to recent findings in this area of study.

Katherine Skvorak
English
Windham, Maine
Windham High School
THESIS: Madonna, Monster and Other Stories: Satirist Short Fiction
Advisor: Gregory Howard
Thesis Description: Satirist literature has a long history of eschewing female writers from the canons and, as a result, female satirists often wrote to question the oppressive forces working against them. This thesis, comprised of eight short stories, acts as a continuation of the legacy of female satirists and examines the forces of invisible authority that govern our everyday lives.

James Seuch
Molecular & Cellular Biology; Biochemistry
Tunbridge, Connecticut
Tunbridge High School
THESIS: Jr. Viri Imaging of the Respiratory Burst Response to Influenza A Virus Infection
Advisor: Benjamin King
Thesis Description: Development of a Type-specific subunit line to enable observation of the innate immune response to influenza A virus using fluorescence microscopy. The Tryp2 biosensor differentially fluorescent dependent on the concentration of hydrogen peroxide. Mobile entry vector to be developed through a B.P Classic II reaction. Final plasmid vector to be developed using a LR Classic I reaction.
Benjamin Tero
Biochemistry
Portland, Maine
Casco Bay High School

**THESIS:** CpsA Protein-Protein Interactions in Group B Streptococcus
Advisor: Melody Neely

Thesis Description: This project is an attempt to characterize protein-protein interactions of the CpsA protein in Group B Streptococcus bacteria. The CpsA protein is associated with a number of cellular processes. However, the specific mechanisms of the various domains of CpsA are unknown. My work involved using biochemical techniques in an attempt to isolate binding partners of CpsA to better elucidate its function.

Elisabeth Therianoi
Journalsim; Political Science
Saint David, Maine
Madawaska High School

**THESIS:** An Examination of Persuasive Language Around Sexual Harassment Through the Lens of Anita Hill, Christine Blasey Ford, and Mimi Too
Advisor: Jennie Woodard

Thesis Description: This thesis explores the hypotheses that the Anita Hill Movement and Twitter have contributed to the changes in language used by individuals to describe sexual harassment and the survivors that come forward with their stories. To test this, this thesis compared language used in New York Times articles published in 1991 on Anita Hill and language used on Twitter in 2018 on Christine Blasey Ford.

Brittany Torchia
Marine Science
Griswed, Connecticut
Griswold High School

**THESIS:** Confirmation of Presence of Parahaplospora carinii in Carcassomous Population of Maine
Advisor: Ivan Bricknell

Thesis Description: 500 Carcasses were collected, euthanized, and dissected so that their tissues could be analyzed for the microsporidian parasite Parahaplospora carinii. Tissues were analyzed by PCR and histology. Seven out of the 500 crabs were found to be infected with the parasite making this the first study to record the presence of the parasite in the United States.

Anthony Zenga
Wildlife Ecology
Easton, Pennsylvania
Easton Area High School

**THESIS:** Assessing Lipid Content in Migrating Alewife
Advisor: Joseph Zydlewski

Thesis Description: Alewife is an economically, ecologically, and culturally important fish to Maine. They are an anomalous species, meaning they migrate from the ocean into freshwater to spawn. This is very energy intensive, and has implications on an individual’s survival and reproductive success. Understanding the lipid content of these fish may help inform better conservation strategies.

Meredith Stephens
Marketing
Rockville, Maryland
Our Lady of Good Counsel High School

**THESIS:** Engagement of Consumers: A Case Study Between Peloton and ClassPass
Advisor: Robert Wheeler, Clarissa Henry

Thesis Description: Consumer engagement is a concept that is fast becoming more important in the modern world. It refers to the way a consumer interacts with a brand, product, or service. This thesis focuses on this concept, looking at two different companies, Peloton and ClassPass.

Jessica Sweeney
Sociology
San Diego, California
John Bapst Memorial High School

**THESIS:** Terms of Enslavement: The Jewish Experience in a Rural New England Town
Advisor: Karin Sponer

Thesis Description: For this thesis, I conducted ethnographic interviews surrounding the Jewish experience in a rural New England town. I then transcribed and analyzed the interviews, finding three ways in which the Jewish community experienced erasure or inclusion. I then used the data to identify implications for policy on a broader level.

