



THE DISTINCTION

FALL 2023



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

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University of Nebraska at Omaha
Honors Program

Celebrating Fall 2023 Honors Graduates



Alaina Mann

Colleges of Arts and Sciences &
Communication, Fine Arts, and Media

Majors: Biology & Studio Art

“Art of Aging- a Portraiture Study”

Advisor: Mark Gilbert & Jave Yoshimoto

Allison Karr

College of Business Administration

Major: Business Administration

“How to Build Student Organizations in a
Post-Pandemic World: A Strategic Analysis”

Advisor: Leif Lundmark

Ashley Honeyman

College of Education, Health, and Human
Sciences

Major: Elementary Education

“Teaching Phonics Mastery Through the
Uses of Differentiated and Instructional
Strategies”

Advisor: Saundra L. Shillingstad

Kapri Case

College of Education, Health, and Human
Sciences

Major: Education

“Animal and Plant Defenses Unit Capstone”

Advisor: Saundra L. Shillingstad

Nolan Bennett

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: English

“Chinese Tales with a Christian Audience:

Sui Sin Far’s Publications in Christian
Newspapers and Magazines”

Advisor: Charles Johanningsmeier

Hannah Smith

College of Education, Health, and Human
Sciences

Major: Secondary Education

“Increasing Student Engagement and
Learning of Geography of Age of
Exploration Through Differentiated
Instruction and Assessment”

Advisor: Saundra L. Shillingstad



Celebrating Fall 2023 Honors Graduates

Mark Meyer

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Political Science

“Twitter Use and the 2022 Senate Election”

Advisor: Randall Adkins

Lauren Rezac

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Sociology

“Captain America: The Fragile Masculinity

Behind American Icon”

Advisor: Julie Pelton

Rachel Hartgerink

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Biology

“The Potential for Probiotic Use in
Optometry”

Advisor: Kristen Johnson

Emily Schultz

Colleges of Arts and Sciences & Education,
Health, and Human Sciences

Majors: Mathematics & Secondary Education

“Instructional Diversity: How Implementation of
English Learner Instructional Strategies Leads to
Student Success”

Advisor: Saundra L. Shillingstad

Maddie Mather

Colleges of Public Affairs and Community
Service & Business Administration

Majors: Criminology and Criminal Justice &
Accounting

“An Analysis of the Impact and Effectiveness of
Human Trafficking State Laws and Policies in
Missouri and Nebraska”

Advisor: Kim Retzlaff





Honors welcomed new students to campus with a social event in Maverick Village students had the chance to meet with Honors faculty, HSA representatives, Dr. Morrison, new Honors GA Emily Fuller, and each other.



HSA Hard at Work

The Honors Student Association (HSA) puts in a lot of time and effort to plan fun events for Honors students. This semester HSA welcomed three new first year representatives to their executive board.

Congratulations to Johnny Do, Isabella Murray, and Sydney Ryan on being chosen as class representatives.

Thank you, HSA, for all your hard work.

HSA celebrated Halloween with a super fun pumpkin painting event!



Juvenile Reentry Program

Autumn Muehler

I am in my junior year majoring in Criminal Justice with a minor in Victimology and Victim Services. As an elective course, I decided to venture into the Juvenile Reentry Program, which is a two-semester course where you become a mentor for a youth within the juvenile justice system. Dr. Hobbs leads this class. The facilities that we are working with this semester include Boys Town, Uta Halee, and Douglas County Youth Center (DCYC). Each student gets to decide which facility they want to be matched with based on how many youths want to be part of the program.

The class begins with some fascinating classes and guest speakers discussing adolescent brain development, the juvenile justice system, and a certification on motivated interviewing. Dr. Hobbs warns us about unpredictability of our matches and the entire juvenile justice system, so the class is quite flexible. In general, you are going to write a journal entry whenever you have contact with your mentee whether that is in-person, a letter, email, etc. The first semester's goal is to get each student matched with a youth and develop a relationship. For many matches, the youth may be released from their facility during second semester. I was matched with a girl placed at Uta Halee and I have developed a fast connection with her. I am very excited to get to know her more and her life's journey.



Omaha Dance Team

Julia Cooper

Being a member of the UNO dance team is about fun, hard work, and so many fulfilling experiences. Frequent practices, games, and appearances have allowed me to become very close with my teammates and have also taught me about being a good representative of this university. It is an incredible opportunity to be able to support other athletics as well as competing ourselves!

