



Georgia Southern University
Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

Honors@Georgia Southern

University Honors Program

Spring 2015

Honors @ Georgia Southern

University Honors Program Students and Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honorsgsu>



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

University Honors Program Students and Staff, "Honors @ Georgia Southern" (2015). *Honors@Georgia Southern*. 8.

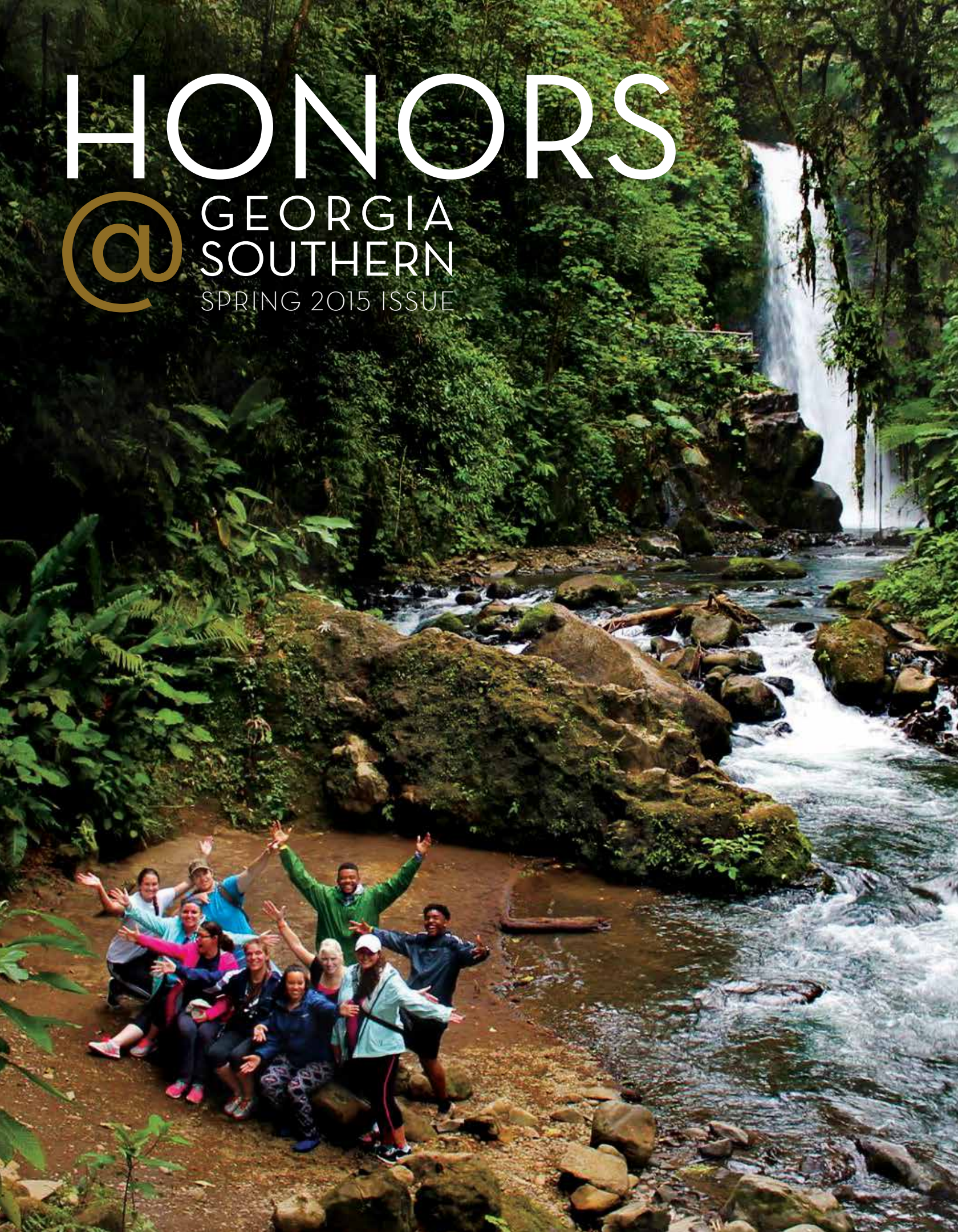
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honorsgsu/8>

