



The Honors Challenge



Sabine Gross

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An Honors student finds a quiet place during a research retreat break. Photo by Sabine Gross.

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The University of Wisconsin–Madison is an equal-opportunity and affirmative-action educator and employer. We promote excellence through diversity in all programs.

From the Director

I vividly remember my first “Honors Family Day” in the fall of 2015, just after I’d become Honors Director, when I talked with a group of Honors freshmen and their parents, answering questions and hearing about their hopes and wishes. This past spring, I had the special pleasure of congratulating some of these freshmen and their families during our Honors graduation reception. In the intervening years, many of them had received Honors awards, made decisions about whether to pursue Honors in the Liberal Arts or in the Major (or both), and discovered new interests, passions, talents, and goals. It is a privilege to accompany and support these promising young people on their journey, to see them at a special celebration and hear about their future plans. (Learn about graduation speakers’ thoughts on p. 10–11.)

Our support for students in many cases takes the shape of small courses and research awards—it also includes listening, caring, and offering advice. Honors advisors pride themselves on providing comprehensive, in-depth advising, and this year we’ve been able to assemble a stellar new team of advisors. More available appointments and drop-in hours every day make it easier for Honors students to seek information and advice. Overcommitment is a constant temptation, and I often find myself advocating for balance, for tempering intensity and excitement with moments of calm reflection. The huge old catalpa tree on the front cover is part of the landscape at idyllic Hilltop Farm where our Summer Apprentices get to discuss their research. The landscape of Observatory Hill with its spectacular view of the lake can similarly encourage us to slow down for a moment of contemplation—a moment that may include communing silently with the Tree of Peace that was planted outside the observatory in 1988.

Washburn Observatory, under the iconic dome that houses the historic telescope, has been the home of the Honors Program for a decade now. It was built



Sarah Morton

adjacent to two effigy burial mounds, on a site that has had special cultural and spiritual significance for thousands of years. UW–Madison has taken steps recently to acknowledge that campus is located on the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk, called by them Teejop, the Four Lakes. The 1832 treaty through which this land became available to build this university was an act of violence against the Ho-Chunk nation. We accept our share of the responsibility of encouraging respect toward this heritage while keeping the memory of this shameful history alive. Part of the message of First Nation members of the campus community has been an invitation to share in the pleasure of this special place and its spiritual traditions. A new initiative at UW–Madison, “Our Shared Future,” acknowledges the history of this land and of the Ho-Chunk Nation, including a public marker on campus; it also indicates a way forward to a new DeJope community in this place. Honors is grateful to be a part of this community. (Learn more at oursharedfuture.wisc.edu)

We hope you enjoy hearing from—and about—students and faculty involved in the Honors Program; we hope that their experiences, words, and achievements will resonate as you recall your time on this campus. Please write and visit—I always look forward to hearing from you, and am grateful for the strong connection many of you feel to this special program, special institution, and special place.

Sabine Gross
L&S Honors Program Director and
Professor of German

Fall 2019 Message from the Dean

It is an honor to write to you as the interim dean of the College of Letters & Science. When I stepped into this role in August, it was with a sense of excitement and possibility. Now, fall semester is in full swing. Students are streaming up and down Bascom Hill. New buildings are going up—a new chemistry building and the new Hamel Music Center. The college is growing and expanding, with fall enrollment, as well as faculty hiring, hitting record highs. It is indeed an exciting time to be at the helm of L&S.

A bit about me: Prior to assuming my role of interim dean, I served as deputy dean of the college, associate dean for research, and associate dean for the natural sciences. I have also served on the faculty of the astronomy department since 1995. I am a firm believer in the Wisconsin Idea: the notion that the benefits of

the university should extend across all of Wisconsin, as well as beyond the borders of the state.

I am also deeply committed to inclusivity and diversity, and determined to improve the student experience for **all** Wisconsin liberal arts majors. These will be among my top priorities in the coming year. My hope is that underrepresented students, as well as faculty, will receive the support they need to succeed at UW–Madison. A diverse faculty and student body strengthens the intellectual, cultural, and social life of this college, and creates a richer educational environment for all.

As alumni, you play a critical role in our success. As the year unfolds, I look forward to sharing our story with you and hearing from you, as well. Thank you for your support and



Paulus Mustelids

advocacy on behalf of your department and the College of Letters & Science.

On, Wisconsin!

