

# HONORS PROGRAM FALL NEWSLETTER

Honors Student Association  
Madison Larimore, Co-editor  
Harim Won, PR Officer

**December 2015 Issue**

## Meet the New Honors Advisor: James Keating

Madison Larimore, Co-editor

The Honors Program would like to welcome James Keating, the new Honors Academic Advisor!

James Keating loves working with students; it's rewarding for him to help you realize your goals. As a first-generation college student, he really appreciated anyone who reached out or helped guide him through the process. He sees advising as his opportunity to pay it forward, and he considers himself lucky to get to work specifically with Honors: high-achieving students who are already doing truly amazing work!

James was born in Denver, Colorado, before moving to Ogallala, Nebraska, a town of less than 5,000 people. He always enjoyed the city lifestyle and is happy to be in the Omaha Metro. He received his bachelor's in political science and international studies from the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and he acquired his master's from our home, UNO.

His door is always open. Feel free to stop in for a chat, to get something off of your chest, or to just say welcome! James can be found in Room 208 in Kayser, and can be contacted at [jkeating@unomaha.edu](mailto:jkeating@unomaha.edu).



**UNIVERSITY  
HONORS PROGRAM**

# Honors Fall Symposium Presenters

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The Honors Program commends the Honors Students who are graduating this December! They have worked very hard; we celebrate this accomplishment with them and wish them the best in all of their future endeavors.

Listed are each of the graduates, thesis title, their faculty mentor, their major, and college.

## **Ebrahim Abdulsattar**

“NebraskaMentalHealth.com Appointment System”

Mentor: Paul Van Vliet

Major: Management Information Systems

College of Information Science and Technology

## **Alissa Anderson**

“Spalding Phonics”

Mentor: Sara Tingelhoff

Major: Elementary Education

College of Education

## **John Cahoon**

“In Vitro Cytotoxicity of Antifungal Compound Caspofungin”

Mentor: Kristen Johnson

Major: Biotechnology

College of Arts and Sciences

## **Johanna Jones**

“The Nature of Violence in Latin America”

Mentor: Joseph Allen

Major: Criminology and Criminal Justice

College of Public Affairs and Community Service



## **Kourtney Osentoski**

“The Effects of Proactive Aggression and Reactive Aggression on Anger”

Mentor: Jonathan Santo

Major: Criminology and Criminal Justice

College of Public Affairs and Community Service

## **Jake Quinn**

“Transformations in IPG”

Mentor: Harvey Siy

Major: Computer Science

College of Information Science and Technology

## **Isaac Thompson**

“The Cost and Benefits of Studying Abroad”

Mentor: Pauline Brennan

Major: Criminology and Criminal Justice

College of Public Affairs and Community Service



# Honors Student Involvement

## Asia Tour with the UNO Jazz Band

Emily Berry

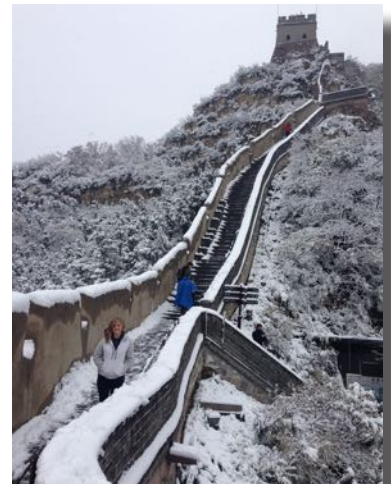
I recently returned from a trip with the UNO Jazz Band to Asia, where we spent almost two weeks performing, collaborating, and learning. Our first destination was Shizuoka, Japan, Omaha's first sister city. We played a concert with the Shizuoka University jazz ensemble and were given time to talk to them about their life and culture. All of the students had very advanced English speaking skills and were so kind.

My favorite performance was at the Daidogei World Cup in Shizuoka. This is a street performance festival that involves over ninety performing groups from fifteen different countries. The festival is held in the downtown area and has about forty different performance locations. Thousands of people attend the event every year and its purpose is to celebrate the arts and bring life to the city.