This magazine is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors@Georgia Southern by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

HONORS



GEORGIA
SOUTHERN
SPRING 2015 ISSUE



FROM THE DIRECTOR



DR. STEVEN ENGEL
Director, University Honors Program

"A pupil who from whom nothing is ever demanded which he cannot do never does all he can." This message, from the nineteenth century English philosopher John Stuart Mill, summarizes the rationale for an honors education. In the University Honors Program we require students take on assignments that may seem impossible at the time they are doing them. We challenge students because if we did not, they would never realize what they could do. In this issue of *Honors @ Georgia Southern*, the emphasis is on the many ways we extend the challenges of an honors education outside of the classroom. You will learn about two new alternative break experiences we launched this year. During spring break, Dr. Leti McGrath led students to Costa Rica to work with children in impoverished areas outside of the capital city of San José. In May, two honors students, Justin Yun and Julie Swantek (along with Dr. John Peden) led students to Red River Gorge in Kentucky to provide service in the Daniel Boone National Forest and learn about outdoor education. These are intensive examples of experiential learning. Initially inspired by the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey, this approach to education seeks to engage students in direct experience with the world and with other people in order to create more thorough learning opportunities. Other examples of honors experiential learning in this issue include examples of internships and study abroad. In fact, our Honors Inquiry in Ireland program, in partnership with Georgia Southern's Center for Irish Research and Teaching will be heading into its second year in 2015. Toward the back, you will see the list of our record number of honors students who graduated this year. Each of them completed a research-based thesis and I encourage you to join the over 10,000 people since last May who have downloaded and read honors theses by accessing Digital Commons online at <http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/honors-theses/>. As always, I look forward to hearing from our students, alumni, and friends about their successes. Please stay in touch.

Sincerely yours,

Steven Engel

MISSION STATEMENT

The University Honors Program provides a small college atmosphere in the context of a large comprehensive university. The program is designed to foster the development of a critical sense of inquiry, a spirit of creativity, a global perspective, and an ethic of civic responsibility. A hallmark of the program is the emphasis on bringing ideas to life through undergraduate research, experiential learning, and service-learning opportunities. The University Honors Program at Georgia Southern University rests on a foundation of the following ideals that are inspired by the institution's emphasis on engaged learning.

CRITICAL SENSE OF INQUIRY

Honors students will explore a variety of approaches to research designed to foster the pursuit of knowledge. Students will develop the ability to question with a healthy skepticism toward accepted opinion. The culmination of the undergraduate experience is an independent research or creative project designed to exemplify a critical approach to inquiry.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Honors students will demonstrate an ethic of civic responsibility and exemplify the motto of the program, "Humility before Honor." Students will be challenged to use their abilities and talents for the advancement of humanity and the pursuit of a greater good. The primary vehicle for the expression of civic responsibility is through service both to the university and the community.

SPIRIT OF CREATIVITY

Honors students will embrace the idea that creativity is a virtue that should be experienced by all students, regardless of discipline. This spirit involves a respect for different ways of knowing and an openness to intellectual discussion and challenge.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Honors students will develop a perspective which allows them to approach their chosen discipline from an international point of view. This outlook involves the critical exploration of global concerns and generation of proposed solutions to international problems. Honors education provides this worldwide perspective through academic courses, study abroad opportunities, and co-curricular experiences.

HONORS @ GEORGIA SOUTHERN STAFF

EDITORS

Sarah Ryniker
Anthropology, 2015
Writer

Maria Alejandra Amiel
International Studies & French, 2017
Design and Layout
Photographer

Nicole Puckett
International Studies, 2015
Design and Layout

Aleyna Rentz
English & writing and Linguistics, 2017
Writer

Elise Rustine
Graphic Design, 2018
Design and Layout

Dr. Steven Engel
Director
University Honors Program

Dr. Francis Desiderio
Associate Director
University Honors Program

Erin Martin
Honors Advisor
University Honors Program

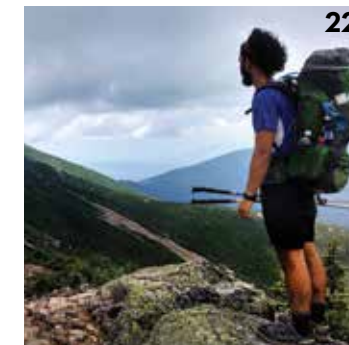
Linda Rushing
Administrative Assistant
University Honors Program



FEATURE STORIES



Honors Inquiry in Ireland



Alternative Breaks



Pura Vida! Costa Rica

Fall 28
2014
&
2015
Spring

Congrats to our Grads!

