September 2013 Issue

Honorable Summer Projects

“A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.”

- Colin Powell
Table of Contents

I. Interview with the Associate Vice Provost for the University Honors Program, Dr. JD Bowers (Page 3–4)

II. University Honors Program: Freshman Taft Retreat (Page 5-7)

III. What were the University Honors Fellows and House Leaders up to over the summer? (Page 8-20)
I. Interview with the Associate Vice Provost for the University Honors Program, Dr. JD Bowers

1. What do you think the University Honors Program's role is in student success? University Honors both creates and facilitates the opportunities for student success. We bring programs and a framework to the table that are academically sound in their approach and oriented toward future achievement in their outlook, such as the research programs, global leadership, study abroad, and dedicated classes where faculty specifically design the course to meet the needs and challenges of University Honors students. We then work to engage students in these opportunities and help them navigate through the university, allowing them to tailor their experience according to their own interests and goals.

2. What is one piece of advice you would give to a current University Honors student? What about to a student thinking about joining the program? There's an old phrase that says "advice is cheap". I think that's true if you are talking about personal matters or giving personal opinions. What we provide to students isn't advice, it is expertise and commentary that is grounded in both a deep understanding of teaching and learning as well as experience. My commentary is simply this: make a plan, set goals, explore the possibilities, and focus on excellence. I think that too many students fear that having a plan will curtail their ability to have fun or be spontaneous. What we provide in University Honors is the professional philosophy that I live by every day: follow your plan and stay grounded in your core values but be open to new experiences, ways of doing, and ideas. That allows you to excel, grow, and be spontaneous, but also gives you some security in knowing that you will be less likely to make decisions you will come to regret. As for advice to those who are thinking about the program or who know of the program and who may be leery about joining, my simple question is this: what's stopping you? University Honors simply has too many advantages for you not to join!

3. In your undergraduate career, what did you do to enrich your education? I have always been purposeful about being engaged across a wide range of my interests and activities. While in school I played baseball, sailed, was a sports writer for The Flat Hat (the campus paper), helped found a chapter of my fraternity on campus and later became its chapter president, was a tour guide, Senior Admissions Intern, did fundraising for Avalon (a center for women and children who were victims of domestic abuse) by starting a croquet tournament that is still sponsored every year, and was a member of the debate team as well as a volunteer coach for a local high school. I also had a few jobs, including working for Colonial Williamsburg (but, no, I was not one of their costumed interpreters). Even now as an adult I am involved in a wide and very diverse set of activities. I have always believed that I am enriching myself by
stretching my boundaries, trying new things, and seeing the world as a much bigger place than my immediate surroundings.

4. Anything else you would like to share? I want University Honors students to feel comfortable approaching me. It is important that you all know that I am thrilled to be in the job that I am--I feel like a kid in a candy store. I always am impressed with the intellectual excitement I hear in your voices when you talk about class, ideas, and research, and my work is to see that you get more of those opportunities. I love to have fun and I find great value in good (and bad) jokes; I find that humor is an essential asset in life. When I was a kid I was very sick and spent months in the hospital and I was limited in what I could do and the doctors talked about limitations I might face in life. But I resolved that their perceptions were not going to limit me and that I was far too young to be facing such a serious challenge and have to go through life being reserved and closed off. So I'm not. And I'm equally dedicated to my role in University Honors as I am to my role in educating students, and if you don't believe me, just ask any one of the students who went with me to The Hague last summer. Ask them about the topic of the program and ask them about The Fiddler, and in their answer you will see the two sides of me.

II. University Honors Program: Freshman Taft Retreat

In three words, describe the Freshmen Retreat.

- “Opportunity to learn”
- “Persuasive, informative, invigorating”
- “Knowledge, helpful, insightful”
- "Hot, informative, tasty"
- “Creative. Interactive. Informal.”
- “Social, informative, enjoyable”
- “Friendly, informational, interesting”
- “Connections, information, entertainment”
- “Challenging, enjoyable, informative”
- “Engaging, Informative, Fun”
- “Meeting new people”
- “Don’t be Randall”
- "Informative, helpful, opportunity"
- "A good opportunity"
In your perspective, what was the highlight of the Freshmen Retreat? What was the biggest challenge?