Our last stop was China, where we had performances at Xi'an Jiaotong University and China University of Petroleum. These are very prestigious universities in China, and we had the privilege to get to know some of the students going to school there. We were able to work with a Chinese folk music ensemble and learn about some

of the unique traditional instruments that they use. They were also extremely interested in our culture, and they had many questions about life in America. Many of the students that we met plan on coming to study at some prestigious American universities, like Stanford or Harvard.

Prior to this trip, I had no understanding of Asian culture. Every person we met in Japan and China was generous, friendly, and sincere. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to travel with UNO. It really opened my eyes and gave me a better understanding of the world we live in.



# Honors Student Involvement (cont.)

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## Running and Winning

Erin Wiebe

Amongst the monotony of classes to attend, papers to write, and tests to study for, it is easy to get caught up in the everyday routine of college life. That's why experiences like Running and Winning are so important. Service learning opportunities like this one remind us of the value in doing things for others. In Professor Rita Shaughnessy's Honors Public Speaking class this semester, we partnered with the National League of Women Voters to host a symposium for local female high school students and female politicians. The purpose of this event was to break down stereotypes about female politicians and to get some of the girls in attendance more interested in politics.

The interactions that were fostered at Running and Winning were not only beneficial to the high school students in attendance, but to the college students lending a hand as well. As part of the curriculum for this Honors class, we prepared the research and maps for the girls to use in their mock election activity. Additionally, some of the class prepared decorations for the event and still others went to the event and served as facilitators at the tables. It was an excellent experience to walk these girls through the process of sorting through the information and formulating persuasive speeches. Some of the girls seemed to really benefit from the experience and were inspired by the female politicians and their message that gender doesn't matter.

It was rewarding to be able to take part in that experience. Some of the politicians made it clear that, despite the struggles they faced, particularly as women under the critical lens of the media and their male counterparts, their service has been beyond worth it. The girls connected with the women's stories of overcoming adversity and found inspiration in their successes. And as a facilitator it was wonderful to partake in the experience and see the girls grow throughout the event. This service learning opportunity allowed us as students to give back to the community and help girls grow into better leaders.

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## West Point Experience

Bailey Rosecrans

Waking up every morning at the break of dawn to the sound of a cannon firing isn't descriptive of a typical college experience, but it's a daily reality for student cadets at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York. I got to experience this, along with other aspects of cadet life, at the beginning of November while I was a delegate at the Student Conference on United States Affairs. The conference focused on collaboration from students across the world to address international policy issues and their impact on United States National Security. Along with these intense roundtable discussion on policy issues, the student delegates stayed with cadet hosts on the West Point campus to learn about and experience cadet life in order to facilitate understanding between civilians and military personnel.





# Honors Student Involvement (cont.)

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At the conference, I got to hear various speakers from the United Nations, international organizations, the military, and even former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in order to learn how policy-makers influence what happens in the world. Then, myself along with the other delegates practiced drafting and writing policy recommendations in various areas. I was a part of the demographics roundtable, where I studied how the changing populations of BRIC nations could possibly affect the United States in the future. As a political science major, it was really fascinating to see how the concepts I learn about in class are used in the real world of policy-making.

While I am glad that my college life isn't the same intense, structured routine that West Point cadets endure, I am glad that I got to experience it for a short time. I learned an incredible amount at the conference, both about military life and foreign policy. These experiences are lessons that I will take with me for years to come as I continue my education and begin my career.

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## Get to Know your HSA Representatives

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Alex Wasinger, HSA Representative - Sophomore Class

[awasinger@unomaha.edu](mailto:awasinger@unomaha.edu)

Do you know the students who represent you in the Honors Student Association? The spotlight is on Alex Wasinger, one of the sophomore representatives.