CONNECT WITH THE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM YEAR ROUND



"Like" the University Honors Program on Facebook to keep up with news and events about the Honors Program throughout the year.

[facebook.com/gasouhonors](https://www.facebook.com/gasouhonors)



Visit the Honors playlist on the Georgia Southern University YouTube channel to see professional videos of honors in action.

[youtube.com/georgiasouthernuniv](https://www.youtube.com/georgiasouthernuniv)



To learn more about the University Honors Program, visit our website

[georgiasouthern.edu/honors](https://www.georgiasouthern.edu/honors)

And subscribe to our monthly newsletter at:

<http://eepurl.com/7pD5v>



Honors Inquiry in IRELAND

A research paper in a typical college class involves covering material that is “known” to the professors and to the general scholarly community but involves new learning for students. On the other hand, undergraduate research projects are distinguished in that students do not have pre-determined or known answers. Students often find these learning experiences much more gratifying than the regular classroom setting.

As such, these are often more exciting learning experiences. Similarly, study abroad experiences are often seen as particularly engaging because they involve experiencing a new culture, in immersive field-based experiences. What happens when you combine these two exciting learning environments—undergraduate research and study abroad?

Starting in summer 2014, the University Honors Program sponsored a trip to Ireland that combined genuine undergraduate research experiences with international travel. This research endeavor, Honors Inquiry in Ireland, is a hands-on, transatlantic research project which examines the migration of people from the Southeast of Ireland to the Southeastern United States in the middle of the nineteenth century.

In the peak period of Irish migration to America in the late 1840s and early 1850s, during and immediately following the famine in Ireland, over one million Irish people boarded ships for America.

While the American South was not the primary destination for these immigrants, a substantial number came to Savannah, Georgia, that by the 1860 census, over 13 percent of



Savannah's population (and nearly a quarter of its white population) had been born in Ireland. In fact, during this time frame, 56 percent of arrivals from Ireland came directly from Wexford, Ireland's most southeastern county, to the port of Savannah. Because of these relationships between Wexford and Savannah, the Center for Irish Research and Teaching at Georgia Southern University has launched a multi-year transatlantic research project entitled the Wexford-

Savannah Axis lead by Dr. Howard Keely, Director of the Center for Irish Research and Teaching and Dr. Steven Engel, Director of the University Honors Program. This project includes several partners: Waterford Institute of Technology and the John F. Kennedy Trust in Ireland along with Georgia Southern and the Georgia Historical Society in the United States. The Center for Irish Research and Teaching sought the involvement and energies of honors students to

help carry out this groundbreaking research. In summer 2014, eleven honors students from Georgia Southern traveled to Wexford, Ireland to carry out archival based research on both sides of the Atlantic. Through their work in archives in Savannah, Wexford, Waterford, and Dublin, they unearthed the first pages of a story beginning to come to life.

During the initial stages of the research, students worked in Savannah with naturalization records, shipping records, city directories and newspaper sources at the Georgia Historical Society.

"What was unique about this summer research project was its transatlantic nature. We were working to narrate a complete story, not just an aspect of the tale. As undergraduates,

"Our research on both sides of the Atlantic has proven a deep relationship between these two regions."

-Dr. Howard Keeley



this opportunity is incredible," Sarah Ryniker (anthropology '15) said.

Then, the students traveled to Ireland to better understand the impulses to emigration, utilizing sources at the National Archives of Ireland, the Wexford County Archives, the Wexford Library, and the Waterford County Archives.

"The professionals we worked with in Ireland have been doing research their entire lives," James Devlin (writing and linguistics '15) said. "They took undergraduate students with almost no experience in primary research and treated us as equals."

