Honors Alumna “Pays It Forward”

For the fourth straight year, the Honors College has successfully nominated outstanding alums for recognition by the University of Illinois Alumni Association. The most recent Honors College winner of one of these impressive UIAA awards is Ms. Carshae D. Dahl, who received the 2014 Loyalty Award for Exceptional Alumni Service at our new student welcome reception on August 24, 2014.

Carshae graduated from the College of Business Administration with a degree in economics from the College of Business Administration, received the 2014 Loyalty Award with a degree in economics from the College of Business Administration, received the 2014 Loyalty Award for Exceptional Alumni Service to the Honors College.

During her acceptance speech, Carshae encouraged the first-year Honors students to make a commitment to give back: “As future Honors students, I want to speak to you about the importance of giving back to the Honors College, whether it be donation of time, money, or support. When I was a student, my parents were not in a position to help me pay for school. I was given the opportunity to sit where you all sit today because of the generosity of those who came before me. And, we all have a responsibility to the Honors College to ensure that current and future students will continue to have these same—and better—opportunities going forward. We must all take our obligation to give back seriously, or these opportunities created by the Honors College will be lost.”

The Honors College is proud of Carshae and grateful for her generosity. Congratulations!

Allie Dowd Memorial Scholarship established in the Honors College

Hanna Hixson, an Honors College freshman, is the proud recipient of a unique four-year scholarship for an incoming student, the Allie Dowd Memorial Scholarship. This generous scholarship was created in memory of Allie Dowd, who tragically died in an accident in 2004 when she was nine years old. To honor what would have been Allie’s first year of college, her parents Diane and Brian created a contest where participants could vote via Facebook to determine where Allie should have gone to college. Of 14 participating universities, UIC obtained more than 1,000 votes more than the second place finisher. In recognition of UIC’s spirit, the Dowd family donated a $40,000 scholarship for an Honors College student—$10,000 per year for four years.

In high school in southeast Ohio, Hanna was a varsity athlete in volleyball, participated in student government, and took introductory college courses at Ohio University. She is very grateful that she got the opportunity to come to UIC with the Allie Dowd Memorial Scholarship. She is already actively involved as the Freshman Representative for the Honors College Advisory Board (HCAB), the official student representative organization in the College.

On October 31, Diane Dowd and her daughter Bailey traveled to Chicago and met Hanna. Says Hanna: “I am so appreciative of this scholarship! There is no way that I could have come to UIC as an out-of-state student without it. I am truly grateful to the Dowd family, and hope that someday I can provide a scholarship like this to a student.”

The Honors College is proud to honor Allie’s memory, and grateful to the Dowd family for making Hanna’s dreams possible. Gifts like these make the difference between success and failure for many UIC Honors students.
Message from the Dean

Dear Honors College Alumni, Faculty Members, Parents, Students, and Friends:

The UIC Honors College grows stronger each year, reflecting the growing achievements of 1,500 outstanding students and over 350 Faculty Fellows from every discipline. Throughout these pages, you will see examples of how our student stand out as leaders in the classroom, in the laboratory, and in the community, and how our faculty are recognized across campus, the nation, and the world for their excellence in research and teaching. It is no wonder that two-thirds of Honors freshmen tell me that they would not have come to UIC had there been no Honors College.

The Honors College allows UIC to recruit the highest achieving students at the university. The enhanced academic opportunity, challenge, and support allows our students to achieve the graduation rates enjoyed by so-called “elite” public and private universities, 88%, compared to the university average of 65%. In other words, the Honors College provides the resources, support, and experiences for students to succeed (bottoms@uic.edu).

Best wishes,

[Dean's signature]

State and National Leadership Initiatives

The Honors College has long been a point of pride for UIC and a national leader, modeling innovative programming for peer institutions. In the past year, there has been regional and national recognition:

Host of the 2014 Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Honors Education Meeting:

In May 2014, the UIC Honors College hosted the biennial CIC (the “Big 10 plus”) Honors Education annual meeting where more than 35 Honors deans, directors, and their executive staff met for two days to share best practices and foster future directions in Honors education. The meeting spurred the development of an inter-institutional working group on assessment.

Dean Beatts met with this group in the summer at a “fly-in” at O’Hare International Airport, where Ohio State, Minnesota, and Michigan State deans learned about UIC’s multivariate database documenting the value of Honors, and planned a national presentation on the topic at the 2015 meeting of Honors Education in Research Universities (HERU)

Planning Committee for the Honors Education at Research Universities (HERU) 2015 National Conference: Dean Beatts serves as a member of the planning committee for the second biennial HERU conference, May 18-19, 2015 at Oregon State University. The UIC Honors College was a founding member of the steering committee that launched this conference in May 2013 at Pennsylvania State University.

