

Honorable Mentions

FALL 2021



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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY AMANDA TROUT

Fall 2021 showed Pittsburg State's renewed progression to return to a new normal following the COVID-19 pandemic. While students persisted under a mask mandate at the beginning of the semester, meetings (such as ones with the Honors College Association) were allowed to resume in person. There is something about fellowship with colleagues that makes in-person meetings so great, something that was clearly lacking in the organization (as well as others) during the pandemic.

Within the Fall 2021 version of *Honorable Mentions* you will find a series of articles, some very similar to the content we (the staff) have presented in the past and others exploring the new opportunities presented to the Honors College during this past semester.

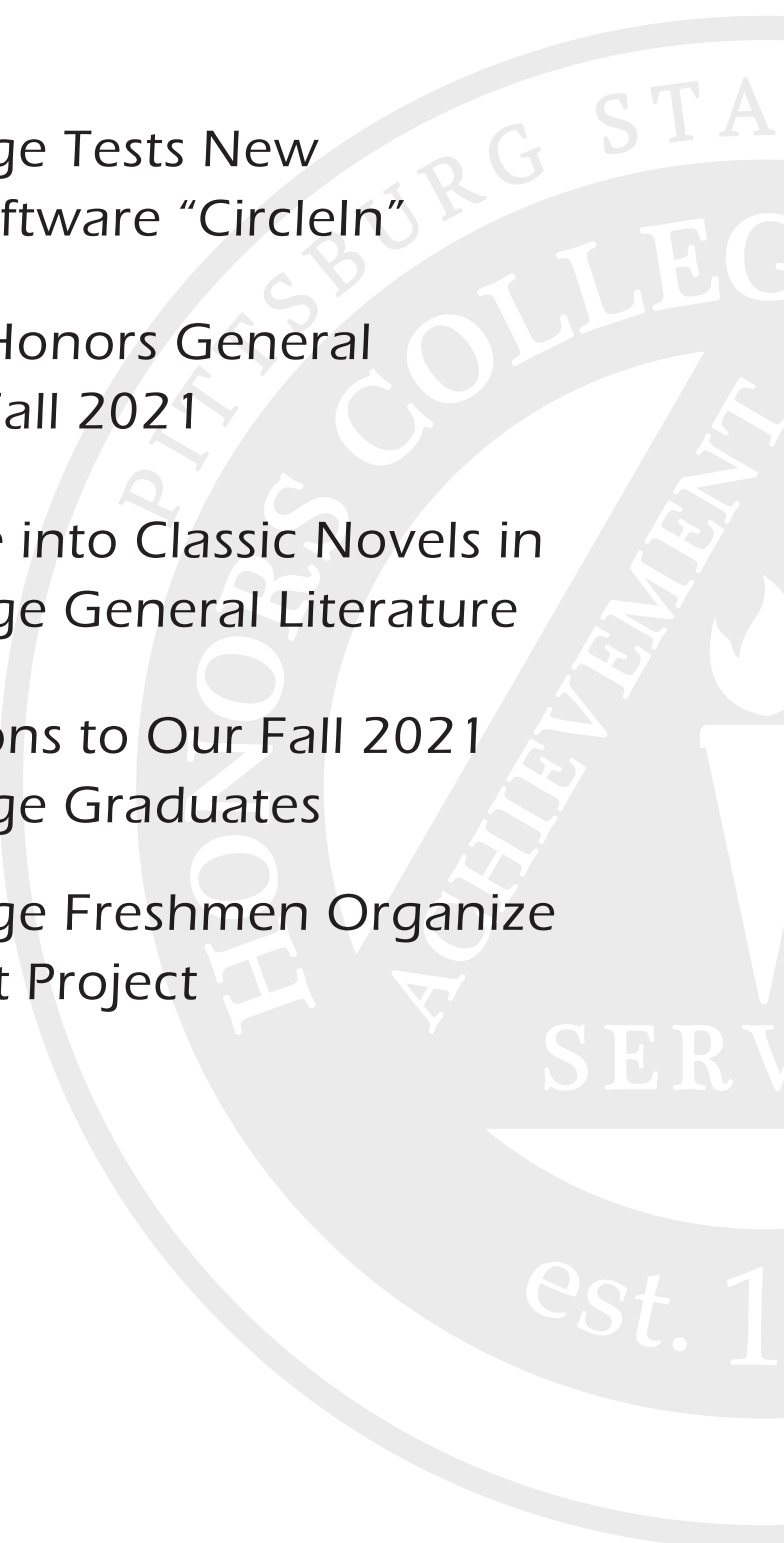
Additionally, while we will not be covering it in-depth within this issue, Honors College

director Dr. Craig Fuchs announced his upcoming retirement this semester. Since his last semester as director will be Spring 2022, be on the lookout for a featured interview with Dr. Fuchs in the Spring 2022 edition.