Students explored the William Graves and Sons papers at the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin. The Graves papers were part of a County Wexford shipping firm that provided passage to a large number of the Irish who left Wexford and came to Savannah. For example, the students unearthed correspondence from the 1840s and 1850s between Savannah cotton merchant Andrew Low and William Graves that demonstrates the commercial links between Wexford and Savannah.

"It was so amazing to see references to Savannah in papers and letters in Ireland that date back all the way to the 1850s," Lauren Gorla (journalism '15) said. "In my research experience, I've never had the chance to work firsthand with primary resources so this trip definitely gave me a new appreciation of that type of research."

The students also delivered two presentations of their research findings to audiences in Ireland, including a presentation to the John F. Kennedy Trust at the Dunbrody Famine Ship and Irish Emigrant Experience. Representing the Kennedy family at the event was filmmaker, Rory Kennedy, the youngest child of former Senator Robert Kennedy.

"Being able to present original research in front of Rory Kennedy and other important figures in Ireland was certainly not a typical freshman year experience," Aleya Rentz (English & writing and linguistics '17) said. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The students learned from their presentations as well. "The presentation at the Dunbrody Centre was a wonderful way to see how our hard work had paid off," Lydia Biggs (English '16) said: "Having



important people, like Rory Kennedy, listen to and later ask more about our research made me realize just how ground breaking and significant our findings are."

While the presentation was an important capstone experience for the trip, it was the beginning of a new stage in the research project. Following the presentation, former employees of the company of Graves and Sons (which had moved out of the shipping business into the building supplies business and then closed in the 1970s) mentioned that they had boxes of papers that dated back to





the 1840s. Many of those documents have been donated and are now housed at the Graves Archives at the Luke Wadding Library at Waterford Institute of Technology.

“Without the eleven honors students, this archive would not exist,” said Dr. Engel. “Their hard work is the reason so many people are getting on board with this project.”

In addition to the research intensive components of the experience, students traveled throughout the southeast of Ireland to better understand the context of the place from which so many of Savannah’s Irish departed.

About working with Dr. Engel and Dr. Keeley, Maria Amiel (international studies & French '17) said, “During



our trip, we had the opportunity to form close relationships with both professors and even referred to them by first name while in Ireland. We even joked about them being our ‘two dads away from home.’” Amiel believes this made the environment comfortable and made it easier for the students to ask questions and be involved with both professors.

“We have been delighted with the results thus far on our research into the migration of peoples from Wexford to Savannah,” said Dr. Keeley. “Our research on both sides of the Atlantic has proven a deep relationship between these two regions. Furthermore, we are proud to have involved undergraduate students in this project. It has created a dynamic learning atmosphere for all involved in the project.”

Since June 2014, back in the U.S., the students have continued to share their research findings. In November 2014, Katherine Sellers (psychology '15), Rentz, Ryniker, and Devin presented their findings at the Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference. “It feels good to translate our course work into actual findings and present them to an interested audience,” Devlin said.

Rentz also presented her research with Dr. Keeley and Dr. Engel at the Bulloch County Historical Society and the Savannah Business Luncheon sponsored by the Georgia Southern University Savannah Alumni Network. “Everyone seemed very interested in our research. I received a lot of feedback and great stories from the audience,” Rentz said.

Two students from this research project, Micah Mills (mechanical engineering '17) and Sarah Holmes (psychology '16), presented their research in October at the Irish Heritage Society of Sun City in

Hilton Head mentored by Dr. Keeley. “Continuing the research confirms that there is a much larger story here. I’m glad I’ll get to be part of the Wexford-Savannah Axis,” said Mills. “It feels like what we did really matters.”

One student chose to continue this research as a focus for her honors thesis. Ryniker completed her honors thesis as an anthropological ethnohistory of the Savannah-Irish culture and examined the institutions that helped develop the culture during the 1800s.

“My research covered a variety of topics, but the central theme was the Savannah Hibernian Society St. Patrick Day toasts,” Ryniker said. “Many people haven’t heard of the large proportion of Irish living in Savannah, and there was hardly

any research on the contributions of the Irish.”