While it can be difficult balancing school and athletics, being a part of the Omaha Dance Team was a dream come true for me and worth all of the tiring days of preparation. A typical week in the life of a dance team member involves five times a week

practices, multiple games, and various other appearances on campus. We perform at almost all sports, including volleyball, basketball, baseball, hockey, and soccer.

When we aren't working on performances for games, we are hard at work polishing and perfecting our dances for nationals. In January, the team will travel to Orlando, Florida to attend Universal Dance Association (UDA) Nationals. Here we will compete against many different schools with the hope of securing a national title. The Omaha Dance Team competes in three different genres: Pom, Jazz, and Game day. We will complete all three of these routines at least twice in the span of three days, making for a long but hopefully rewarding week.

Some may think that the dance team season is over after this. However, as soon as we get back home from nationals, we will be back in Baxter Arena supporting the Mavericks. There is nothing I would rather spend my time doing than being a part of the Omaha Dance Team and I hope you learned a little more about it today.



Spring 2024 course launch!



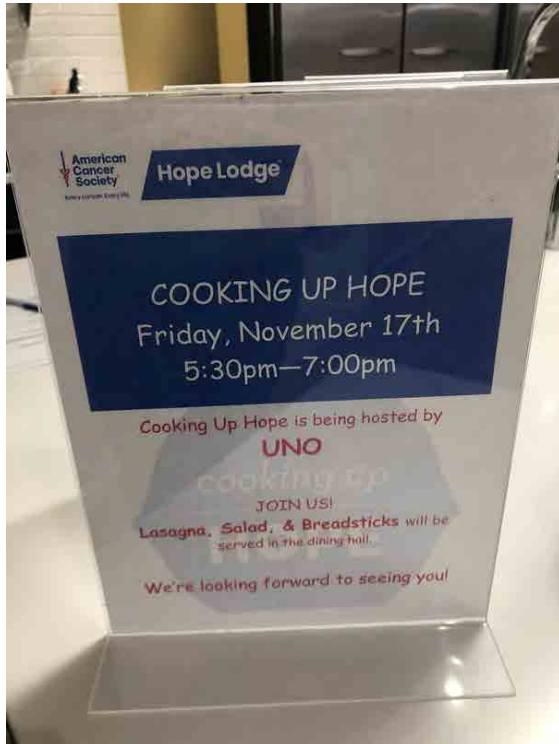
Students stopped by Kayser 208 to learn about Honors colloquia and Honors-only courses offered for the spring 2024 semester—and to get free lunch.



Baylor Winters won a bag of UNO Honors swag after answering a trivia question posed in the weekly hump day email.

Cooking Up Hope

Allison Whitmire



On November 17th, Honors student Allison Whitmire and her fellow resident assistant Kole Hudson facilitated a meal for residents at the Hope Lodge. They provided the residency with a delicious meal of lasagna, salad, breadsticks, and a holiday treat bag, the latter made and decorated by students who live on Dodge campus. The Hope Lodge is a facility a mile away from UNO's campus where cancer treatment in Omaha. To qualify to stay at the Hope Lodge you must live more than fifty miles away from Omaha. This is a very helpful resource for people because paying for accommodations is very expensive, especially when someone is already going through so much with going through cancer treatment.

Allison and Kole went shopping at Walmart. They loaded up two carts full o supplies to make five lasagnas and lots of treat bags. Then they went to Allison's resident hall on Dodge campus to prepare it all. They cooked from 12:00pm-2:30pm and then the event started at 3:00pm. The event was super fun and full of holiday cheer. After the event was over, Kole and Allison loaded everything back up and drove to the Hope Lodge. There they served thirty Hope Lodge residents dinner.



Honors Student Wins Research Award

Morgan Baker (senior) recently won Best Lightning Talk Presentation for her talk at the London & Regional Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Conference. Baker presented about her research on MorpheusQ (a 3D facial imaging software) as a method of measurement for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Baker said about her experience, “After my presentation, I received many questions from people who thought the software could be useful in their own practice. I was surprised to see an overwhelming amount of interest in MorpheusQ. It is definitely a good indication of the potential impact this project will have on people”.



In addition to her research, Baker stays busy competing as part of the UNO swim team, being a Scott Scholar, and applying to medical school programs. Way to go Morgan!