I would like to extend a thank you to my staff for their contributions to the newsletter, a special thanks to our recently-graduated graphic designer Grace Haworth, and continued thanks to our readership. I hope you enjoy this edition of *Honorable Mentions*!



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HONORS COLLEGE TESTS NEW INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE “CIRCLEIN”

BY EVAN TAYLOR

Pittsburg State University is performing a trial run of a new interactive learning tool for students. The CircleIn website is a place where students can perform discussions outside of class, live chatting in study rooms, or even sharing notes and tips. The idea is to provide an environment away from an instructor and classroom setting that still facilitates learning and collaboration between students. This was especially important with the continuation of the issues presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. A place where students can chat face to face and share information and work with one another online is an excellent way to mitigate the risks of transmission among students as well as just the capability of providing an excellent academic resource to PSU students. The site encourages students to collaborate and use the resources on the site regularly by providing students with awards for meeting weekly quotas for completing tasks, sharing notes, sharing resources, joining study rooms, reviewing flash cards, and much more.

Each class a student is enrolled in has a unique page that has an active discussion board, public notes and flashcards that have been shared by classmates, an option to start a study room, and a complete list of all the students that are in the class. Each class has a leaderboard where students are incentivized to use the features on the website to score points and compete against their peers. All the information shared in the class page is saved

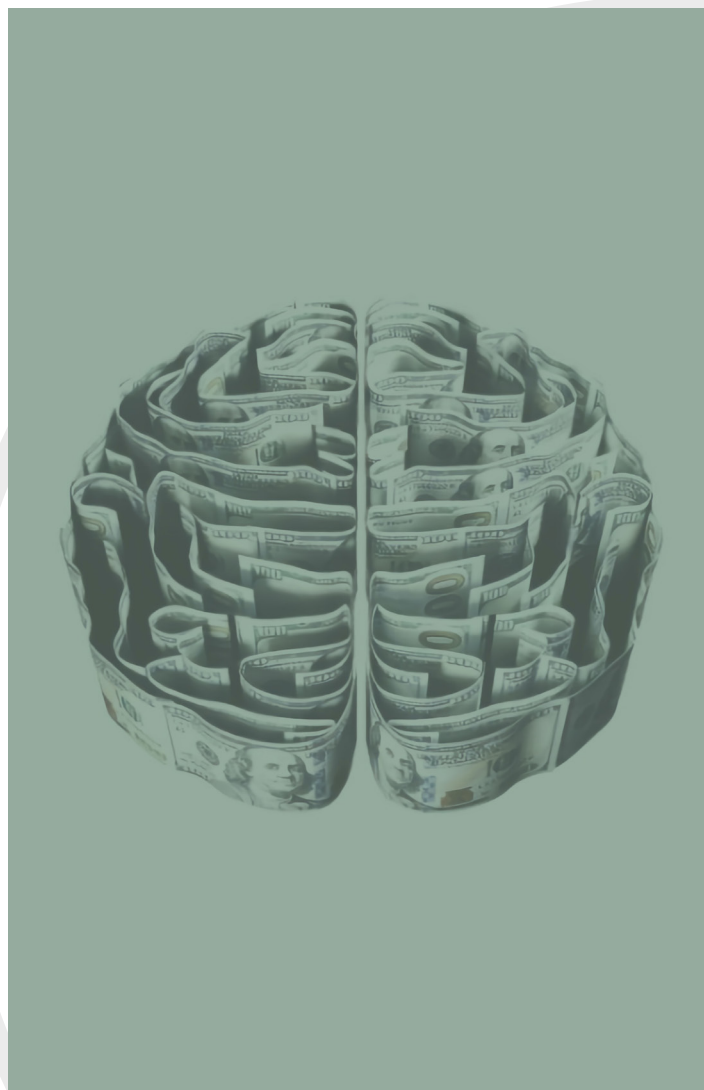
so the students don't lose access to potentially valuable assets.

Honors College students were asked to help in pioneering the advantageous use of the new resource campus wide. With our help, the university hopes to be able to implement CircleIn more widely in the coming years.



REVIEW OF HONORS GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY: FALL 2021

BY LEANN TROUT



The Honors General Psychology course held this fall was observed online through Zoom. While at times this proved a challenge—with the occasional broken camera, pet and family member interruptions, unmuted mikes, etc—class proceeded as any other honors course would, in that it was interactive, informative, and offered the opportunity for

students to express themselves. One of the most entertaining aspects of this course was the projects. One project required students to pretend to be famous psychologists throughout history, to modern day. Tricia Combs played an excellent Abraham Maslow, representing the humanistic psychologist and elaborated on his hierarchy of needs. Olivia Holman was the controversial Sigmund Freud, representing the psychoanalyst. Representing a modern psychologist was Abi Peters in the role of Elizabeth Loftus, a cognitive psychologist. Peters was so invested in her role that she successfully portrayed Loftus throughout the rest of the week after presentations had finished.