Founding of “The Journal of Honors in Higher Education”: With co-editor Dr. Nichola Outgump from Pennsylvania State University, Dean Beatts is the founding co-editor of a new journal focused on Honors education. The first round of submissions will be accepted in conjunction with the Honors Education at Research Universities (HERU) Conference in May 2015.

Recent Alumnus Already Making a Difference

Hugh Vondracek, a 2014 Honors College graduate who majored in Political Science, recently had his Senior Capstone Thesis Project entitled “A Single Raised Hand; Prospects for Peace in the Sudanese Revolution;” this original piece of research has earned him prestigious awards, including the United States Department of State Critical Languages Scholarship. This allowed him to travel to Sudan from the University of Dayton in Turkey, and led to an internship at the U.S. Embassy in Turkey. Hugh received the McKelvie Scholarship, which promotes public service leadership, and the Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Fellowship. He is currently earning his M.Sc. in international relations at the University of Glasgow, Scotland through the Glasgow University Trust International Leadership Scholarship. Hugh is the 2014 Donald and Leah Ridde Prize recipient, who recognizes the most outstanding graduating senior in both academic achievement and leadership at UIC.

Thank you to all of our donors—we greatly appreciate your support!

Honor Roll of Donors for Fiscal Year 2014

The following individuals and organizations have made gifts to the Honors College in fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014). Thanks to their support, the Honors College is able to offer enhanced student programming, scholarships, and financial support for students in research, study abroad, and other academic endeavors.

Now is a great time to become a supporter of the college with your gift to the annual fund. Simply log on to our online giving page at www.uic.edu/honors/alumni/giving and make your gift today!
Forty graduates from Chicago Public Schools are among the 83 recipients of this fall’s inaugural Fresh Start scholarship in the University of Illinois at Chicago's Honors College.

“These are the strongest students at the university. They stand out as classroom leaders, who seek out intellectual challenges and engagement,” says Bette L. Bottoms, dean of the Honors College and professor of psychology. “But their financial needs are great. We are pleased to support their achievements as they enter the UIC Honors College community.”

The award, which is based on merit and financial need, ranges from $1,000 to $5,000 and can be used toward any cost of attendance, such as tuition, housing or books.

In addition to the 40 Fresh Start scholarship awards, another dozen 2014 CPS graduates accepted the President’s Award Program—Honors Scholarship, which is the Honors College’s most prestigious award, covering four years of tuition and housing for exemplary incoming first-year students. Additional Honors College freshman scholarships were awarded to three other CPS graduates.

The UIC Honors College, with approximately 1,500 students and 330 faculty fellows, provides access to merit and need-based scholarships, honors courses, and competitive research. The six-year graduation rate is 88 percent, rivaling or exceeding the rate for national universities.

Achievements of Honors College Students: Prestigious National and Campus Award Recipients

Honors College students make up about 70% of UIC’s winners of prestigious national scholarships and awards. With support from the College’s Office of Special Scholarship Programs (OSSP), led by Director Beth Powers and Scholarship Specialist Sheena Miller, over 177 Honors College students have been awarded nationally competitive scholarships since 2000. Although located within the Honors College, OSSP supports all UIC students in preparing for nationally competitive awards. Select recent Honors College recipients include:

FULLBRIGHT FELLOWSHIP: for college graduates to study, conduct research, or teach English abroad • LEA CROWLEY: senior in History and Anthropology, to teach English in Korea • PONNU PADIYARA: senior in Biological Sciences and Psychology, to teach English in Turkey

WHITAKER INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP: for U.S. students to study biomedical engineering abroad • NIKHIL BOMMAKANTI: senior in Bioengineering, to conduct research at the University of Oxford

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT CRITICAL LANGUAGES SCHOLARSHIP: oversees summer intensive language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences • NEHARIKA AKKOOR: senior in Philosophy, studying Hindi in Jaipur, India • BRIDGET HANSEN: junior in Anthropology and History, studying Arabic in Nizwa, Oman

The UIC Honors College, established in 1982, the six-year graduation rate for students who entered the Honors College in 2008 is 90 percent for Asian American students, 86 percent for whites, 85 percent for Latinos and 75 percent for African-Americans.

Established in 1982, the UIC Honors College grew out of a longtime effort to create a unique educational environment to explore issues in depth, through special projects and classes. Students must maintain a 3.4 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) and complete special honors enrichment activities, including a senior thesis.

Applications to the Honors College have doubled over the last two years. The first-to-second-year retention rate is 92 percent, while the six-year graduation rate is 88 percent, rivaling or exceeding the rate for national universities.

In addition to access to merit and need-based scholarships, Honors College students enjoy “honors only” facilities; civic engagement opportunities; and the mentor- ing of Honors College faculty fellows, who offer guidance on advanced research projects.

