

PITTSBURGH STATE UNIVERSITY

HONORS COLLEGE ASSOCIATION

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Honorable Mentions

Spring 2022

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A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers of Honorable Mentions:

This year once again has been a year of changes for the Honors College, culminating with the announcement of the retirement of Dr. Craig Fuchs as Honors College director and the election of Heather Eckstein as director beginning Fall 2022. Yet, this year also saw a lot of strengths within the Honors College remain the same. Once again the HCA maintained a high graduation rate with the class of 2022, along with a high average GPA. Honors College members were involved all across campus, with representation in nearly every department. We participated in community service initiatives like Natural Ties and the Big Event. We promoted social interaction and community through the newly-introduced Cohort Cup (congratulations freshman cohort for your win). We also successfully interviewed and selected a brand new cohort for the HCA that is currently preparing for orientation over the summer.

This will be my last time writing the opening letter for this newsletter as I graduate from the Honors College and pursue my Masters degree at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in the fall. The Honors College has done a lot for me, more than I could ever hope to repay. I know a lot of graduates and alumni share similar sentiments. So, for the final time, I would like to thank my staff that helped write content for this semester's newsletter, as well as those of you who read this newsletter each semester. Honorable Mentions has given me a way to serve the program I love through a craft I adore, and it's been an honor to serve both the program and the readers as Editor-in-Chief for these past couple years. Go-rillas!

—Amanda Trout



Seniors Honor Outstanding Faculty at Annual HCA Banquet

By Evan Taylor

At the conclusion of each academic year, the HCA takes the opportunity to recognize its fantastic seniors. These seniors have dedicated their valuable time to make priceless contributions to the betterment of our organization. Each senior is recognized for the growth they have made in their time in the HCA, as well as their personal accomplishments, highlighted by a “Who are they now?” slideshow. During the slideshow, the audience gets an opportunity to see a side-by-side comparison of the individual as an incoming freshman and a graduating senior. The audience learns how their interests and outlook on life have changed. It is a fantastic way to celebrate the growth that the HCA and the PSU community allowed our seniors to experience in such a short time. One of the most rewarding and heartwarming traditions of the banquet is the seniors are granted the chance to select a significant faculty member to be present for the ceremony and even don the level of distinction medals on the student. The selection process for the seniors can be very difficult as there are, of course, numerous faculty members that made a positive impact on the graduating senior. However, there are always certain qualities about the individual they eventually select that help guide their decision. In some cases, the decision may have even boiled down to one interaction. It is hard to quantify the importance of positive faculty/student relationships for high achieving academics like the members of the HCA.

Some of the HCA seniors chose to share the importance of their selection:

“I chose my significant faculty member because he is always there to help me if I need it and is very supportive of my goals”

- Kinsey Morey

“Dr. Grant Moss has played a large role in developing the interdisciplinary thinking that has driven my college experience. He’s always so passionate ... to the point that he’ll help me on side projects like learning about versification or writing poetry ... for a contest. I had a lot of very influential professors to pick from for my significant faculty; Dr. Moss was the one case where, if I hadn’t ever met him, the entire course of my college experience would have changed. I want to honor him for that”

- Amanda Trout

"I've known since sophomore year that one of the most significant faculty members for me would be Professor McNew. He has been the professor I know I can always go to for advice for my career and have guidance on what to do in order to build up my skills for the real world. He has been my go-to person whenever I needed someone to help me figure out the next steps in my career, and he has been a huge support as my passions in engineering have changed and developed"

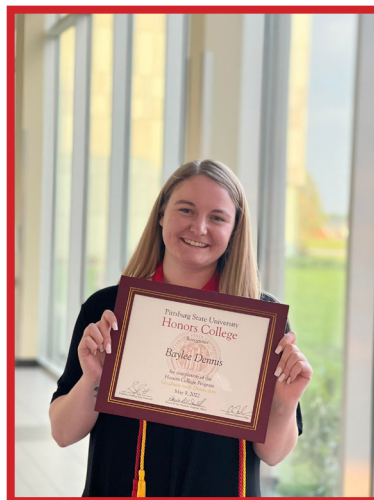
- Sarah Case

"I would not be where I am as a student and person without them. They have pushed me to excel academically and have set me up for success in my future career. More importantly than what they have done for me in the classroom, I also consider them to be friends. I truly appreciate who they are as people and their deep care for each student that they teach. They truly want us all to succeed"

- Samuel Eddington

Our HCA seniors feel indebted to their faculty. They are thankful for their guidance and feel that the presence of the faculty in their lives have provided them with the motivation and drive to continue reaching their academic, personal and professional goals. They attribute much of the development they made as young men and women to the efforts of their significant faculty. After several years of hard work, the HCA graduates feel they need to honor the efforts and sacrifices the professors at this university made to complete their college experience.

