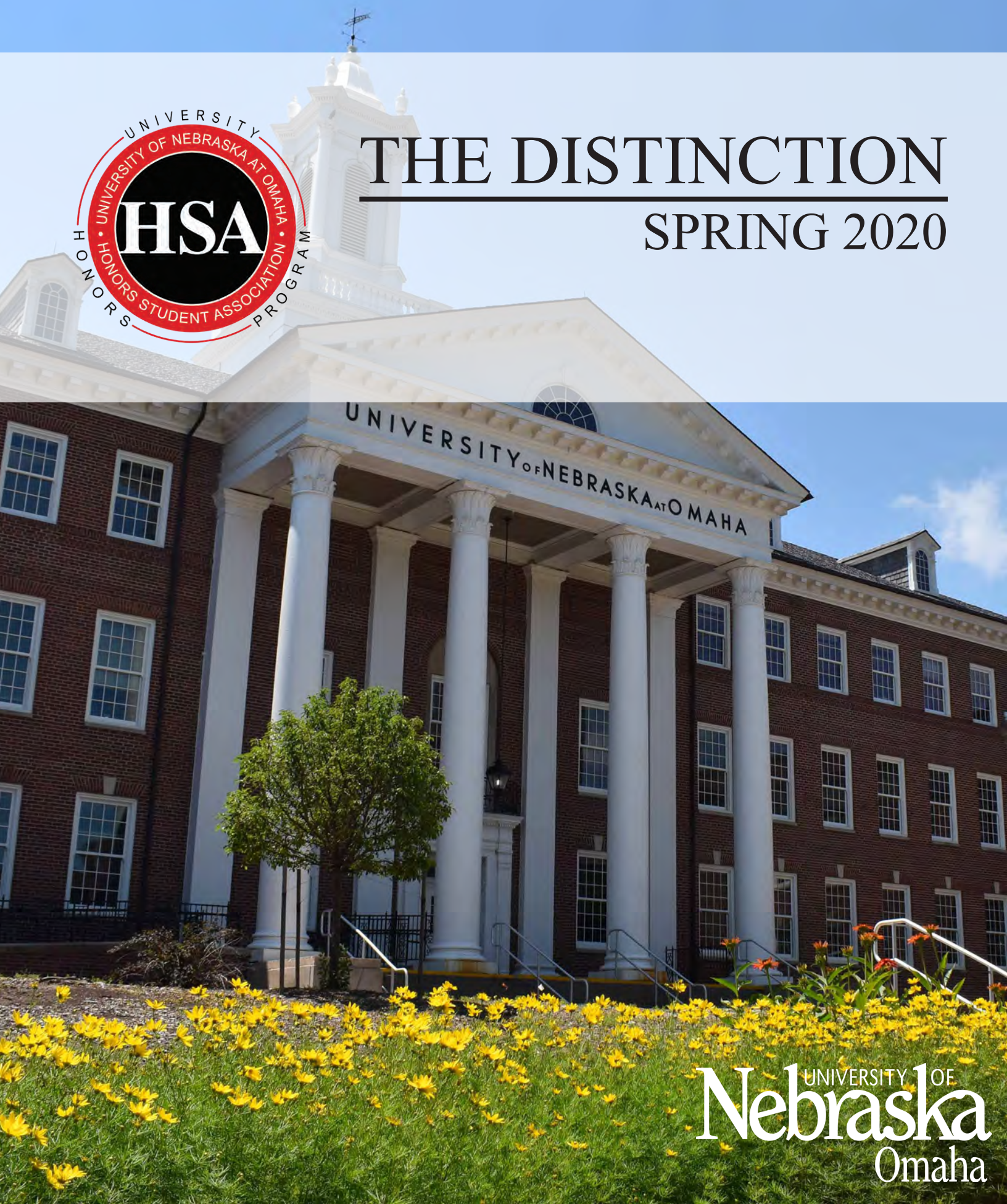




THE DISTINCTION

SPRING 2020



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

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Hannah Im, Editor

May 2020 Graduates

Wala Albahrani

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Biology

“The Impact of Healing Arts on Students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha”

Advisor: Adrian Duran

Caroline Anderson

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Political Science

“The Violence Against Women’s Act: From the Criminalization of Domestic Violence Through Modern Political Challenges”

Advisor: Kim Retzlaff

Caelyn Armshaw

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Molecular and Biomedical Biology

“A Library without Books: The Importance of Language Representation in Public Libraries”

Advisor: Jose Moreno González

Kylee Beyea

College of Education

Major: Speech-Language Pathology

“Bilingual Practices in Speech-Language Pathology in Nebraska Schools”

Advisor: Kathy Coufal

Jamie Bish

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Foreign Language & Literature - Spanish