To help defray the costs for students on this program, benefit concerts were held in March in both Augusta and Savannah. Wexford soprano Joanne McCabe was the headliner and Waterford Institute of Technology professors Eric Sweeney (organist and composer) and Jimmy O’Brien Moran (uilleann pipes) performed for over 600 people at the two venues. In April, Kieran Cronin, head of the Graves Archives at Waterford Institute of Technology visited Georgia Southern to deliver a lecture on civil rights in Northern Ireland and the U.S. While here, he provided an orientation session for the students who will be conducting research on this project in summer 2015.

“Continuing the research confirms that there is a much larger story here. I’m glad I’ll get to be part of the Wexford-Savannah Axis.”

-Micah Mills

This is an ongoing research project and the University Honors Program will partner again with the Center for Irish Research and Teaching in bringing students to Ireland in summer 2015. Among several students, Rentz will return to Ireland this summer.



IN-CLASS EXCELLENCE MEETS REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

Students in the University Honors Program expand education past the classroom walls. Internships take students around the world and engage students in engineering, theatre, politics, science, and many other fields.



Rachel Neuhauser and Andrew Smallwood

Andrew Smallwood and Rachel Neuhauser spent the spring term in the Georgia Legislative Internship Program at the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta, Georgia.

Smallwood (political science '15) chose to participate in the internship because of his interests in political science. "It was an unparalleled opportunity to network and gain an extra leg up in terms of experience," he said.

Neuhauser (sociology '15) finds the work very rewarding. "Through hard work, I've gained the respect of dedicated public servants, who in turn entrust me with immense responsibility," she said.

She chose this internship to have a better understanding of the government that influences lives on a daily basis. "In order to be an active citizen, it is necessary not only to understand the government, but also to have an educated appreciation for government," said Neuhauser.

Both students will use this internship opportunity in their honors theses. Neuhauser's thesis is an examination of modernization processes in China. "In having the knowledge of what a state government controls, I have a greater understanding of the magnitude of issues that China's government faces," Neuhauser said.

Smallwood's honors thesis is an analysis of government branch popularity. His work in the Governor's Floor Leaders' Office has given him the privilege of witnessing the two branches interact with one another.

Both Neuhauser and Smallwood worked with high profile senators, representatives, and lobbyists. "There are a lot of negative associations to politicians, but in my experiences so far, they do not apply to Georgia officials," Neuhauser said.

"They may be high profile, but they're just people," Smallwood said.

Last summer, Cameron Feriante participated in a 10-week internship through the Society for Chemical Industry America International Group and the American Chemical Society.

This opportunity placed Feriante (chemistry '15) with Milliken & Company in Spartanburg, South Carolina, a company that develops synthetic flooring, flame resistant fabrics, and infrastructure.

Feriante's main research involved preliminary work with room-temperature silicone elastomer composites. Silicone composites are a combination of materials that make fabrics and textiles lighter and more durable.

"Learning a different technique and applying it to a problem is something the University Honors Program taught me. There was more self-direction than the average classroom, but I applied the data towards the goal of problem-solving," Feriante said.

The learning experience in the internship built on the knowledge he gained in Georgia Southern University's classrooms and labs. "I worked with phenomenal minds to seek to promote creativity, and I secured a second internship for this past year," Feriante said.



Cameron Feriante

Feriante also received an honorable mention from the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship for his research in the treatment of traumatic brain injuries, which ultimately became his honors thesis under the direction of Dr. Hans Schanz.

Feriante will continue his studies in the Georgia Institute of Technology's chemistry Ph.D. program with funding from their Presidential Fellowship.



Kayla Smith

Kayla Smith's summer internship with Emory University reaffirmed her passion for the medical field and put her on the right track for medical school.

Smith (biology '15) interned with Dr. Rachel Patzer at Emory University School of Medicine. Dr. Patzer and her team developed an application called, "iChoose Kidney." Smith trained nephrologists (kidney doctors) in how the app worked.

"I was amazed at the number of patients with different issues and stories. I was able to make personal connections with people, something you can't do in a laboratory," Smith said.

Smith also participated in a community study called the "Radiant Study" on dialysis patients. "There is a lack of knowledge about dialysis in the community, and this internship opened my eyes to a lack of public knowledge," Smith said.

"This internship taught me so much more about myself and science. It really was an internship that bridged lab work and the public," Smith said.