The selection of the significant faculty member will continue to be a key piece of the HCA awards banquet. Those relationships will continue to shape the lives of the young men and women of our organization for the better. It is a constant reminder of the importance of healthy relationships. As much as our seniors feel they need to honor their faculty members, assuredly, the faculty members feel they need to honor the hard work and commitment to Pittsburg State we display as well.



Fuchs Retires as Director, Passes Position to Eckstein

By Amanda Trout

After many years as a number of roles around Pittsburg State University, one being Director of the PSU Honors College, Dr. Craig Fuchs recently announced his retirement from the PSU community. In regards to the Honors College, Heather Eckstein, current Director of Student Success Programs, will take on the role of Honors College Director beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

In his time at PSU, Dr. Fuchs has won many awards and participated in many intercultural experiences. Fuchs was awarded the Robert K. Ratzlaff Outstanding Faculty Award in 2001 and 2012 by the Student Government Association, a prize decided by nominations from the student community. In 2010, Fuchs received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Missouri Western State University.

As Honors College Director, Fuchs has led several study abroad trips to many countries around the world, including the recent Italy/France tour and trips to England and the Netherlands, among others. As a professor of music, Fuchs has appeared as a guest conductor for both the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional del Paraguay in Asuncion and the Orquestra de Camara Eleazar de Carvalho based in Fortaleza, Brazil.

“With the inclusion of the upcoming study abroad program in May, we (the Honors College) will have done eight study abroad programs in 12 years,” Fuchs said. “We have taken 157 Honors College students overseas. We have covered all of west and central Europe.”

In his final speech at the annual HCA Awards Banquet, Fuchs reflected on both his impact on the Honors College and the impact of the Honors College on him.

“Since we take 30 students each year, and we took 36 students my first three years, I have had the privilege of working with now 378 of the very best and brightest students that have ever walked the campus of Pittsburg State University,” Fuchs said. “I have developed so many great relationships and great friendships with students, attending their weddings, meeting their kids—who I lovingly refer to as my Honors College grand-babies, and continuing to stay in touch with them even after they leave PSU. I have been so blessed by this job in so many ways that it is impossible for me to account for all.”

Heather Eckstein was announced as the choice for the new Director at the April

Meeting of the HCA. Students who attended the meeting were allowed to ask Eckstein questions about her vision for the Honors College in the coming years.

"I've watched from afar for a lot of years," Eckstein said. "I want to get to know you (the Honors College), I want to work with the faculty that you work with for your classes, the ones who go on trips with you. I am most excited about students. I was pleased to hear that (this program) was student-focused. I'm okay with that, because if we really want to help students, we have to have people who are focused on students. We have to fight for them."

The staff of *Honorable Mentions* would like to thank Dr. Fuchs for his many years of service. We would also like to congratulate Heather Eckstein on her new role. 2022-2023 is sure to bring with it a lot of changes, but we know the future looks bright!



HCA Inducts New Freshman Class for 2022-2023 School Year

By Tricia Combs

Each year, we return to the day we all dreaded as incoming freshmen: interview day. Potential members of the next HCA cohort come from far and wide to join us on campus for one nerve-wracking experience. This year's interview cohort was no exception, with some students coming to us from just blocks away, and others from all the way in Nebraska. No matter where they came from, they each shared the common goal of joining us in the Pitt State Honors College. Through their nerves, they mingled amongst themselves, bonding over high school activities and experiences and making connections that will continue on during their time at Pitt State.

This year's group was filled with outstanding candidates, but the selection was finally narrowed down to just 30 students. Listed alphabetically, the 2022 Cohort, shared with the University as of March 1, is as follows: Russell Baker, Emmaline Beyeler, Carlee Brumley, Kennadie Campbell, Hannah Dickens, Alaina Fulkerson, Hannah Gray, Shekhar Gugnani, Neil Gugnani, Kyra Heald, Jeffrey Horinek, Corey Humble, Emily Imhof, Josie Jacquinot, Taylor Krehbiel, Caroline Kunshek, Colby Lampkin, Joy Lee, Joseph Marten, Alexa Owens, Austin Parrish, Alexandra Robinson, Shelby Sogaard, Ezekiel Spieker, Kirryn Sprague, Nathan Stice, Taelyn Thompson, Kelsie Tucker, Beau Wilson, and Sarah Wood.