“Culture and Aging: The Role of Language in Engaging our Senior Population”

Advisor: Melanie Bloom

Aaron Borcyk

College of Education

Major: Speech-Language Pathology

“Law Enforcement, Public Opinion, the Media, and its Effects”

Advisor: Justin Nix

Alexandra Chase

College of Arts and Sciences

College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media

Majors: Mathematics, Studio Art

“The Healing Properties of Interactive Art: Creating a Proposal for Art within a Hospital Environment”

Advisors: David Helm and Adrian Duran

Alexandra Deman

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Psychology

“Exploring Connections Between Social Anxiety and Social Media Use in College Students ”

Advisor: Troy Romero

Jacob Franzen

College of Business Administration

Concentrations: Banking and Financial Markets, Business Finance, Investment Science and Portfolio Management, Legal Studies, Real Estate and Land Use Economics

“Cryptocurrencies: An Overview, Investment Investigation, Comparative Analysis, and Regulatory Proposal”

Advisor: Clinton Rushing

Tylore Gross

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Psychology

“Examining the Relationships Between College and High School Relational and Physical Victimization and its Effects on Self-Esteem”

Advisor: Juan Casas

Patricia Harte-Maxwell

College of Arts and Sciences

Majors: English, Biology

“Meeting His Monstrous Family: Kinship and Kinslaying in Beowulf”

Advisor: Lisabeth Buchelt

Keanu Hoang

College of Information Science & Technology

Major: Bioinformatics

“Comparative Analysis of Metabolic Pathways of Bacteria found in Fermented Food”

Advisor: Dhundy Bastola



May 2020 Graduates

Bailey Hoffer

College of Arts and Sciences
College of Public Affairs and Community Service
Majors: Psychology, Criminology and Criminal Justice
“Planning and Navigating in an Unfamiliar Location:
Effects of Outsourcing on Memory”
Advisor: Bethany Lyon

Delaney Jackson

College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media
Major: Theatre
“Peter and the Starcatcher: Creating the Character of
Peter Pan via Rehearsal, Script Analysis, and Personal
Actor Techniques”
Advisor: Ronald Zank

Nathan Johnson

College of Arts and Sciences
Majors: Political Science, Sociology
“Factors Influencing Student Participation in Liberal
Student Organizations”
Advisor: Julie Pelton

Natalia Kunze

College of Arts and Sciences
Majors: Psychology, Biology
“Undergraduate Employment: How Does Working
Influence GPA and Attendance?”
Advisor: Brigitte Ryalls

Morgan McBride

College of Public Affairs and Community Service
Majors: Criminology & Criminal Justice, Psychology
“Responding to Victims of Human Trafficking in the
United States: A Review of Treatment Providers”
Advisor: Teresa Kulig

Maria Mickles

College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media
Major: Communication Studies
“Trying to Save the Game(r): Understanding the
meaning-making process of YouTube subscribers
surrounding mental health and video game vlogging”
Advisor: Andrea Weare

Morgan Miller

College of Education
Concentrations: Special Education and Sign Language
Interpretation
“A case study comparing fingerspelling production
between two interpreters with EIPA scores of 3.0 and
4.0”
Advisor: Julie Delkamiller

August Namuth

College of Arts and Sciences
Major: Neuroscience
“Art and the Pursuit of Happiness: How Artists Use Art
to Promote Their Emotional Well-being”
Advisor: Bruce Chase

Savana Nawojski

College of Arts and Sciences
Major: Molecular and Biomedical Biology
“‘Contact’ Sports: Competitive Athletic Experience,
Racial Attitudes, and Intergroup Contact”
Advisor: Dan Hawkins

Jacob Phillips

College of Arts and Sciences
Major: Philosophy
“Language and Thought in Wittgenstein’s Solipsism”
Advisor: Andrew Newman

Yazmin Ramos

College of Arts and Sciences
Majors: Foreign Language and Literature - Spanish,
Psychology
“Predictors of Loneliness among College Students:
Evidence for the Necessity of Early Childhood
Interventions to Prevent Loneliness”
Advisors: Kelly MacArthur and Joseph Brown

Alison Raszler

College of Business Administration
Concentrations: Supply Chain Management, Marketing,
and Management
“How Power Bi can be built to analyze player and team
stats in the NBA”
Advisor: Erin Pleggenhule-Miles

May 2020 Graduates

Delaney Simmonds

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Neuroscience

“Challenges Associated with Occupational Therapy in Nebraska”

Advisor: Katie Shirazi

Alyssa Spartz

College of Arts and Sciences

College of Public Affairs and Community Service

Majors: Psychology, Emergency Management

“Influential Factors that Impact Individual Disaster Donations”