HSA helped students warm up by hosting a hot chocolate event



Homecoming in Honors

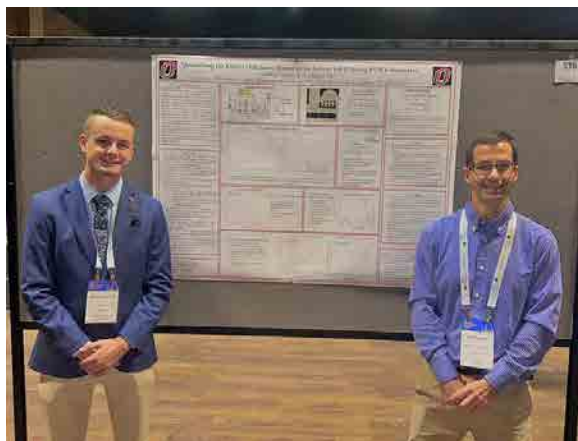
Honors showed our Maverick Spirit by participating in the campus wide door decorating contest put on by the Office of Spirit and Tradition. We may not have won, but we loved the contributions made by our Honors students!

St. Louis Research Presentation

Baylor Winters

Honors student Baylor Winters (senior) presented his research at a conference in St. Louis. Winter's project was titled "Quantifying the influence of relative humidity on aerosol pH utilizing RGB colorimetry". Below is his research abstract:

Understanding the impact of aerosol particles on human health and climate necessitates accurate measurement of their pH. However, existing methods pose practical limitations of high cost and immobility when employed in field research. To address this challenge, we present a novel technique utilizing a cell phone camera to photograph pH paper exposed to aerosols containing a 1:1 ratio of a salt and amino acid. Specifically, we investigate two representative combinations found in the atmosphere: NaCl and glycine, as well as ammonium sulfate with glycine. By employing a standardized colorimetric approach, we analyze the RGB values of the calibrated photograph. This analysis enables us to quantify the pH of the aerosols through a standardized linear curve based on the Henderson-Hasselbach equation. Notably, our findings exhibit an exceptional level of accuracy and precision in this model, substantiated by an R-squared value of 0.99. Additionally, we explore the influence of relative humidity (RH) on phase changes of aerosols, including efflorescence and deliquescence, to establish a relationship with existing water content models and, relatedly, particle size. We employed infrared (IR) spectroscopy to quantify the water content in the aerosols. Intriguingly, a correlation between water content and pH was observed, suggesting a direct relationship between the two variables. Our findings shed light on the chemical and physical properties of aerosol particles, contributing to the development of accurate models for predicting the environmental impact on their behavior.



Trip to Music City: 2023 PRSSA ICON in Nashville, Tennessee

Allyson Havenridge

As the Vice President of Creative Services and Communications for UNO's Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter, I had the honor to be able to travel with other members of our E-board for my second PRSSA ICON Conference. Last year, we had traveled to Dallas, Texas, and I was granted many different opportunities to connect with and hear from the communications industry's most experienced professionals.

This year, we were fortunate enough to be able to travel to Nashville, Tennessee, favorably called the nation's Music City. We stayed at the stunning Gaylord Opryland Resort, where the conference was being hosted, and had the chance to meet different PRSSA members from universities across the country.

We were eager to attend all the keynote sessions, breakout sessions and panels that were on the agenda to learn ways we can better ourselves and our chapter's activities. We heard from the likes of Amanda Brooks, Director of Communications for ESPN, Gina Laughlin, Vice President of Global Employee Communications of Delta Air Lines, and David Epstein, *New York Times* best-selling author and science writer. We also attended sessions that helped us to learn the steps we should take as we begin our preparations to host PRSSA's Midwest District Conference in March, 2024.

Thankfully, we were able to get outside of the resort and discover the part of town that gives Nashville its nickname, Broadway. Although we had spent most of our fall break flying, working, and networking, we allowed ourselves time off to enjoy the city's night life after team dinners. Not



only did I come back from my trip with a wealth of knowledge that I'm excited to share, but now our chapter's executive board is stronger and closer than ever. I'm looking forward to spending my last semester with this wonderful team, and now we feel ready to host a district conference in the spring.

RELI 1010: Introduction to World Religions, taught this semester by Dr. Bharat Ranganathan, gives a great introduction to the field of religious studies. RELI 1010 introduces you to the field in a different way than most 1000-level classes: it's essentially a class on the study of the study of religion. You'll learn different approaches to religious studies, how religious studies differ from theology, and the philosophical questions underlying the academic ones.

RELI 1010: Intro. to World Religions

Dan Magruder

This semester, RELI 1010 examined three drastically different books: a writer's experience inside a southern snake-handling Christian sect, a comparison of Osama Bin Laden and the United States Government's rhetoric following the September 11 attacks, and a case study of the 1991 Crown Heights riots in New York. Together, these books opened new lines of analysis for our class, allowing us to consider many contentious topics, from the "right" and "wrong" way of studying religion, the ethics of proximity to the subject of study, and the nature of community.