We look forward to welcoming these students to campus with our overnight in June, and are excited to see the impact they will make here at Pitt State!



Honors College Members Tour Italy and France on Study Abroad

By Amanda Trout

Potentially one of the greatest assets of college is the number of opportunities afforded to students, especially in terms of study abroad capabilities. This past spring break, several students from the Honors College and beyond traveled to Italy and France to immerse themselves in the rich culture and history of two prominent European civilizations.

The trip took place from March 11 through March 21, and was led by a combination of the travel company, EF Tours, Dr. Brian Moots (PSU modern languages instructor), and Honors College director Dr. Craig Fuchs. Students who participated in the study abroad program received either Honors or modern language course credit.

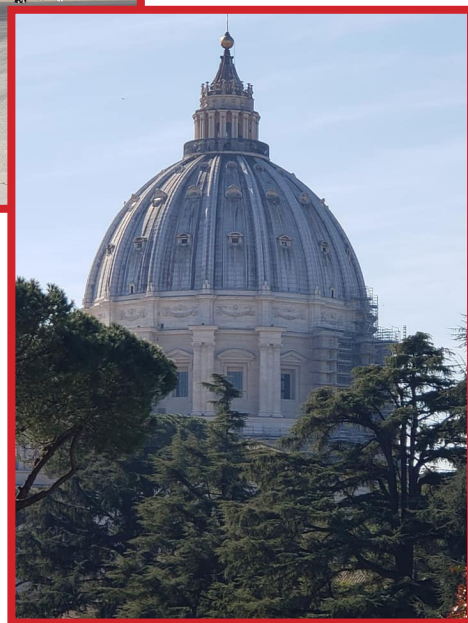
The trip itinerary was packed with historically significant locales. After a long day spent in a variety of airports, students visited Rome. The capital of Italy contained many relics of ancient times, such as the Colosseum and Trevi Fountain, as well as the modern innovations and chic shopping destinations of a big city. In each city, students were treated to several dinners featuring local cuisine and guided tours of each locations' best sites.

Destination number two was Florence, after a quick excursion to Assisi (a theologically-significant town that is a Unesco World Heritage site). Florence featured connections to several artistic big shots, such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, and the epic poet Dante Alighieri. Florence was also home to Galileo and other influential scientists. Where Rome has the amenities of the big city, Florence has the charm of a community connected by its rich history.

For the final destination, students flew cross-country to the capital of France, Paris. After a wind delay that resulted in most luggage being left in Florence, the grandness of the capital made up for any inconvenience. Like Florence, Paris felt very culturally connected despite being a very large metropolis. In Paris, students visited the Louvre, Versailles, and took both bus and boat tours of the city.

Students on this spring break study abroad trip were able to learn a lot about language, culture, and international travel, but beyond this they also gained skills

for dealing with complications in daily life. The opportunity to study internationally is a gift, and it is one of the many possibilities afforded to students via both Pittsburg State University and the Honors College program.



HCA Students Compete in First Annual Cohort Cup

By Leann Trout

This year has brought with it a lot of new changes for the Pittsburg State University Honors College. With new adjustments, it remains heartening to see the honors students adjust and take on new challenges when needed. However, not all changes are intimidating, but rather opportunities to simply have fun. Such is the case for this year's Cohort Cup, the first ever competition of its kind for the Honors College at Pittsburg State University.

The Cohort Cup started off with a trivia night, which was September 26th of the 2021 fall semester. This event pitted the individual cohorts against one another in a test of general knowledge wits. Rounds featured academic topics such as biology, and also topics such as sports and entertainment. After the first Cohort Cup event, the freshmen cohort was in good standings. They gained attendance points for having a good showing at the events, and also performing very well at the trivia night. Seniors also performed well, at one point tying with the freshman for a chance at the gold. Sophomores were third place at the trivia night, and juniors took fourth.