Advisor: Tom Jamieson

Madeline St Clair

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Biology

“‘Disbelieving Black Women to Death’; the ‘Double Jeopardy’: Racism and Sexism Affects Black Women’s Access to and Quality of Care During Pregnancy, Birth, and Postpartum”

Advisor: Timi Barone

Kathleen Thompson

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Environmental Science

“Soil Quality Tests for Classroom Use”

Advisor: Ashlee Dere

Nicholas Weber

College of Arts and Sciences

Majors: Philosophy, Psychology

“Perspective Driven Behavior: The Effect of Classroom Climate on a Student’s Personality and Willingness to Communicate”

Advisor: William Kramer

Catie Yaggie Heinen

College of Arts and Sciences

Major: Biology

“Analyzing Leadership Opportunities through Participant Perspective”

Advisors: Karen Murch-Shafer and Katie Shirazi

2020-21

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A Look Back at the Semester

Kate Earnhardt



If you've ever stopped into my office for a quick chat, a cup of tea, or even just to say hello, you've probably heard my self-deprecating joke that I wasn't an Honors student. And if we swerve away from undervaluing myself (which we should all do, honestly), it's a true statement. And since we're being honest, I didn't even know UNO had an Honors Program when I was an undergrad here. Now, in my defense, I graduated from UNO all the way back in 2012, long before Dr. Morrison arrived on campus to help rejuvenate Honors into what it is today, so I had to build all my knowledge from the ground up. In my short time working in Honors, I've learned so much about this community from the awesome faculty, the students I see almost every day, and especially our resilient 2020 graduates through the lens of their most meaningful UNO and Honors memories.

I've learned that to be in Honors means being engaged with our UNO community, like Keanu Hoang, who recounted "my most memorable UNO experience has been my membership

on the Queer & Trans Services board. I enjoy helping plan and executing programming specifically aimed for LGBTQ+ students on campus." Catie Yaggie Heinen told us "I enjoyed spending three years on campus as a Resident Assistant and a Resident Director. I made some amazing connections and found great leaders through this position." And I can't forget to mention Madeline St. Clair, who noted her most memorable UNO experience is "right now, having my last semester online and working at the Maverick Food Pantry during the Covid-19 pandemic."

I've also learned that to be in Honors is to adventure. So many of our students have had the incredible privilege of studying abroad or traveling the country, and those experiences have helped them grow as students and humans. Kylee Beyea told us "I want to say that studying abroad in Peru was my most memorable UNO experience, but I wasn't at UNO, so I feel like that doesn't count." (For the record, as a former study abroad student, I say it does!). Aaron Borczyk also had a great time when he "traveled to Orlando for the American Speech Hearing Association Convention to present the research I completed for a FUSE Grant. I'd never gone on a trip by myself before and it was a great experience." And though it may not feel like an adventure to us native Omahans, Carrie Anderson "will always remember the weekend trip I took down to Omaha to participate in the Distinguished Honors Scholarship competition. It was the first time I ever flew by myself. Attending the competition made me confident that I had made the right decision in coming to UNO. "And she got the

scholarship!

Being in Honors also means to discover, whether it's discovering things about yourself or your surroundings. Alyssa Spartz candidly told us her most memorable moment at UNO "was finally finding a course of study that I was passionate about. It took about four major changes, but after changing it for the final time, I was able to start learning about a topic I was truly passionate about." Yazmin Ramos's "most memorable Honors course was City of Omaha. It was really eye-opening to learn about our city in historical, sociological, and political perspectives. There was so much that I didn't know about Omaha, particularly North Omaha, and I really fell in love with the city." And Morgan Miller expressed that she "really valued my time taking American Sign Language courses. These courses allowed me to learn a new language and experience deaf community and culture. It was because of these courses that I changed my major to become a sign language interpreter."

Being an Honors student means challenging yourself, in big and small ways. Delaney Jackson challenged herself when she "interviewed the senior residents of the Immanuel Village retirement community for the Nostalgia colloquium. The interviewees shared such rich and compelling stories I wouldn't have had the opportunity to hear if I hadn't taken the class." Maria Mickles gained camaraderie with her fellow Honors students when she "found out in the majority of my honors classes, just because no one is raising their hand, doesn't mean they don't know what's happening. I found comfort in difficult work with other students

Spring Awards

who are as equally challenged yet determined as I am.” And Savana Nawojski stated simply, “my most memorable UNO course was Organic Chemistry II because it was extremely challenging and required me to adapt in an unprecedented capacity.”