Interim Dean Eric Wilcots
Mary C. Jacoby Professor of
Astronomy

*July 17, 2019: Welton Summer Apprentices
on Observatory Hill are ready to depart
for the annual Research Retreat.*



Ideas in Action — a Portrait of Bill Matuszeski '62

Meeting the very first graduate of the L&S Honors Program in Washington, DC, last fall was a special pleasure. After all, Bill Matuszeski embodies the living history of our Honors Program from its beginnings, and he has had the kind of career that Honors graduates, in particular, seem drawn to—challenging, varied, and public-spirited.

Our breakfast chat in the National Gallery turned into more than two hours of animated conversation, as Bill readily shared past experiences, thoughts, and a summary of more recent exploits. I knew he had graduated in December 1962 (Phi Beta Kappa) after seven semesters. When I asked what drew him to join the Honors Program as a sophomore in 1960, he smiled as he told me: “The story of how it happened is hardly one of honor and commitment to the community that one might expect from a program designed to bring out the best in people.” It turns out that his father exhorted his children to meet his own record, “Phi Beta Kappa in seven semesters,” which was an incentive for Bill to add Honors—“outperforming the old man,” and becoming the first Honors graduate in the process.

En route to reaching a goal motivated by family dynamics rather than lofty idealism, Bill discovered the pleasures of critical thought, of small and focused classes, of enriching academic work, of being part of a cohort with shared interests, and of individual contact with faculty. He recalled how some of his Political Science professors, in particular, “opened doors to knowledge.” But he also stated more generally: “The Honors Program provided us with regular challenges to our assumptions.”

Bill’s budding career as a lawyer (he went to Harvard Law School, graduating in 1966, and worked on land-use issues during the summer) found a new direction when he joined the Peace



Corps as an alternative to the Vietnam-war draft, “a way out that changed my life,” as he stated emphatically: “The Peace Corps convinced me that what I really wanted to do most with my life was public service.” Encompassing a series of jobs in Washington, his career revolved around “improving the natural or urban environment.” It included some surprising experiences and insights, such as “the two most difficult agencies to get to agree to evaluate the negative effects of their actions were the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Park Service.” Working for the EPA, Bill spent a decade directing the Chesapeake Bay clean-up, which challenged him to bring together numerous stakeholders, agencies, and individuals. He found the focus on helping others to develop their talents rewarding: “At some point in your career you reach the point that your knowledge is best used to remove barriers and to encourage others to grow and to use their expertise.” (I was strongly reminded of his words as I listened to our Honors graduation student speakers this year, whose Honors experience has led them to very similar conclusions—see excerpts on pages 10–11.)

Bill transitioned from this major project to an active retirement that includes travel, writing, speaking, teaching, bicycling, continued public service in the US and abroad, and landscape painting as well as time with family (some of his paintings are displayed in the virtual gallery at <http://www.yellowbarnstudio.com>). Based on his own lived experience, he revises the traditional model of life as 20 years each for education, family, and career, “after which there was nothing of importance.” He offers a different three-stage model: “The first 30 years are for education and deciding on a career; we have learned that there is much valuable time after college to explore the world and decide one’s role in it. The second period, from 30 to 60 years, is a mixture of career and family, with a need for both parents to be engaged in raising any children. The final 30 years is 60 to 90, the post-retirement years, which offer many new opportunities for community and family service and pleasure.” Bill’s involvement in the restoration of the Anacostia River in DC continues his efforts to bring different groups to the table, including his monthly articles in local papers about the Anacostia River that—as he emphasized—“must appeal to the neighborhoods rich, poor, and in between along the river.”

“Any final words on the value of the Honors Program?” I asked Bill, who has continued to support the program. He only thought for a moment before offering the following: “You are being well-prepared to find your way to success and happiness because you are aware of who you are and what you can do and what you need others to be inspired to do.”

Honors Seminar Focuses on Women's Health

History Professor Judith Houck provides a distinctive, wide-ranging, challenging, and gender-specific view of a topic many students are passionate about in her Gender & Women's Studies (GWS) 531 course "Women and Health in American History." Unsurprisingly, when she offered the course for the first time as an Honors seminar in spring 2019 with support from the L&S Honors Program, it quickly attracted many eager students. As Sara Stephenson, Honors Associate Director of Academic Services and head of the Honors advising team, explains: "A course with a health-sciences focus from a Humanities perspective taught with interdisciplinary breadth is very high on the wish list of many Honors students."