My name is Alex Wasinger, and I am one of the Honors Student Association representatives. My family is the most important thing to me, especially my mother: she guided me to where I am today. Today, I am a sophomore mathematics major. I went to Papillion La-Vista High School, and I took two years after high school to get back into school. I am now starting to get more involved on campus. Being able to have a representative position this year was very important to me because I was finally able to contribute more and do more for UNO. I believe that the UNO Honors Program is starting to grow and I'm glad to be a part of it because it will only continue to expand and evolve for the better. I want to not only build on the great events we currently organize, but also bring new ideas to the program. In the upcoming years, I hope I will be able to have a bigger impact and help push the Honors Program to its full potential.

These representatives help lead the organization by demonstrating leadership, coordinating volunteers for events, and planning activities. All in all, they keep the HSA on track. Get to know the rest of your Honors representatives today!

Emily Pachunka	President	Erin Dabbs	Sophomore Representative
Cristian Valquier	Vice-President	Sara Pinkelman	Sophomore Representative
Justin Korth	Treasurer	Sofia Rahmanzai	Sophomore Representative
Josiah Krutz	Secretary	Alex Wasinger	Sophomore Representative
Harim Won	Public Relations Officer	Delaney Jackson	Freshman Representative
JoVanna Balquier	Senior Representative	Kati Kuuseoks	Freshman Representative
Emma Flynn	Junior Representative	Natalia Nolting	Freshman Representative
Ananya Mitra	Junior Representative	Bailey Sweeney	Freshman Representative

# Semester Recap

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## Fall Soccer Tailgate | Tuesday, Sep. 22nd Kayser Hall

The Soccer Tailgate was a success! We met in Kayser to play some icebreaker games and to eat hotdogs courtesy of the Honors Program. Immediately afterwards, we cheered the UNO Mavericks Women's Soccer team as they played against Missouri State at 7:00 PM. Go Mavs!



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## Honors Program Advising Lunch | Tuesday, Oct. 13th Kayser Hall 208

Lucy Morrison, Honors Program Director

[lxmorrison@unomaha.edu](mailto:lxmorrison@unomaha.edu)

Advising lunch was yummy! Honors students came and saw what Honors had to offer in Spring 2016, ate delicious sandwiches, and received advising on how to make Honors a part of their next semester.





# Semester Recap

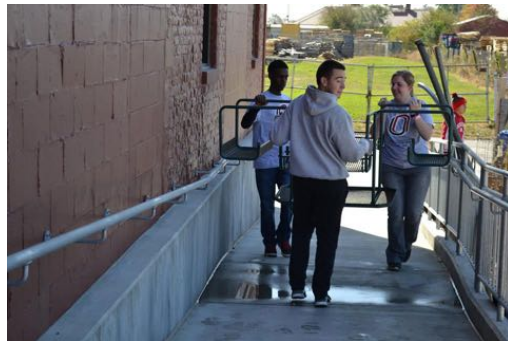
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## Honors Program Three Days of Service | Fall Break 2015

CEC/Habitat for Humanity

Around 75 Honors students chose to be a part of something bigger than themselves and participated in the annual Three Days of Service event, volunteering for the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. In recognition of their efforts, the *Omaha World-Herald* wrote a feature on the service project on their October 20th *Good News* column! The article quoted Alyssa Wiese, an Honors freshman, “A well-rounded education should involve some community service, giving back.” Good work Honors Students! We encourage you to keep staying active in the community and across the campus through the many service projects that the Honors Program organizes throughout the year.

The full Omaha World Herald article can be found here: [http://www.omaha.com/news/goodnews/uno-students-spend-part-of-annual-fall-break-helping-habitat/article\\_ff64267e-767b-11e5-83a2-939b12cec50d.html](http://www.omaha.com/news/goodnews/uno-students-spend-part-of-annual-fall-break-helping-habitat/article_ff64267e-767b-11e5-83a2-939b12cec50d.html)



# Semester Recap

## HSA Fall Social | Saturday, Oct. 24th

Roskens Hall 201

Delaney Jackson, HSA Representative

[djackson@unomaha.edu](mailto:djackson@unomaha.edu)

The semester is approaching its end, and if you're like me, you're just beginning to realize how much you have actually learned. Perhaps the knowledge you gathered wasn't limited to what was covered in the classroom. Earlier this year, the Honors Student Association hosted a Fall Social that offered students the opportunity to meet in an environment where they were encouraged to share their opinions and knowledge on controversial issues and create a conversation with this information.