And let’s never forget that being in Honors means coming together. Delaney Simmonds recounted her “most memorable experience with Honors was the combined three courses for my freshman cohort. It was a very interesting experience to grow so close to the same group of twelve students in my first semester at UNO and I am still friends with a good amount of them.” Likewise, Bailey Hoffer said her most memorable Honors experience was “simply being the student worker for the Honors Department all three years I went to UNO. It gave me the opportunity to personally get to know all the staff, while also introducing me to students that I would probably not have met otherwise.” And who could ever forget Nicholas Weber’s most memorable Honors moment: “being able to meet and fall in love with the person I am going to be marrying this upcoming July!”

In my short time working in the Honors office, I’ve learned so much about its students and community. We strive for excellence, but we remind ourselves to take time for self-care and introspection. We go above and beyond what’s required of us personally, but never leave a Maverick buddy behind. We push ourselves to view the world outside of our lived experience, but we don’t forget where we come from. So while I might not have been an Honors student all those years ago, I’m delighted to be a part of its community now.



Top: Dr. Zach Darwish receiving the Honors Faculty Award, applauded by fiancée Sarah.
Middle: Dr. Adrian Duran virtually receiving the Honors Faculty Award.
Bottom: Bailey Hoffer virtually receiving the Honors Student Achievement Award with dog Stella.

Zoom Symposium

Bailey Hoffer

The Honors Symposium is an annual opportunity for soon-to-be Honors graduates to share their research projects with the community. This year, the Symposium faced unique challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic and was held through a virtual Zoom conference environment. More than 135 Zoom guests attended the event.

Bailey Hoffer was one Honors student who presented research on her thesis, "Planning and Navigating in an Unfamiliar Location: Effects of Outsourcing on Memory."

Walking into the student ballroom of Milo Bail Student Center, I could see the array of all the thesis posters put together by my honors classmates, with whom I would be graduating in just a few months. Going further into the room, I find my poster in between two others before wandering around to admire the other students' work. I could feel the excitement in my body as I waited for all of my family and friends to arrive to share this special moment with me.

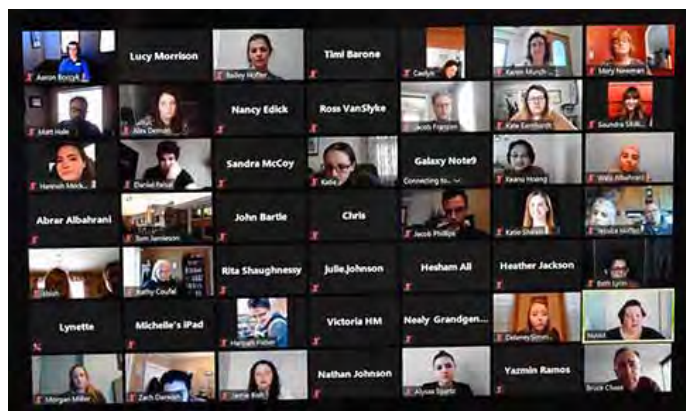
For the three years that I had been a student at UNO in the University Honors Program, this is always how I had imagined

the spring symposium for the semester I was to graduate. When the difficult times of Covid-19 hit, this dream sadly had no chance of becoming reality.

Thinking fast on their feet, Dr. Morrison and her team did a great job at organizing an online zoom event. Although not the same as an in-person ceremony, being able to have all the students, faculty, family members and friends participate in this event from the safety of their own homes was such a great feeling. Each poster was displayed on a website which the attendees had the chance to glance over and ask questions to each student, if they so desired.

Each student was recognized in a personalized way by Dr. Morrison, and in the end, we had the option to break off into breakout rooms with our family members to have our own private conversations.

This past semester as a whole was difficult for the entire university; however, being a graduating senior made it even more difficult, in my opinion. The bittersweet moment that I had always imagined had been stripped away, but the online Zoom Symposium is still a night that I will never forget. For that, I am thankful.



À Bientôt Besançon

Adele Kanley



Adele Kanley shares her journey from Besançon back home after the pandemic cuttrails her study abroad trip.

Original blog post from <https://rollingdeepthoughts.wordpress.com/>. Edited.

I got the news that I had to return to the States while video chatting with a couple friends back home. News about the coronavirus had just started to become an all encompassing conversation topic when I received the email on my University student account. When I first got the email notification with the words “study abroad” and “coronavirus” I kind of shrugged it off because I genuinely thought there was no way this virus could get so bad. But during my chat with my friends, they got a news notification on their phone saying something along the lines of US borders being closed due to the virus.

My first immediate instinct was to scramble to find ways where I could cheat the system and stay in France. I assumed the school was just trying to prevent a potential lawsuit in case one of the students abroad got sick, and thought they would allow the options for students willing to take the risk to stay. As I read the email over and over again and as more and more emails about Covid-19 came flooding in from news sources and the university, I knew there was no way I could stay. I was in shock, confused, but most of all I was sad. Sad that my quaint little French city was being taken away from me. Sad that this news will

always taint my abroad experience. Sad for all the friends I would be leaving behind. Despite all the overwhelming feelings I was feeling in that moment, I still made sure to book a flight home.