Overall, this course was most conducive to learning when opportunities were provided for students to engage. Another great aspect of this course was the few labs given in Canvas. The first lab was a brain lateralization topic that allowed students to determine how they used parts of their brain to answer certain questions. Another lab was about food aversions which required students to explain why they do not like particular foods based on past experiences. While at times the lectures were a little hard to follow—mostly due to Zoom malfunctions—the projects tended to be insightful and purposeful, and the personal anecdotes provided by Dr. Allison alone should make any Honors College student more than excited to take this class when it is next offered.

STUDENTS DIVE INTO CLASSIC NOVELS IN HONORS COLLEGE GENERAL LITERATURE

BY EVAN TAYLOR

General Literature was offered to Honors College students this fall as a GenEd. Taught by Dr. Carlson, students were placed in an environment where they were encouraged to think critically about works of fiction and poetry. Dr. Carlson's personality allowed the students to feel more comfortable discussing some of the more difficult topics that the works presented. She was always brutally honest and encouraging of students to express how certain characters or scenes made them feel. The class began with a look at short stories. Except, these short stories all had character's that challenged our traditionally way of thinking and even our comfortability when reading. We were introduced to criminals and all sorts of deviant personalities and asked to really think critically about the origins of their behavior and how these individuals affected those around them.

The class moved on to longer works of fiction. We read *Pride and Prejudice* and discussed *The Great Gatsby*. While reading these books, we were asked to think critically about the cultural environments that these works were written in and how that affected the author's scope. Victorian era literature is obviously vastly different than literature written during the roaring twenties in America. We were able to see that the cultural ideals and norms were reflected in the works. Students began to see how the viewpoint of the author changes the makeup of a book entire-

ly. Being asked to think critically about the real "American dream" spurred some interesting in class discussion.

Finally, the class moved to poetry. For many students, poetry creates challenges because of the circuitous language and intense emotion that poems are often written with. Dr. Carlson understood our apprehension and explained that we read poetry to explain things that are just too difficult to describe with typically language and we read poetry to help us learn about ourselves and the world around us. She mentioned that there are instances where you will encounter people and situations that appear frequently in poetry in your real life. During our poetry unit, we learned how to analyze sound in poems and how to paraphrase poems into language we understand. We used what we learned in those lessons to tackle Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. We spent a lot of time dissecting his works line by line as a class to help us uncover the meaning behind the language Shakespeare chose to use. We got better and better as we continued to practice and are almost able to take passages and perform breakdowns of our own without instructor guidance.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FALL 2021 HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATES!



Grace Haworth



Riley Dennis



Ahdaya Meyers

HONORS COLLEGE FRESHMEN ORGANIZE SUCCESSFUL PITT PROJECT

BY KASSANDRA BURNS

This year's Freshman Cohort has really stepped up to the plate and is quickly proving to be an important addition to the Honors College. These new faces brought in fresh ideas to help not just Pitt State, but the whole community. The Pitt Project was a popular event started by an HCA member many years ago. The idea behind it was to get college kids out into the community by offering to help citizens of Pittsburg with odd jobs. The citizens got help, the kids got community service, and the whole city of Pittsburg got a heightened sense of community. It was a huge success!

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 Pandemic brought the annual project to a screeching halt. But this fall, we were able to breathe new life into the Pitt Project and host its long-awaited return. HCA Freshmen members, led by Hannah Eckstein, Blair Wilson, and Payton Oliver, divided themselves into teams to tackle the marketing, pick-up, recruitment, inspection, and donations. Each team worked hard to ensure their aspect of the project went according to plan. From organizing the fine details to spreading the word all around town and everything in between, everyone played their part in making this Pitt Project a huge success!

Just when everything seemed to be going smoothly, a thunderstorm kept the project from continuing as planned. Fortunately, we were able to reschedule. And while not all volunteers were still able to participate on the



new date, many new volunteers were able to. There actually ended up being more volunteers than there would have been if we had stuck with the original date! On the day of the project, Pitt State students assisted with tasks such as raking, painting, planting, and landscaping. Some even got to pick fresh pears right from the tree!

Citizens of Pittsburg seemed grateful for the assistance, and also quite pleased that there were good college students in town willing to volunteer their Saturday to help people out. Overall, the project seemed to be a success and a positive experience for all those involved.