GWS Department Chair Aili Tripp was confident that Honors students would be "especially rewarded by the rigor the course requires."

Houck, who earned her PhD in UW-Madison's renowned History of Science and Medicine Department, counts teaching Honors courses "among the highlights of my career at this university." She especially values the students' curiosity and tenacity, even as they tackle topics and methods outside their expertise. Teaching this topic to a group of seventeen students allowed Houck to assign a historical research paper, a feature of the course that students say made the experience even more valuable, giving them the opportunity to "individually pursue a topic of deep personal interest," as one student put it. Students researched a wide variety of historical topics, including anorexia nervosa, menstrual product marketing, and the health consequences of living in Japanese internment camps. Three students launched Wisconsin-based projects, writing the histories of involuntary sterilization, contraception, and sex



Judith Houck counts teaching Honors courses "among the highlights of my career at this university."

trafficking in the state. For some students, it was this pursuit of a scholarly project that they liked particularly. As one of the participants affirmed: "I thoroughly enjoyed the process of writing the historical paper because I had never worked with historical materials before." Others commented on the value of the course from a career perspective: "I treasure our in-class discussions and hope to apply my knowledge to my future studies and interactions with patients." The course tackles provocative questions in its exploration of women and health, investigating the effect of gender on the perception and experience of illness, exploring medical views and personal experiences: When did women in the United States start using birth control? Were nineteenth-century

women expected to enjoy sex? How have women served their communities as healthcare providers and activists?

Although the course mostly attracts women, male students as well as those who identify as trans and non-binary also found the course informative because it examines how gendered expectations shape medical diagnosis and treatment and how medicine produces and reinforces the very categories of male and female.

Houck asks the students in the class to grade their own participation; additionally, they are invited to award bonus points to fellow students for contributions to discussion, a strategy that encourages them to think about how they themselves engage, understand, and analyze the material and trains them to assess the quality of discussion: "Perhaps someone asked one question that made you rethink an issue. Perhaps somebody brought two disparate strains together in a way that enlivened discussion. Perhaps somebody dared to offer a contrary opinion. Perhaps someone rephrased what you were trying to say in a way that helped others understand. Maybe someone helped you finally understand discourse analysis." Houck's teaching includes guidance on how to discover and evaluate sources and how to find and develop a research topic. Her individualized and detailed comments on students' drafts proved particularly valuable. As one of her students noted: "I completely restructured my paper after the first draft."

Reshaping students' approaches to their own experiences as well as those of others, illuminating the intersection of bodies, health, and gender from a historically informed perspective, is no small feat: Houck accomplishes it in her combined roles of gifted pedagogue, consummate scholar, and deeply knowledgeable historian.



Emma Langer running in the 2018 Nuttycomb Invitational.



Anne Pankowski (left) with teammates after winning the 2019 National Championship.

Performing at the H




Honors Advisor Christine Evans interviews Anne Pankowski and Emma Langer

What do they wish more people knew about student athletes on campus?

Anne Pankowski (Comprehensive Honors, '19) and Emma Langer (Honors in the Liberal Arts, x'20) agree: they emphasize that most student athletes are focused on their educations and do not fit the pervasive "jock" stereotype. As Division I athletes and students in the Honors Program, Anne and Emma utilize strong time management skills, personal drive, and a desire for balance to set and meet ambitious goals in all areas of their lives. This summer, these two incredible Badgers took time to share their experiences as student athletes in the Honors Program.

Anne stopped by Washburn Observatory shortly after returning from Finland, where she and her teammates earned the gold medal for the United States at the 2019 IIHF Ice Hockey Women's World Championship. Anne is used to interviews that highlight only her athletic accomplishments, so she was glad to answer questions about her academics as well. When being recruited by colleges as an ice hockey player, academic opportunities played a substantial role in Anne's decision to attend UW–Madison. Her interest in science and math plus a passion for working with animals ultimately led her to major in zoology. She conducted research in an orthopedic lab for her senior Honors thesis and volunteers extensively with the OccuPaws Guide Dog Association. Along the way to earning a bachelor's degree with Comprehensive Honors (the most challenging path to graduating with Honors), she enjoyed exploring new topics in Honors courses outside of her major, including "Introduction

ighest Level: *Meet Student Athletes in Honors*

		
	Anne Pankowski Comprehensive Honors, '19	Emma Langer Honors in the Liberal Arts, x'20
Major(s)	Zoology	Biology and psychology
Sport(s)	Ice hockey (forward)	Cross country and track (middle distance runner)
What accomplishments are you most proud of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 NCAA National Championship • 2019 Big 10 Medal of Honor as Hockey Humanitarian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running at the 2017 National Championship for cross country • Alternate for the 2019 National Championship • Maintaining a high GPA and finding a good life balance
What are some of your goals for the next five years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on the next Olympic hockey team • Graduate from veterinary school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get into and succeed in medical school and residency • Publish my research
What is something important you have learned on campus?	"I've learned the importance of people you meet along the way."	"Leave early to get places on time, and set goals, but know goals can change."