After a night filled with anger and tears, I woke up the next day determined to take as many photos and videos of my little French hideaway as I could. Before the news of our mandatory return, I was that person who was embarrassed to take pictures in public and always internally rolled my eyes at my friends who did. But that Friday, I got it. It finally clicked. I started my documentation of Besançon from my bus ride to the CLA (Centre de linguistique appliquée) all the way through the evening of that Friday. I took the long route to class because why not, and I got to test my handy dandy vlogging skills, no matter how embarrassing it might have been in the moment.

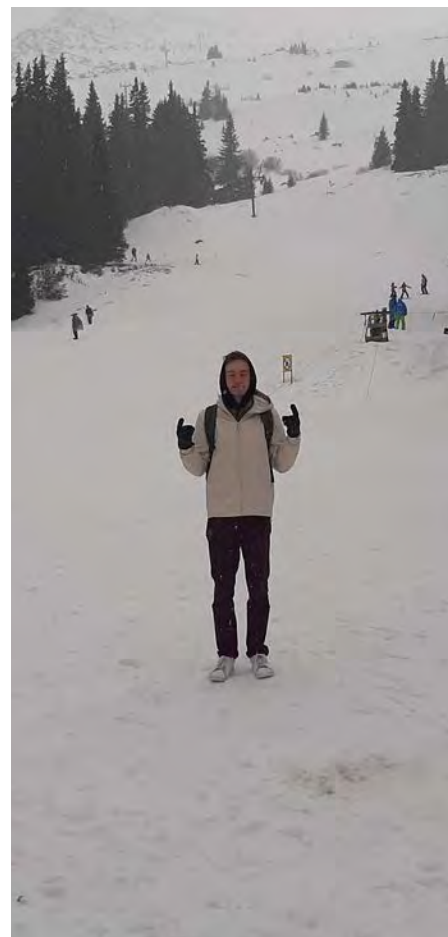
As I walked into class that day, I did the cliché thing of realizing “you never know a good thing until it’s gone”. I walked into that French class, fully determined to not miss a single word the professor utters and participate like my life depended on it. But turns out, I was not the only

one being forced home. In addition to a thrilling lesson about French adjectives and numbers, the head of the CLA came in to announce that all upcoming classes would be held online because the president of France had ordered a shut down of all public institutions. The knowledge that I was not going through this alone and that I wouldn’t be missing out on too much was a wonderful aid to my hurt.

I took my sweet time leaving class, said some awkward goodbyes and then went on a walk around the city center. As I was walking out of the CLA for the last time, headphones in pretending I was in a movie, I coincidentally met a couple of fellow Jehovah’s Witnesses who were out doing preaching work. We instantly bonded and then I informed them in some still broken French that I would be leaving on Monday. We laughed, we hugged, and of course we pictured. I said my first and last goodbye to them and headed to my destination of choice, my favorite Kebab shop. It just happened to be one of the first beautiful spring days in Besançon and everyone was out in the city center. I patiently waited in line for my Kebab while I solemnly took in my last sights of Besançon.

Reflection

Byron Moore



Byron Moore reflects on his shortened study abroad experience in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Even though it was certainly not the most ideal string of events, I would not trade my chosen semester abroad for anything else. I arrived in Thessaloniki, Greece on the 4th of February and returned to the United States on the 16th of March, a whopping 40 days abroad. The first week and a half was cold and lonely, resulting in two weeks of essentially pre-corona isolation. But from then on, every moment in Thessaloniki was worth it. I was surprised to find how close I had become with the other foreign students in such a short period of time. Being thrown into a new environment where you have never met anyone before is challenging but

rewarding.

The study abroad lifestyle was quite different than that of a normal student, especially in Greece. I often heard the phrase “no rush, no worries” being used by everyone, from my landlord to the university staff. While nice at times, this cultural quirk became extremely annoying when attempting to finalize selected courses and university paperwork. Another interesting aspect of the unique situation was the fact that my classes did not begin until a week after arriving back home. One takeaway since returning from Greece is a heightened focus on minimizing stress levels and being more relaxed,

but also still balancing this newfound approach with a healthy amount of ambition.

Even though I was not able to see Athens, Tripoli, visit a Greek beach, see Mt. Olympus, or travel to any of the islands, I do not wish I had decided to study abroad a different corona-less semester. Regardless of the heartbreaking outcome, I am thankful for the opportunity to experience a month abroad and build relationships with wonderful students from a diverse set of nations. I know I will be studying abroad again, Covid-19 permitting.