Jasmine Walte
Biochemistry
Southport, Maine
Maine School of Science and Mathematics

**THESIS:** Genomic and Proteomic Effects of Red Raspberry (Rubus idaeus) Consumption on the Perivascular Adipose Tissue of the Obese Zucker Rat, a Model of Human Metabolic Syndrome
Advisor: Dorothy Klimis-Zacas

Thesis Description: This study investigates the effects of red raspberry (Rubus idaeus) diet-enrichment on inflammation of perivascular adipose tissue in obese Zucker rats as a model of human metabolic syndrome.

Spencer Ward
Mathematics
Lewiston, Maine
Maine School of Science and Mathematics

**THESIS:** An Evolutionary Approach to Crowdsourcing Mathematics Education
Advisor: Justin Dimmel

Thesis Description: A use of evolution-based epistemology to devise a new model for crowdsourcing knowledge. Includes early designs for a website applying this model to mathematics education.

Samuel Varga
Finance, Management
End, Hungary
Vinissum Mohdy Gimesium

**THESIS:** Predictions of IPO Underpricing
Advisor: Grant Miles

Thesis Description: For my Honors thesis project, I researched variables that predict IPO underpricing, testing two hypotheses.

Lena Staakiak
Zoology
Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin
Whitefish Bay High School

**THESIS:** Leveraging the Transparent Zebrafish to Test for Conserved Gene Function Between Mammals And Fish
Advisor: Robert Wheeler, Clarissa Henry

Thesis Description: Adapter protein myd88 is responsible for activating an immune response by initiating important signaling pathways that recruit immune cells to clear infection. In this project, we found that myd88 plays an important role in protecting against hindbrain infection, and that myd88 plays a selective role in immunity to C. albicans with specific pathways it induces.

Annmarie Thuma
Chemical Engineering
Windham, Maine
Windham High School

**THESIS:** Using Cellulose Nanofibrils and Calcium Carbonate in Single-Use Utensils
Advisor: Grant Miles

Thesis Description: For my Honors thesis, I conducted a feasibility study of using a mixture of cellulose nanofibrils (CNF) and ground calcium carbonate (CaCO3) to replace single-use plastic utensils, focusing on the dewatering and drying of the mixtures, and a techno-economic analysis of making the utensils on a large scale.

Lena Staakiak
Zoology
Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin
Whitefish Bay High School

**THESIS:** Leveraging the Transparent Zebrafish to Test for Conserved Gene Function Between Mammals And Fish
Advisor: Robert Wheeler, Clarissa Henry

Thesis Description: Adapter protein myd88 is responsible for activating an immune response by initiating important signaling pathways that recruit immune cells to clear infection. In this project, we found that myd88 plays an important role in protecting against hindbrain infection, and that myd88 plays a selective role in immunity to C. albicans with specific pathways it induces.
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Meet Our very impressive inaugural group of Honors Ambassadors! They come from different colleges, cohorts, and majors, but are united in their passion for the Honors College.

Honors Ambassadors assist with prospective and accepted student recruitment events such as campus visits, open houses, and high school programs. They also bring their experiences and enthusiasm to community-building efforts with current students from meeting one-on-one with first-year students to helping create programs that cross cohorts. As well, we welcomed their participation at Homecoming, where our past graduates shared stories with these future ones.

This dynamic and energetic group has already accomplished a lot. Bailey West, who annually organizes the Honors College team for the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, was joined this year by fellow Ambassadors, including Kate Follansbee who gathered a team of Black Bears to walk with her. Joining forces with the Honors College Student Advisory Board members, Ambassadors Katie Tims, Dominique DiSpirito, Bailey West, Megan Driscoll and Gabby Sands organized an event on Giving Tuesday collecting more than 500 much-needed personal care items for UMaine’s Black Bear Exchange.

We are excited to welcome these Honors Ambassadors and look forward to working with them to build a strong, student-centered Honors community!

To learn more about each of our Honors Student Ambassadors, visit us online at honors.umaine.edu/honors-ambassadors

The 2020-21 Honors Student Ambassadors. Top row from left: Bailey West ’21, Gabby Sands ’22, Katie Tims ’21; Bottom row from left: Megan Driscoll ’21, Dominique DiSpirito ’22, Michael Fortado ’23, Kate Follansbee ’21. All photos courtesy of the subjects.

Honors College
Student Ambassadors
A NEW HONORS INITIATIVE

To learn more about each of our Honors Student Ambassadors, visit us online at honors.umaine.edu/honors-ambassadors