to Buddhism," and getting to know professors. Anne admits to initially being hesitant to apply to the Honors Program because she was concerned about how the academic expectations could conflict with her hockey commitments. Encouraged by her family to complete the application, Anne was pleased to discover that UW faculty were supportive of student athletes and that the Honors Program's focus was on "the quality of learning, not about making it hard." Anne is continuing her education at the UW–Madison School of Veterinary Medicine this fall and intends to play for Team USA at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

Like Anne, Emma was recruited as a student athlete and weighed academics heavily when selecting a

university. For this cross country and track runner, the beautiful trails in Madison and the chance to represent her home state of Wisconsin helped seal the deal. Emma is now pursuing a double major in biology and psychology and conducts research related to genetic-based heart arrhythmias with Dr. Corey Anderson and Dr. Lee Eckhardt. Emma values the chance as an Honors student to have professor-led discussions for lecture courses, and the Honors Program has helped her get to know her classmates better. In addition, Emma gets to see behind the scenes of the Honors Program and meet even more "smart, interesting individuals" as one of the program's office assistants. She has been impressed by the doors the Honors Program can open

for students, for example by providing research grants. Moreover, she appreciates the genuine interest of faculty and staff in supporting her and learning about her experience as a student athlete. When reflecting on her years in Madison, Emma concluded that she has developed a healthier relationship with school than she had in high school, learning to study smarter and have more confidence in academic and social settings. After completing a bachelor's degree with Honors in the liberal arts in the spring, she plans to attend medical school.

We thank Anne and Emma for their contributions to campus and the Honors Program, and we congratulate them on their successes so far.

Go, Badgers!

Honors Students Abroad

Honors Advisor Aimee Drolet asked Honors students studying abroad in 2018–19 with an Honors grant to write to us about their experiences. Here's what they had to say:

Megan Janssen (x'20, Journalism and Spanish) studied in Madrid, Spain, during Spring 2019.

Returning with the command of a second language and expanded cultural knowledge will be among the most valuable skills I will acquire in my lifetime and I owe it to all the supporters and scholarship donors in my life who enabled me to make this time studying abroad a reality—it is really a dream of mine come true.

Giovanna Danna (x'20, Psychology and Italian) studied in Bologna, Italy, during the 2018–19 academic year.

This entire year I studied abroad in Bologna, Italy, thanks to the generous help of the grant that I received from the Honors Program! I am so happy to have taken courses surrounding topics that I would never take in the US with my schedule!

Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity, it has truly been life-changing! Grazie mille!!!

Emily Byers Olson (x'20, Political Science and Legal Studies) studied in Utrecht, Netherlands, during Spring 2019.

So far I am loving everything about studying abroad and I am extremely grateful to have received a grant to help make this possible for me. Going abroad is the perfect opportunity to try new things that you haven't had the opportunity to try at home with amazing new friends who are as excited as you are about this experience.



Giovanna Danna in Bologna, Italy

Joy Nuelle (x'21, Computer Sciences and Chinese) studied in Tianjin, China, during Summer 2018.

My favorite part about studying abroad was that I could learn Chinese in the classroom and then leave the classroom and immediately put what I learned into practice. I made many fun memories while learning valuable lessons that can only be learned studying abroad! I am so grateful for my experience and can't wait to go back to China.

Mackenzie Berry ('19, English/Creative Writing) studied in South Africa during Fall 2018.

In a few words, my experience was both fast-paced and still, engaging students in experiential learning and traditional lectures, and allowing us the independence

to learn and experience place on our own. We visited hospitals, clinics, nonprofit organizations, schools, temples, churches, sangomas (traditional healers), traditional Zulu weddings, city markets, soccer and rugby games, and other places. The program was transformative for me personally and academically.

Lexington Haider (x'20, Biology and Spanish) studied in Seville, Spain, during Spring 2019.