Groningen, Goodbye

McKensi Uecker



While it's comforting to be back home with my family watching this pandemic unfold, I'm still heartbroken over leaving. I wasn't planning on coming home until August, so I feel robbed of my exchange experience. I know that it isn't anyone's fault, but it is still a really unfortunate turn of events. Everyone (myself included) had to pack up and leave so quickly that there wasn't time for very many goodbyes. I hope in the future to see all of my friends again, but I'm not sure that we will all have an opportunity to do so. It's difficult to view this situation from an optimistic perspective, but I am still very grateful that I had the opportunity to go.

During my time in Groningen, I learned so much about different cultures across the world, and I think I grew as a person—even if my time was cut short. The largest lesson I'm taking from this experience is that it's okay to be completely independent. I had to navigate life in a new place by myself, forcing me to adapt and overcome a variety of challenges. Overseas, I didn't have the safety net



of my friends and family, so I really had to put myself out there and meet new people.

On my trip home, I flew from Amsterdam to Detroit and had to undergo health screenings for Covid-19 when I went through customs. I was disappointed to learn that the only measures being taken were temperature checks that proved to be wildly inaccurate and handouts about symptoms to watch out for. For instance, the woman behind me in line had her temperature recorded

at 92.3°F (hypothermia sets in when the body's temperature falls below 95°), so the health checks were only successful in stressing people out.

One of my last days in Europe was spent in Germany with some of my life long friends. I planned on visiting them once I had settled in a bit more—so the past weekend has felt a lot like “hello” and “goodbye” all at once. However if time has taught me anything, it's that I'll see them again. To Groningen and the friends I made there, I will be back.

McKensi Uecker looks back on her time in Vaarwel, Netherlands. Original blog post from <https://mckensiuecker.wixsite.com/website>. Edited.



Summer Health Professions Education Program

Afrah Rasheed

I'm not going to lie, I didn't think I was going to make it into this program. Everything was going wrong: my transcript took nearly forever to send, the website kept malfunctioning, I filled out some things at the last second, and, not to mention, I didn't think I was an interesting enough candidate for it. I persevered and decided to give it a shot so that I could at least say I tried. I accepted defeat anyways, yet I still ended up checking my application about a month later and guess what: I got in!

The Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) is a 6-week program over the summer where pre-health professionals engage in activities to increase their exposure and connections to the medical field. Their aim is specifically to find those who are disadvantaged financially or are minorities who have limited opportunities to get into medical school. It is open to all freshmen and sophomores who are interested in any health-related field, including medicine, public health, dentistry, etc. Multiple medical schools across the nation sponsored SHPEP, but I applied to UNMC and the program was led by Sonja Tutsch. There were approximately 12,000 applicants, but only around 800 got accepted.

It was one of the most enriching experiences that I have ever been through. Growing up, I was this meek little Muslim girl who wasn't allowed to do anything except go to school. I haven't had many friends, the opportunity to explore my city, or the chance to have my voice heard. At

SHPEP, I had all of that and more.

The first thing that I really liked was that we stayed at the dorms on Scott Campus, where food, room and board, and transportation was covered by SHPEP. That is already a huge plus for struggling college students, and being the sheltered nerd that I was, it was nice to stay away from home for a couple of weeks to explore. Plus, we got an extra \$600 on top of that to fund our journeys around Omaha, which was the cherry on top.

"One of the most rewarding experiences I got from SHPEP was being able to meet and connect with various incredible people "

We had UNMC first and second year students be our TA's and RA's, and they guided us throughout the whole program with advice and leading activities. I still keep in contact with some of them! This was also a really good opportunity for us to experience a taste of medical school as we had courses at UNMC and the UNMC students to go to for advice. Throughout the week, we would shuttle over to the UNMC campus and sit in a giant lecture hall where UNO professors, such as Dr. Shirazi and Dr. Sullivan, and various UNMC professors would give lectures on topics such as anatomy, biomedicine, chemistry, physics, and epidemiology. We also had the opportunity to see a variety of guest speakers from multiple areas. Dr. Lawrence Chatters held a workshop on microaggressions

and discrimination, James A. Miles taught us about financial literacy, Dr. Jasmine Riviere Marcelin told us about her journey into medicine, and Jessica Kroeker spoke to us on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their impact on health. All of these experiences served to deepen our understanding of not only the world of healthcare, but also to open our minds as future healthcare providers and to understand the population of people we will serve one day.