The Fall Social proposed discussion on targeted killings, physician assisted suicide, genetically modified organisms, and amnesty granted to children of illegal immigrants. These are pressing issues in America today, but most of the time it's extremely difficult to talk about them in a composed manner. As a participant in the Social, I wasn't sure what to expect. I didn't know how many people were going to be for or against the issues at hand;



I only knew where I stood. This is where, in my opinion, the organization of the Social became unique and vitally important. When conversation becomes a planned event, you have time to consider what you know and don't know. How much legitimate evidence do you actually have at your disposal? Is it really enough to justify your ideas? Even before I got to the social, research resulting from these questions began to sway my thinking. I saw the topics for what they really were: not just political issues, but human issues that are much more complex than we'd often like to believe. When the Social actually took place and other students brought not only their research, but their life experiences, I began to change my mind on issues that many people refuse to even talk about.

I think that's what I really learned from this event. Change is possible, even if you believe it's impossible. People are always encouraged to keep an open mind, but I finally understand what it means. It means being prepared and ready for change at any moment; observing your ideas as soft balls of clay rather than completed sculptures that could be broken. I encourage students to take advantage of their academic environment as I did, and to discuss issues that people may not always feel comfortable talking about. In the end, change can be an incredibly enriching experience.





# Semester Recap

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## Honors Program Fall Blood Drive | Tuesday, Nov. 3rd

Milo Bail Student Center

Cristian Valquier, HSA Vice President

[cvalquier@unomaha.edu](mailto:cvalquier@unomaha.edu)

The Blood Drive was an incredible success! Despite the overwhelming effort it took to schedule 86 appointments when there were only 90 possible slots, we had so many people help out on the day. The final figures have been updated on the Red Cross website. Our goal was to collect 66 donations and we managed to gather all 90 of the possible donations! As you may remember from last semester, we were able to donate 69 units - how awesome to have surpassed that number! Great job to everybody involved; thank you all.



Sarah Schmidt, a regular donor with the Honors Program, saved up to three lives with her donation!

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## Honors LLC Holiday Social | Thursday, Dec. 3rd

Maverick Village Clubhouse

Honors Living Learning Community RA Alex organized a fantastic holiday social for the Maverick Village LLC! It was a fun night filled with building gingerbread houses, creating decorations and, of course, making memories with a fantastic community of Honors students!



# Semester Recap

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## Honors Student Association Meetings for Spring 2016

Emily Pachunka, HSA President

[epachunka@unomaha.edu](mailto:epachunka@unomaha.edu)

The first meeting of the Spring 2016 semester will be on Tuesday, January 19 at 5:30pm with the room to be determined! We will meet every Tuesday at 5:30, and all of HSA (that's you!) is welcome to join us on the first meeting of every month, which will include:

February 2

March 1

April 5

Also, be sure to mark your calendars for the Spring Blood Drive on Thursday, February 18!

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## Summary of Honors Intro to Gerontology and English Composition

Congratulations to Professors Lyn Holley and Matthew Marx and their joint Honors Intro to Gerontology/English Composition class for a terrific end to their course! This class featured a service learning component in which all members of the class partnered with elders from the Omaha community. The photo featured to the right includes the students and their elder partners at an event that completed their service learning project. Through this course, Honors students engaged with the community and gained valuable perspective from some amazing community members!



If you would like to contribute a piece to our next newsletter, contact us at [unohonors@unomaha.edu](mailto:unohonors@unomaha.edu)! We can give you topics to consider, or you may present ideas of your own. Please make sure any submissions are emailed to the above email address by Monday, January 25th.

Kayser Hall 208 | 402-554-2696 | [honors.unomaha.edu](http://honors.unomaha.edu)

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