Moving to a different country, living in someone else's home, and taking classes in a foreign language have been shocking yet rewarding experiences. Thanks to generous donors that contributed to the Study Abroad Grant, I am studying abroad with no regrets and am learning more than I ever thought possible.

Student Profile: Rena Yehuda Newman

By Sabine Gross

Is the student perspective adequately represented in the UW–Madison Archives? Honors student Rena Yehuda Newman (x'20; pronouns: they, their, them) begs to differ, and after this past year, they have experience that gives weight to their opinion. As the inaugural Archives student Historian-in-Residence, they have worked in a number of ways to change the state of things going forward. “I love archives,” Rena Yehuda tells me, and remembers how, as they opened that first box of archival material at the State Historical Society for a freshman history project, they felt a strong sense of “I need to do more of this.” A history major also pursuing a certificate in educational policy, Rena Yehuda is driven by a love of learning coupled with a strong sense of social justice.

I caught up with Rena Yehuda after a presentation they gave at the April 2019 UW–Madison Undergraduate Research Symposium on the importance of documenting the history of student activism and organizing on campus. Rena explains that given the inevitable student turnover on campus (compared with staff and faculty), student voices are much less present in Archives holdings than those of longer-term members of the campus community, and that while Archives materials come from many different sources, official documents tend to be over-represented. In other words, documents issued by the Chancellor have a much better chance of being included than student initiatives or responses, resulting in a somewhat lopsided picture of our campus history. Both Cat Phan, University Archives digital and media archivist, and Rena Yehuda see the student historian’s work as a way to redress that imbalance and, as Phan puts it, “to add richness and fullness to UW history by ensuring that



it is inclusive.” The student receives valuable training and experience while undertaking a research project with a “focus on historically under-researched and underrepresented people and stories in our campus history,” as Phan, who spearheaded the Historian-in-Residence position, explains. Among other things, Rena Yehuda researched documents and artifacts from the February–March 1969 UW Black Student Strike. Phan tells me: “We’ve been extremely fortunate to have Rena in the position to help us figure out what this program really can accomplish and its potential impact on students and campus.”

Rena Yehuda sees the value of the work on both the local and the broader national level: while they have presented

their project at the Midwest Archives Conference, they have also given a presentation to the UW–Madison ASM Governing Council to impress on its members the importance of keeping good records of their work and submitting those records to University Archives.

Rena Yehuda has been working on oral histories of current student activists, hoping to contribute to a better future balance of Archives holdings. Rena Yehuda’s interests range broadly—they call their cartooning class with Lynda Barry “life-changing.” [Note: check out Barry’s 2014 book *Syllabus* to see why students love courses offered by our Professor of Interdisciplinary Creativity, and why Barry has just been awarded a MacArthur “genius grant.”] What does Rena Yehuda value particularly about the Honors Program? “The wide-ranging conversations I’ve had with Honors advisors.” They applied for the Archives position because they “tend to take initiative,” they tell me: something I hear not infrequently from Honors students.

Find more information about Rena Yehuda’s residency at uwmadarchives.tumblr.com/post/176304782179/student-historian-in-residence-hello-from-the

Welton Summer Apprentices 2019



Parting Words for New Beginnings

At the Honors graduation receptions in December and in May, we invited outstanding Honors students to address their graduating class. In reflecting on their years in the UW–Madison L&S Honors Program, they mentioned learning from, with, and about others. They praised inspiring mentors who pushed them to aim higher and supported them in ways that changed their goals and plans. And they talked about the excitement of exploration and discovery along with the guiding principle of the Wisconsin Idea. Here are excerpts from their speeches.

If there is one thing I have learned at UW–Madison, it is to be courageous by acting in the presence of fear. I found my courage, not so I can freely speak my mind, but so that I can help shift the conversation and center it around the people who need to be heard. [...] Expand the circle, because one person doesn't know it all. [...] Step back, and continue lifting others up.

Amina Maamouri '18



Gwyn DeLap pictured with faculty mentor Jolanda Vanderwal Taylor.