I applied to the program of medicine, so within that I had some incredible opportunities. I worked with cadavers every week, which is an interesting experience to say the least. I learned how to put on a cast and splint as well as basic surgical suturing, work with \$50,000 medical dummies who can move and speak, and I tested out the new iEXCEL technology that will revolutionize healthcare in the years to come. We toured UNMC and the College of Dentistry in Lincoln and I also got to see a clinical perfusionist in action and shadowed an amazing physician, Dr. Howard Liu, who was the Head of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Nebraska Medicine (and we follow each other on Twitter now, so that's fun!). We also got to do a bunch of fun things around Omaha and with each other and had support groups after our lectures at UNMC. I traveled to the Old Market a couple times and explored a bunch of the small businesses there, went all over Omaha to do a project on various living conditions, rode around on the metro

Summer Health Professions Education Program

Afrah Rasheed

buses (not a great experience by the way; it was pouring and we had no idea what we were doing), and visited a bunch of cool sites around town.

Unfortunately, on the first few days of the program, I had a series of panic attacks due to the unfamiliar situation and after meeting a bunch of amazing SHPEP scholars. In my mind, I wondered what I was even doing there. I didn't feel like I deserved such an opportunity. I would hide in the bathroom and cry for a few hours at a time, missing out on some of the activities. At that point, I was devastated, and the people around me were starting to notice. Finally, I decided to reach out to the RA's and they were amazing enough to sit down with me and to help talk me through the experience. I could never thank the med students enough for all the support and encouragement that they gave us.

Over the next few weeks, I ended up making strong bonds with my roommates and other fellow SHPEP scholars. I got to participate in a talent show where I got to show off a video of mine where I painted, and I really felt a lot of love after that.

One of the most rewarding experiences I got from SHPEP was being able to meet and connect with various incredible people, all of whom are talented and intelligent and have set a strong vision and goal for themselves. I met another Muslim girl who wanted to be one of the few female cardiothoracic surgeons in the U.S. One of my roommates wanted to be in public health and work with expecting mothers in poverty, and

another guy was passionate about dentistry (and funny enough, teeth). I still am in contact with various people I met at SHPEP and we all have one giant group chat where we update each other on our lives and share memes. Now, I also have connections to doctors, speakers, and medical students which is amazing. I wish that I could've stayed for longer!

If you are a Pre-Health freshman or sophomore, I would highly recommend in you considering

applying to SHPEP in the next cycle of November this year. Applications will be up at <https://www.unmc.edu/shpep/index.html>.

Afrah Rasheed at UNMC for the 2019 Summer Health Professions Education Program.



Resonating Research

Daniel Faronbi



Every year, the National Science Foundation funds a variety of Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) programs. Hundreds of these programs are hosted at a variety of universities across the country, providing students access to world class research. These programs are very competitive, with acceptance rates varying from 10% to 15%. In these programs, students are assigned to an REU site, which consists of about 10 students, and each student is assigned a faculty member with whom they will work closely on a research project. The hands-on approach to research pedagogy combined with the prestige makes these programs ideal for students wanting to attend graduate school.

This summer, I have the opportunity to participate in an REU

site at Washington State University. I applied to this REU program in January. The application process included submission of a resume, essays describing my possible contribution to the program, list of prior work experience, and many other parameters. In April, the finalists for the program were sent an email asking for two letters of recommendation. At this time, I asked two UNO faculty members to submit letters for me. Soon, I was notified of my acceptance into the program. Students are usually expected to travel to the institution to participate in the project. Unfortunately, new travel policies implemented amidst the Covid-19 pandemic have forced the removal of this component of the program. Instead, I will be aiding the research project remotely.

“The University Honors program has been a great help for me trying to navigate my unique education track.”

The project that I have been assigned focuses on alcohol relapse. Participants of the study use a wearable computing wristband called E4, which collects a variety of biometrics from the participants. These include skin conductance level, heart rate, temperature, and many more. My role in the project is to apply digital signal processing techniques to analyze this data, so that the research team can find correlations between biometric parameters and the

likelihood of alcohol relapse.

My interest in digital signal processing (DSP) is a result of my interest in computers and music. DSP is the process of taking a real-world signal (like audio or biometric data) and analyzing it using a variety of computational techniques. The computer often must perform complex mathematics on the signals to produce the desired results. My double majors in Computer Engineering and Music Technology, and minor in Mathematics, have given me a strong exposure to DSP topics.

The University Honors program has been a great help for me trying to navigate my unique education track. The summer before my freshman year, I met with Dr. Lucy Morrison and the Honors advisor. They helped me plan out my upcoming college experience, managing the variety of classes offered from both of my majors and making sure the class times did not conflict. This was incredibly helpful. The support I received for pursuing my unique goals was a refreshing contrast to conversations with other advisors.

My plan is to pursue a Ph.D. program in Music Technology, specializing in topics related to DSP for music. I am thankful to be a part of this REU program since exposure to these topics will be very helpful to my graduate school application and my career. I am also grateful to be a part of a fantastic Honors Program which has been supportive of my unique interest from the beginning of my college experience.