For UIC senior Sahar Shah, the Capstone project is more than an Honors College requirement; it represents years of hard work and his driving passion for psychology and neurosci ence. The Capstone project serves as the culmination of an Honors College student’s undergraduate experience. It provides them with the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills from the classroom to a relevant research question.

Capstone Focus: The Brain in Translation for Sarah Deshpande, Honors College Freshman

Shah’s achievement is the result of the great amount of time and discipline that he devoted to his Capstone. After working in Dr. Raney’s lab for three years, he developed a strong incentive to learn more about psycholinguistics, Shah received an Honors College Research Grant and won first place in the Social Sciences Division at the UIC Student Research Forum last April.

Shah’s achievement is the result of the great amount of time and discipline that he devoted to his Capstone. After working in Dr. Raney’s lab for three years, he developed a strong incentive to learn more about neurosciences and its connection to linguistics. As a future medical student, Shah hopes to further investigate this topic by using different methods of measuring brain activity, such as functional MRIs.

Shah encourages all Honors College students to start working on their Capstone projects early in order to help complete meaningful, innovative research. He advises taking full advantage of the various opportunities presented by the Honors College which will “ultimately create a unique and fun UIC experience.”

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The UIC Honors College has emerged as a leader of the Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success (collaborative.uic.edu), with Dean Bottoms as its Executive Director, and Thrive Chicago—groups of universities, high schools, non-profits, and others working together to promote college readiness and student success in the city. As such, the UIC Honors College serves as an important model of effective student success initiatives not only for the university at large, but also for the region. Students in the Honors College had an average six-year graduation rate of 82% in 2013-14 (rising to 88% for 2014-2015), compared to a university average of 58% (now 60%). This advantage holds even after accounting for entering ACT score, unweighted high school GPA, high school percentile rank, and number of entering AP credits. (The six-year rate is the national benchmark; most Honors students graduate in four years.) The class that entered in Fall 2008 has achieved a record six-year graduation rate of 98%. The average GPA of Honors students at UIC remains steady at 3.68.

For more information about the Honors College’s impressive statistics, you can view our 2013-14 Annual Report at http://www.uic.edu/honors/about/documents/Honors_College_Annual_Report_13_14_Final.pdf

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**2014 BY THE NUMBERS**

- **Honors Freshman Core Courses**: 35
- **Honors Seminars**: 30
- **Honors Faculty Instructors**: 57
- **Honors Faculty Fellows**: 356
- **Honors College Students**: 1,588
- **Honors College Graduates**: 300

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**Honors College Students:**

- **Racial/Ethnic Diversity**
  - White: 38%
  - African American: 35%
  - Other: 5%
  - Hispanic: 16%
  - Asian American: 6%

- **Degree-Granting Colleges**
  - Liberal Arts & Sciences: 68%
  - Engineering: 13%
  - Nursing: 8%
  - Architecture, Design & the Arts: 4%
  - Business: 2%
  - Applied Health: 5%
  - Education, Pharmacy, Urban Planning: <1% each

- **Other**
  - Medicine: 4%
  - Pharmacy, Nursing: 7%
  - Design & the Arts: 4%
  - Medicine, Engineering: 6%

- **Honors Activities**
  - Honors Core or Seminar: 42%
  - Internship or Study Abroad: 4%
  - Other Research: 11%
  - Student Organization or Publication: 3%
  - Other Service: 12%
  - Research Thesis: 19%
  - Capstone Research Thesis: 19%
  - Other Honors Course: 9%

- **Financial Need**
  - Pell Eligible: 38%*
  - Not Pell: 47%**
  - Above Pell Threshold with serious financial need: 15%**

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*Pell eligible students are determined to have a low or zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to the cost of their education.

**Students who are above the Pell threshold, yet whose Expected Family Contribution does not cover the cost of tuition, let alone fees, housing, books, and other educational expenses.

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**A PROFILE OF SUCCESS**

**2010-2014 Honors College Fundraising Results**

The Honors College has quadrupled its fundraising over the past five fiscal years, allowing the College to provide more students with much-needed scholarships. Even so, our students’ increasing financial need far outstrips what we can currently provide. Every dollar donated makes a real, immediate difference in the lives of our students.

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**Scholarships**

- 2010: $20,000
- 2011: $30,000
- 2012: $40,000
- 2013: $50,000
- 2014: $60,000

**Enrollment Growth**

- 2010: 100
- 2011: 200
- 2012: 300
- 2013: 400
- 2014: 500

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Follow the UIC Honors College Facebook page and the Alumni & Friends LinkedIn group for news and events and to connect with alumni, James Scholars, and friends of the College.