After graduation, Smith will work as a lab assistant in Emory University's Department of Surgery and apply to medical schools in the fall. "My internship concreted my desire to work with the public. Now that I have ties to Emory, I can't wait for graduate school."



Cesar Perez

Cesar Perez (multimedia communications '15) held the very first internship as the Digital Media Correspondent with the Sun Belt Conference this year.

Perez produced three videos each week for the conference. He controlled every step, from setting up the interviews with the student-athletes, to interviewing the students, to editing the final takes. "This job is a great way to learn skills for the future," he said.

The videos he made covered games in "Weekend Previews" interviews about upcoming games, and "Weekend Recaps," which discussed what went on in games over the weekend. Perez also produced "Features" which involved specialized stories and interviews.

"Filming the videos was a great experience. I've gotten used to the sport environment, and I think people became comfortable with me," Perez said. "I traveled to away games. Being on the field at the Georgia Dome was a very neat experience."

This summer, Perez plans to attend a broadcasting seminar in Athens, Georgia, where he can network with individuals working in broadcasting. He hopes to eventually work with film studios, specifically with post-production.

Kori Williams

Kori Williams never believed she would engage with cutting-edge laboratory technologies as an undergraduate. A 10-week National Science Foundation summer research experience at the University of Vermont changed that.

Williams (biology '15) worked in a neuroscience lab, specializing in proteins and eye development. "Working in the lab with new techniques and technologies was something I could bring back to Southern. We have begun to incorporate them into the labs on campus," Williams said.

Williams saw this experience as a chance to evaluate her goals for the future. "I worked in the field with researchers from diverse backgrounds from all over the United States who helped cultivate my passions," Williams said.

She also wrote papers, presented posters, received feedback on her research, and participated in workshops about graduate school. "The experience you receive from an internship is completely different than in the classroom," Williams said. "I could not have participated without the funding from the National Science Foundation."

After graduation, Williams is taking a year to work at the Medical College of Georgia. Afterward, she plans to apply for graduate school to pursue a Ph.D. in either neuroscience or developmental biology.



Nicole Puckett: Japan

Rebecca Henderson: South Korea



Leaving home to attend college is a challenging endeavor for many students. Leaving the country to study abroad for a full year raises the challenge to a different level altogether. Nicole Puckett (international studies, '15) experienced a whole new culture as she spent a year abroad in Japan.

year enrolled at the Nagoya University of Foreign Studies in Nisshin, Japan. During her year abroad, she worked on her language skills—both in writing and speaking, took courses in international law, and volunteered at an orphanage.

Puckett said one of the best parts about the exchange program was how her Japanese university offered integrated courses. "It was fantastic to engage with Japanese students and learn more about their society while getting class credits," she said.

Puckett believes the University Honors Program prepared her for experiences on the trip by developing

her global perspective and sense of curiosity through coursework and experiential learning. "I wanted to have an open mind about Japan. I didn't want to go in with too many generalizations," Puckett said.

Puckett got more out of the experience because she maintained a sense of openness. "Everyone was friendly. They were all willing to answer my questions and help me find my way."

"Learning a foreign language is the best way to become a global participant. I'm prepared to take on the world now," Puckett said. "I would recommend this exchange program to anyone."

Her time in Japan was only the start of her travels abroad. After she graduates, Puckett will work in Australia for a summer before returning to graduate school for International Affairs.

Most business students read about international business strategies, but few receive the chance to see international policies in action. Rebecca Henderson,



portion of Daegu, the third largest city in South Korea. Henderson, supported by the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship as well as the University Honors Program, took five classes while abroad: Korean Language, Korean Culture, Korean History, International Business, and Managerial Accounting. "When I wasn't studying, I was trying to find new places to eat and trying unfamiliar foods," Henderson said.

An aspect of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship requires Henderson to share her experiences abroad. Her goal is to inspire others to follow in her footsteps. She spoke to several classes in the College of Business Administration discussing the importance of South Korea in the global economy and how that importance has been increasing in recent years. "[South] Korea's economy has been one of the fastest growing economies in the industrialized world, despite the major recession," she said.