Freshman Leadership Council

Meena Rahmanzai

The Freshman Leadership Council (FLC) is made up of approximately 20 Freshman Leaders who meet regularly to learn more about the UNO campus and UNO Student Government. I heard about student government through UNO's Instagram account; they post almost everything that happens at UNO. The Student Body Vice President oversees FLC, including the group's special projects, which are events such as giving cookies to the students in the library during finals week. We also had another project that was going to happen in the summer; this project was planned to help Nathan Hale Middle School students with hair cuts and school supplies for going to school in the fall.

FLC is a great way for new students to get involved in student government, and my time at FLC was the most memorable and valuable because I got to know so many great people. During the first semester, the individual interviews for all the applicants with the Vice-President take place. After the candidates are chosen to be FLC members there are a lot of meetings that take place in the first

semester where we get to know each other and plan what we want to accomplish as freshman leaders. We had many guest speakers who taught us so much about leadership. One of the biggest impacts that FLC guest speakers had on me was them teaching us about how we impacted our community and those around us as a leader. I think this was a really

"FLC is a great way for new students to get involved in student government...I got to know so many great people"

important concept because being a leader means there are people looking up to you and, as a leader, a person should have a good influence on those around them and in their community.

During the first semester, FLC elects two members to be First-Year Ambassadors who attend Student Senate sessions and act as the voice of new students. The election for becoming First-Year Ambassador also takes place in the fall, and I was a candidate; unfortunately, I did not win.

However, I do not regret running for it because it was so much fun getting my project ready for my presentation. Including the goals that you want to accomplish if you get the ambassador position, my project was focused on student success and what I wanted to do if elected and how I wanted to do it.

FLC partners with Nathan Hale Middle School honors students and we go there from time to time to help them with problems they are facing that are school-related; we also give them advice on what to expect in high school and what they need to do in high school to be successful in college. We were luckily able to accomplish this goal and we hope that it helped those students. We planned many end of the year events for UNO students and summer plans for Nathan Hale Middle School students to help them with school supplies. Even though we didn't get to meet in person because of the pandemic, we know those students will be great in high school. I recommend FLA as a great way to get involved on campus and learn about leadership.



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Student Art



Alexandra Chase

I am Alex Chase, a Studio Art and Mathematics double major graduating spring 2020. I view my art as a reflection of myself and the world around me. My creative process is personal, introspective, and requires precision and attention to detail in order to produce the vision that I have in my head. I strive for my creations to display who I am, what matters to me, and the world as seen through my perspective.

Left: Nightmare is a 8.5" x 10" lithograph print.



Afrah Rasheed

Paintings for sociology project

Left: Maria; above: Together

Honors Highlights



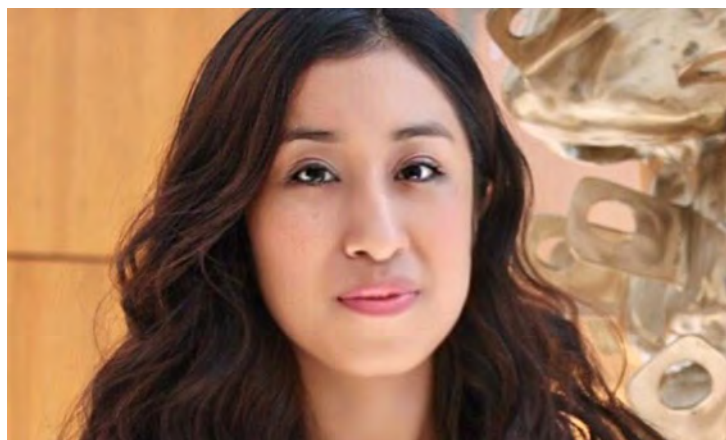
Madeline St. Clair received the 2019 Marian Ivers Community Service Leadership Award (Ivers CSL), which is awarded to students who show commitment to community service and leadership.



Patrick Hodson is a graduate of the UNO College of Business Administration who has earned the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program (CBYX) scholarship. Although delayed due to the global health pandemic, Hodson will have the opportunity to work and continue his studies in Germany through the program.



Junior Dalton Meister, a Social Work major, was awarded the Canada-Mitacs Globalink Fulbright scholarship this summer. This prestigious and highly competitive national award would allow Dalton to undertake original research regarding social work practices in Hong Kong, which Dalton was fortunate enough to visit briefly last summer!



Maria L. Perez Hernandez is a Business Administration Economics and Management student who has been named a Newman Civic Fellow. This esteemed recognition identifies those who have improved their communities through civic service. The fellowship program provides awardees resources and opportunities to continue their commitment to social and community change.



The Distinguished Scholarship Competition was hosted by Honors on February 29th. Incoming freshmen spent the morning engaged in activities as they competed for these prestigious awards.

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