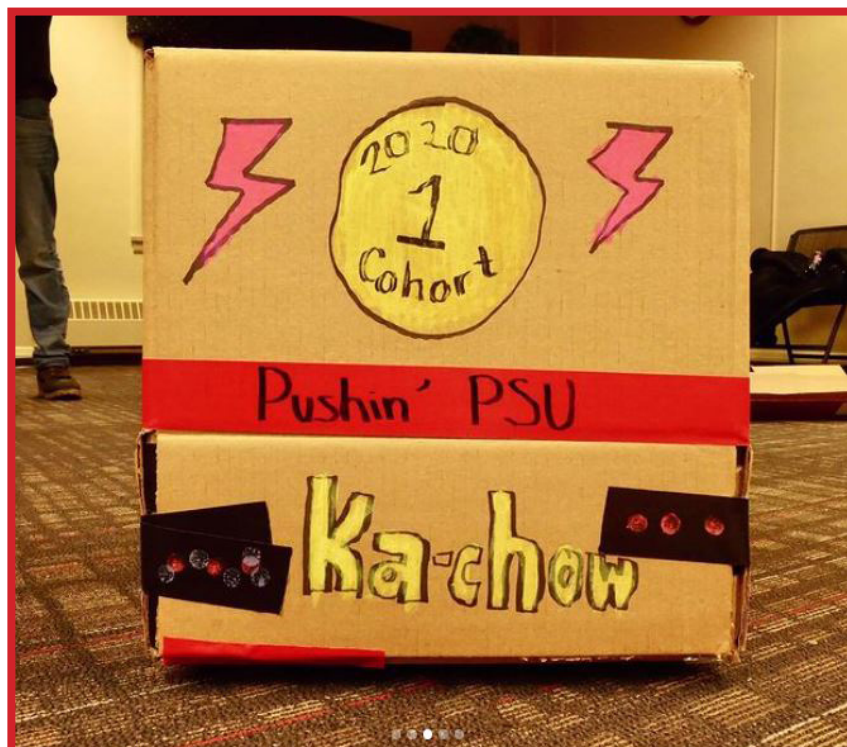
Additional Cohort Cup events in the fall included dodgeball on October 21st and a bowling night on November 16th at Holiday Lanes. A small break from the Cohort Cup activities was taken during the months of December and January, and then Cohort Cup events for the Spring were kicked off with an Honors College Association Winter Olympics on February 22nd. This event featured olympics-styled games with a beginning craft to design a bobsled. Outstanding bobsled appearances were made by the freshmen and sophomore cohorts, with the freshmen bobsled featuring durability, and the sophomore bobsled earning points for school spirit and style. The first event of the night was, fittingly, a bobsled race through the halls of the Overman Student Center. Other olympic-based events featured included a mock-curling game, having elected individuals from each cohort attempt to slide a puck over a table and into designated marks, and a team skiing game. This game involved intense teamwork, as four individuals per cohort were required to move two boards attached with ropes through a challenging obstacle course. The team with the fastest time won. To end the night, skiing teams attempted an even more rigorous path, while each individual was required to make trash can baskets at the very end of the route to officially be finished.

The Cohort Cup ended with a picture scavenger hunt event on March 29th, having planned a field games event for April 19th at the President's field which was canceled due to uncooperative weather. Regarding cohort standings, the results

were given out in person on May 9th at the Honors College Awards Banquet. The sophomore class was runner-up with 10 points, and the freshmen class took home the trophy with 11.5 points. When asked to speak a few words on the pertinence of the Cohort Cup, the events coordinator, Sarah Case, commented on the environment created by the Cohort Cup between the individual cohorts.

"In my opinion, the Cohort Cup was a really great addition to the HCA for a few reasons," Case said. "First of all, oftentimes, the cohorts get very close, and they become your group of friends in college. The Cohort Cup facilitates an environment where cohorts mingle with one another as they compete against one another. Sometimes, cohorts would even be paired together for competitions. Our members also represent a large variety of majors that are spread all over campus, and this offers multiple opportunities over the course of the year to come together to work together as a team. Finally, I've noticed that HCA members' desire for achievement often lends it to a competitive nature, so it offers an environment for some healthy competition that helps students release some stress from classes."

Having been a new concept to provide community events for the Pittsburg State University's Honors College, it can be said that the Cohort Cup was an outstanding idea to bring honors students together to have fun while in competition.



HCA Public Relations Committee

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Members — Kassi Burns, Tricia Combs, Marci Heatherly, Annie Mccord, Evan Taylor, Leann Trout