- "Highlight: Food; Challenge: Climbing all those stairs"
- "Meeting new people and having a sense of place; the beast"
- "Highlight: conversations at meal time; Challenge: climbing all of those stairs during the hike"
- "Highlight: The Leaders were awesome; Challenge: getting students to talk and ask questions"
- "The group meeting with the faculty members; retaining all the information"
- "Meeting new people that are different(by being paired randomly placed in groups) and talking about new things between each other"
- "Meeting new friends who I will hopefully carry on friendships with. The biggest challenge was the hike!"
- "I enjoyed the night hike because I was able to meet a lot of people! The biggest challenge for me was the monster project."
- "Group activities because you got to know people and absorbing all the info we got told, a lot of sitting through lectures."
- "The highlight was the presentations concerning the different honors programs. The biggest challenge was the timing of our showers (2 for 16 girls)."
- "I really enjoyed meeting people I didn’t know any one going to the retreat but everyone from students to staff were extremely welcoming and kind."
- "The highlight was meeting new people and roaming with a group to hangout. The challenges were having to go the day of move-in and not being able to remember everything talked about."
- "The highlight was the team building activity"
- "Highlight: Learning so much about the program. Biggest challenge: Staying focused during lectures"
- "The highlight was making friends and the biggest challenge was stairs"
- "Learning about that dweeb Randall and it’s tough trying your hardest not to be Randall."
“The highlight of the retreat was the night hiking and the biggest challenge was the beast.”

"Highlight: food and small groups; Challenge: beast"

"Highlight: meeting new people and getting great info; Challenge: staying awake."

"Highlight and challenge: talking with faculty."

What are you most excited about as a new NIU Honors student?

“The Peer Mentor Program”

“Starting my classes”

“The ability to be part of a community that does such awesome things”

“I am excited to discover and take advantage of all the opportunities that the Honors program extends… excited to set myself apart”

“Being involved in a prestigious group and becoming involved on campus through the program”

"Living in the Honors House!"

"Having a shoulder to lean on"

"Starting dorm life and making new and close friends that have the same academic drive as me"

"Studying abroad!"

"Learning new things in a setting that fits my learning"

“I am looking forward to all the opportunities that the honors students receive that will get me involved at NIU."

“Building a sense of community while getting a more personal education surrounded by students like me.”

“I’m excited for sending my artwork to honorable mentions.”

“Challenging classes and a support system to help me.”
“Priority class registration.”

“I am eager to be a research rookie! I would love to work with a faculty member one on one on a project.”

“Meeting new people and professors to learn from.”

“The honors benefits”

“Studying abroad”

“I can’t wait to get involved with NIU Honors events”

“I’m excited about all of the opportunities in and out of the classroom, including social activities.”

“I’m excited about being part of a tight and fun community.”

“All of the opportunities available”

“I’m excited about getting to know staff/faculty and having more opportunities than a regular student.”

“Not be the Randall of the bunch. Oh, or Dillon, he’s a dweeb too.”

“Being able to say I am a NIU Honors student.”

"I am most excited about the opportunities I have as an NIU Honors student.

"Joining HSA."

"Doing what I didn't do in High school and working hard to meet my goals."  

"All of the opportunities of networking and research"

"New Hall community life."

"Having smaller class sizes and being able to connect with classmates teachers more than in a normal class."
III. What were the University Honors Fellows and House Leaders up to over the summer?

Chris Lloyd:

Hello! My name is Chris Lloyd and I’m a second year Honors Fellow! I am majoring in Industrial & Systems Engineering with an emphasis in Engineering Management. This summer I was back in my hometown of Freeport, Illinois, where I was lucky to have a Manufacturing Engineer Internship with a company called Honeywell Sensing and Control. During my roughly three months at Honeywell, I was given many different projects to manage. These projects included process cycle time reductions, 5S mapping, creating standard work procedures for test lab setups, and even making a few integrated product display boards that are now being showcased in the main lobby of the plant. These projects helped me better understand how a manufacturing facility operates on a day to day, month to month, and year to year basis. Along with that, I was able to grow in the areas of project management, communications, and even a bit of visual management. I’m excited to be back at NIU for my senior year of college and I look forward to learning more engineering concepts to apply at my next internship down the road. Good look to you all in this Fall 2013 semester!

From left to right: the plant manager, value stream manager, HR manager, and me (Chris)!
Elaine Rodriguez:

This summer I was able to conduct research in the department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science at the University of Iowa in their Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP). I was able to stay in one of the residence halls along with 24 other students coming from all over the country. The research consisted of a survey study asking residents of Iowa City what their barriers and motives to exercise were. With this information I was able to see the relationship between the two. It is important to promote exercise because of all the benefits it provides for the human body. Along with being able to conduct research there was seminars every day that consisted of professional development, GRE prep, journal club, and guest speakers including current graduate students. SROP is an incredible program that I would recommend to anyone who is interested in learning more about their field of study.