If you're in any sort of major involving world affairs—I'm a Political Science major myself—you'll take away a great deal of relevant knowledge and experience. RELI 1010 is so much more than a list of information about religions like you might expect—it's a class worthy of an honors course.

Luminarium Field Trip

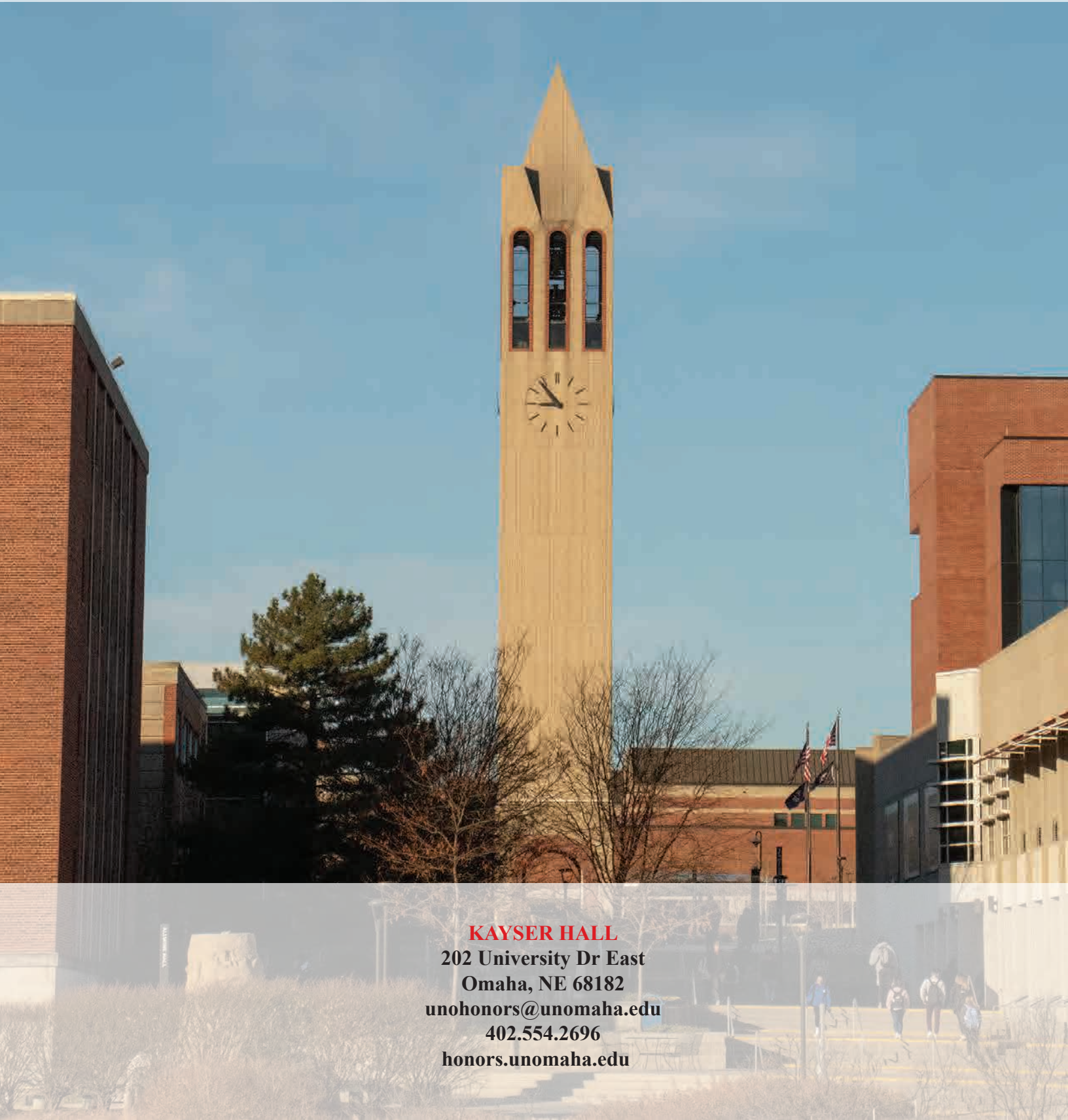
Dr. Todd Richardson's first-year Honors class, Space, Place, and Self, took a field trip to Omaha's new Kiewit Luminarium. The class was joined by individuals from the Ollie Webb Center as a service learning experience to build connections in the community.



Luminarium Field Trip Continued



Dr. Lucy Morrison
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