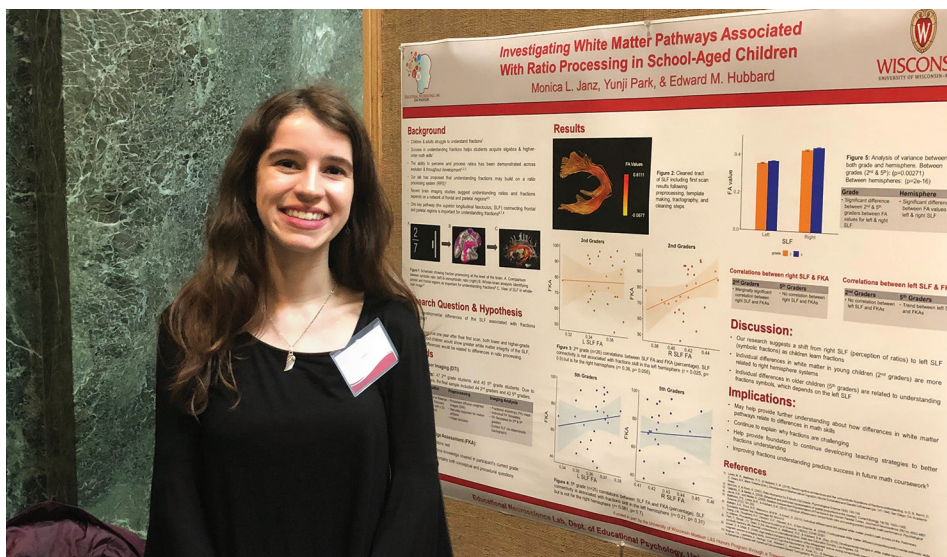
Honors students typically have trouble saying no to things, so I am sure there are hundreds of stories in this room that each student carries which make up their own Wisconsin experience. I recognize that everyone completed a different journey to get here, and that after we graduate our lives will branch out in different directions, but our narratives will stay connected by the Wisconsin Idea. [...] The Wisconsin Idea isn't measured by a single outcome or contribution. Instead, it is a guiding philosophy for how to live your life. And in reflecting on your time at this university, you may start to notice all of the small ways your education has already spread beyond the classroom.

Gwyneth DeLap '19



As my time winds down here at UW, I hope all of the other graduates can likewise look to the people that pushed them to where they are today, whether they are a friend, mentor, a roommate, a professor, an advisor, or someone like my octogenarian classmate Ray. Thank them for making our time at this university great and for significantly impacting our education and happiness at Wisconsin. Not every university can boast the wonderful staff and programs we have here, so make sure when you move on to work, graduate school, or wherever, to not only thank those who helped you get there but also reach out and be that person for others.

Tom Powers '19



Monika Janz presenting her research at the 2019 Posters in the Rotunda.

In his *Sand County Almanac*, Aldo Leopold states, “To those devoid of imagination a blank place on the map is a useless waste; to others, the most valuable part.” I believe this quote exemplifies the values of the L&S Honors Program, teaching us to explore the uncharted terrain of our respective disciplines and to integrate the breadth of our knowledge about other fields of study. As students in the Honors Program, we continue this legacy of going beyond what we can learn from one discipline to incorporate insights from other fields. In my own experience, the Honors Program has pushed me to explore the sometimes uncertain but always curious blank places on my own personal map. [...] As Honors students, we will continuously strive to integrate all we learn and to share this knowledge with others, the Wisconsin Idea.

Monika Janz, '19



Honors freshmen in the historic Washburn Library.

PAY IT FORWARD!

Honors students need your support

During the academic year 2018–19, support from Honors donors enabled us to offer more than 70 grants to Honors students. These awards allowed students to conduct research, study abroad, complete Senior Honors Theses, or carry out leadership projects in the community. We are proud of what they have achieved. Your gifts make it possible for us to support students this coming year and in the future, and to continue building an Honors community on campus! We rely on you, our alumni and friends, to help our students realize their goals and turn dreams into reality.

By Mail

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Indicate “**L&S Honors Program**” for donations to our General Fund; do note if you prefer your donation to go to a specific fund such as the Spector Excellence Fund or the Director’s Fund. You can find a gift form to download and send with your check at the “Make a Gift” link below.

Online

Please use the “Make a Gift” link on the L&S Honors website to make an online gift directly:
<https://honors.ls.wisc.edu/make-a-gift/>

Contact me anytime with your questions and suggestions!

Sabine Gross, L&S Honors Faculty
Director: director@honors.ls.wisc.edu, 608-262-2984

For planned giving information, please contact Russ Austin at the UW Foundation: russ.austin@supportuw.org, 608-308 5326



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Incoming L&S Honors class on Observatory Hill, September 3, 2019.