Faith Stauersboll:
My name is Faith Stauersboll and I’m a University Honors Fellow! This summer I enjoyed spending time with my family and friends, taking my new puppy for walks, and I especially enjoyed learning at my internship! I was so fortunate to spend the summer before my senior year working as a student nurse intern at Swedish American hospital in Rockford, IL. I spent my summer mainly on a Med/Surg floor, but I also got to shadow other units too. The best part of the program was that I was allowed to do almost everything a registered nurse can do! I got to practice so many hands on skills that I normally don’t have time for in my clinical courses for school. I also worked full 12 hour shifts so now I understand how a nurse’s typical day goes. And lastly, I learned so much about time management, and I became more comfortable talking to patients. It was such a great learning experience and every nurse I came into contact with was so kind and ready to help me learn! If any nursing students are interested in details of how the program works or how to apply, do not hesitate to contact me at z1601535@students.niu.edu

Faith Stauersboll pictured on the right
Jason Montemayor:

As a proud University Honors student I was one of four recipients awarded the Congressional Internship Scholarship on Capitol Hill offered through the Political Science department. I first became aware of this opportunity after having a meeting with Dr. Streb, the Chair of the Political Science Department. This competitive opportunity open to all majors offers NIU students a unique opportunity to have hands on experience of what life is like working on the Hill. In addition to the experience you will obtain, NIU’s Political Science Department offers each student a $6,000 scholarship to cover the cost of housing at George Washington University from May 26th to August 10th, and six (6) credit hours of Political Science.

My experience working for Congressman Bill Foster who represents the eleventh congressional district of Illinois was truly phenomenal. As a Congressional Intern you have the opportunity to handle constituent concerns from writing letters, giving informational tours of the United States Capitol, writing Congressional Records, attend briefings, research legislation, and making the office the world’s best cup of coffee! There are many other perks that come with living on the Hill other than the time that you dedicated to your office. For example there are Congressional receptions that you are allowed to attend that offer a wide array of information on specified issues from immigration, NASA, STEM research, and even bees. It was a very exciting time to be in Washington, D.C. when SCOTUS overturned the Defense of Marriage Act and the Senate approving S. 744, the Border Security, Economic opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act, a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill.

The best part about this opportunity is the ability to represent the University Honors Program, your area of study, and yourself when networking with the top professionals and businesses in the world. Northern Illinois University has a strong presence in Washington, D.C. I had a great opportunity to intern in the same office as one of our very own University Honors Program Alumni, Gary Timmins who was awarded the highest honors, the Paul Simon Award which is given annually to the top intern from Illinois. Gary Timmins currently works as a Congressional Staff member for Congressman Bill Foster’s Washington, D.C. office. This goes to show that success on Capitol Hill is attainable if you give your absolute best. I strongly encourage everyone to apply for this amazing opportunity even if you do not seek a future in public service because the skills, networking, and experience that you obtain from working in Washington, D.C. are truly irreplaceable. I am honored to be among the few endowed recipients of the Congressional Internship and will value this experience for the rest of my life. Go Huskies!

For information to about the Congressional Internship Scholarship awarded through the Political Science Department I encourage you to visit the web link listed below. Here you will be able to obtain more information of approximate deadlines as well as the application itself.

(http://www.niu.edu/polisci/engaged_learning/internships/congressinterninfo.shtml)
From left to right: Jason Montemayor, President Doug Baker
Lexi Williams:

My summer wasn’t as eventful as it could have been, but I enjoyed the relaxation. I spent most of my time on my summer classes - a philosophy class, which was very interesting and insightful, as well as Anatomy and Physiology, which was tedious, but I learned a lot. I also went on a couple family vacations. One was to Door County, Wisconsin, where I took this picture along Lake Michigan with my brother. I also took a trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota to spend more time with my family. Last but definitely not least, I finished off my summer with a trip to the first Packers preseason game on August 9th.

Lexi pictured on the right
Luis Lopez:

Summer 2013 proved to be the busiest summer of my life. I spent my summer interning at Navistar, Inc. which is a company that produces medium to heavy duty trucks, military vehicles, school buses, diesel engines and other products around the world. As an Integrated Product Development Intern for the Noise, Vibration, and Harshness Department, I got the chance to learn from experienced engineers and take part in the work they do on a day to day basis. I also had the opportunity to meet many important people and network with professionals inside and outside the company. This was an awesome experience for me and I feel very lucky to have had this opportunity. I owe this great opportunity to the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology for making me the first Navistar Corporate Scholar. This internship motivated me to keep working hard for my engineering degree and I feel very happy to have chosen this field of study. I strongly recommend everyone to take part in a summer internship and see for themselves what their future could await them.
Nicole Aryes:

Wow! Another summer has come and gone! This year, I wasn’t able to spend a majority of my
time laying by the pool or swimming or engaging in all the fun summer activities people enjoy.
Instead, this year I spent my summer interning, spending quality time with my family, and
attending one of the biggest concerts of the summer. Although that is all over, I’m excited to be
back at NIU and the University Honors Program!!

This summer I interned at a litigation consulting firm in Chicago for my second summer in a
row. I was a key member of the team in performing analyses that were included in a report for a
case that is set to go to trial in October. I also went to Hawaii in June for one of my aunts’
wedding. A lot of my family members went and it was great to spend time with them in such a
beautiful place. I also took my sister to see Taylor Swift at Soldier Field in August. We have
been fans of hers for years and it was definitely a night to remember! I definitely enjoyed my
summer and am looking forward to the new school year!!
Thomas Bouril:

My summer was a future historian’s dream: A summer full of research! I was lucky enough to have been a part of NIU’s inaugural year of the Summer Research Opportunities Program (Or SROP). SROP allowed me to work for eight weeks with Dr. Nancy Castle researching the situation of accessibility of higher education for persons with disabilities in Europe, which was both a rewarding and eye opening experience. The program also gave me many exciting opportunities, such as going to Fermi Lab, the Field Museum, and even a White Sox game to watch President Baker throw out the first pitch. While researching in SROP did dominate most of my summer, it also gave me the chance to meet several NIU students I did not have the pleasure of knowing, as well as students from around the country who were in NIU’s REU program. SROP (As well as McKearns and REU) concluded with NIU’s first ever Summer Research Symposium, which was a lot of fun! (Pictured is me in front of my poster at the Summer Research Symposium)

In between my SROP dominated summer I’ve also been studying for the GRE and getting ready to move into my apartment (I lead an exciting life don’t I? ; ) ). So while the summer has been pretty quiet, it has been productive. And despite what a lot of people might think, DeKalb is not that boring during the summer!
Dan Jeffries:

Over this past summer I had the pleasure of working my second summer at the Lane Ranch in Allenspark, Colorado. While there I worked mainly as a waiter, working with four other wait staff to serve our weekly average of 75-80 guests breakfast and dinner. On occasion, I would help out the other staff by either doing maintenance work around the ranch or tossing hay. The work was time consuming but fun. We'd get one day off a week and with the free time I’d go hiking, shooting, fishing, or just take time to myself to enjoy the scenery. I was able to work with some very awesome people as well as meet some incredibly interesting guests. One co-founder of wrangler jeans, the Callaway golf family, Bill O' Riley, and the Hornady ammunition family are just some of the notable guests the Lane Ranch has served. After this school year it is my full intent to return.
**Jordon Mitzelfelt:**

I spent a majority of my summer working and even though that does not sound like much fun, I really cannot complain. I find my job of lifeguarding and teaching swim lessons to be very rewarding. I taught private lessons to close to 40 kids this year and I have to admit I was attached to each and every one of them. All of the kids had very different personalities and each of them presented different challenges for me to tackle. I enjoyed working with the kids because they would always say the strangest things and would always manage to put a smile on my face no matter my mood or how my day was going. Their upbeat and innocent attitudes, crazy imaginations and their hugs at the end of the swimming sessions made all of the twelve hours days completely worth it. Plus knowing each of them was able to learn a possibly lifesaving skill makes me proud that I spent my summer the way I did.

Jordon pictured on the right.
Joe Palmer:

The highlight of my summer was working as a camp counselor for NIU’s Global Leadership and Philanthropy Camp. The camp is targeted towards high achieving high school students who have expressed an interested in the areas of non-profit development, leadership, social activism and philanthropic endeavors. My role as counselor, alongside other University Honors students Josh Nixon, Jordon Mitzelfelt and Lauren Nale, was to guide the campers during this week-long exploration of their interests.

Each camper brought with them a new perspective or idea on how best to positively impact the communities around them. With campers coming from multiple states and backgrounds, GLAP Camp allowed me to diversify my understanding of the world as well as polish up my leadership skills and knowledge. It was a great week full of fun, adventure and educational merit. It was a joy to see each student participate in the sessions, engage in the message and develop as future leaders and philanthropists.

The future is bright – so long as the GLAP Campers are in charge.
Jarrett Wolske:

While many of my friends were researching or studying abroad, I had a mostly mild, normal summer. My friends and I had a vacation in Lake Geneva, we celebrated many birthdays (we have six in August alone) and I spent time with my grandparents. As well, I shadowed at an occupational therapy clinic. During that time I was able to engage in more hands-on-experience and meet many professionals in my field. Yet, the pinnacle of my summer was the pervasive car trouble that plagued me, my family and friends.

For example, as my friend and I were driving, his car started to smoke and his tire popped. My truck failed its’ emissions twice and stopped shifting gears in the middle of my driveway. Together, my neighbor and I were able to roll it into the driveway. This is not to mention the other car troubles that affected my family. In all, this summer has gone down as the summer of broken cars.

Jarrett pictured on the left.