Henderson said the trip changed her in a positive way. "The way you can just be immersed in a culture, learning the language and meeting the people, it just...you just can't describe what it does to you as a

(accounting '15) spent a semester abroad in Daegu, South Korea. She enrolled in business courses, developed Korean language skills, and became immersed in the local culture. Henderson's decision to spend a semester abroad may give her the upper hand as she begins to take part in the global economy.

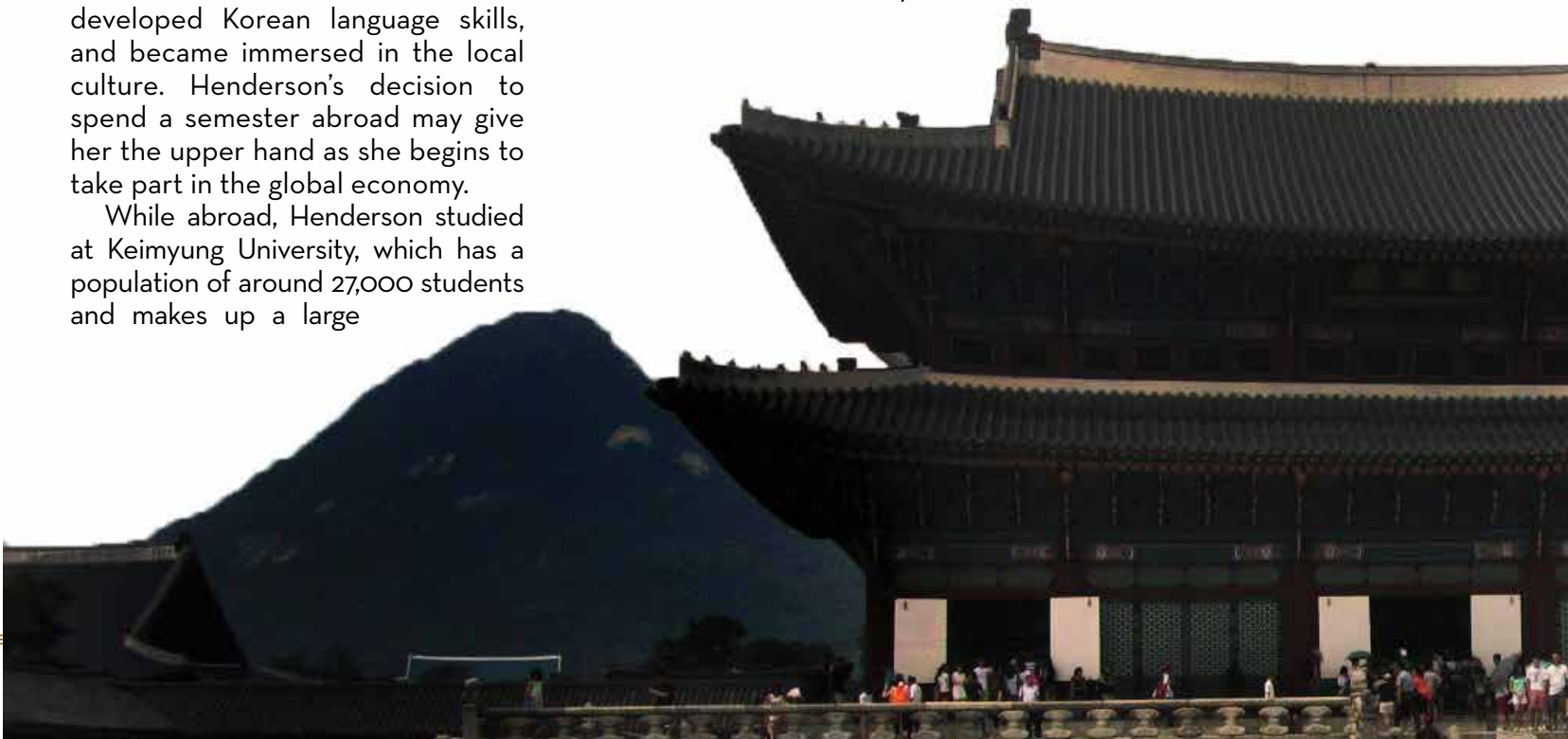
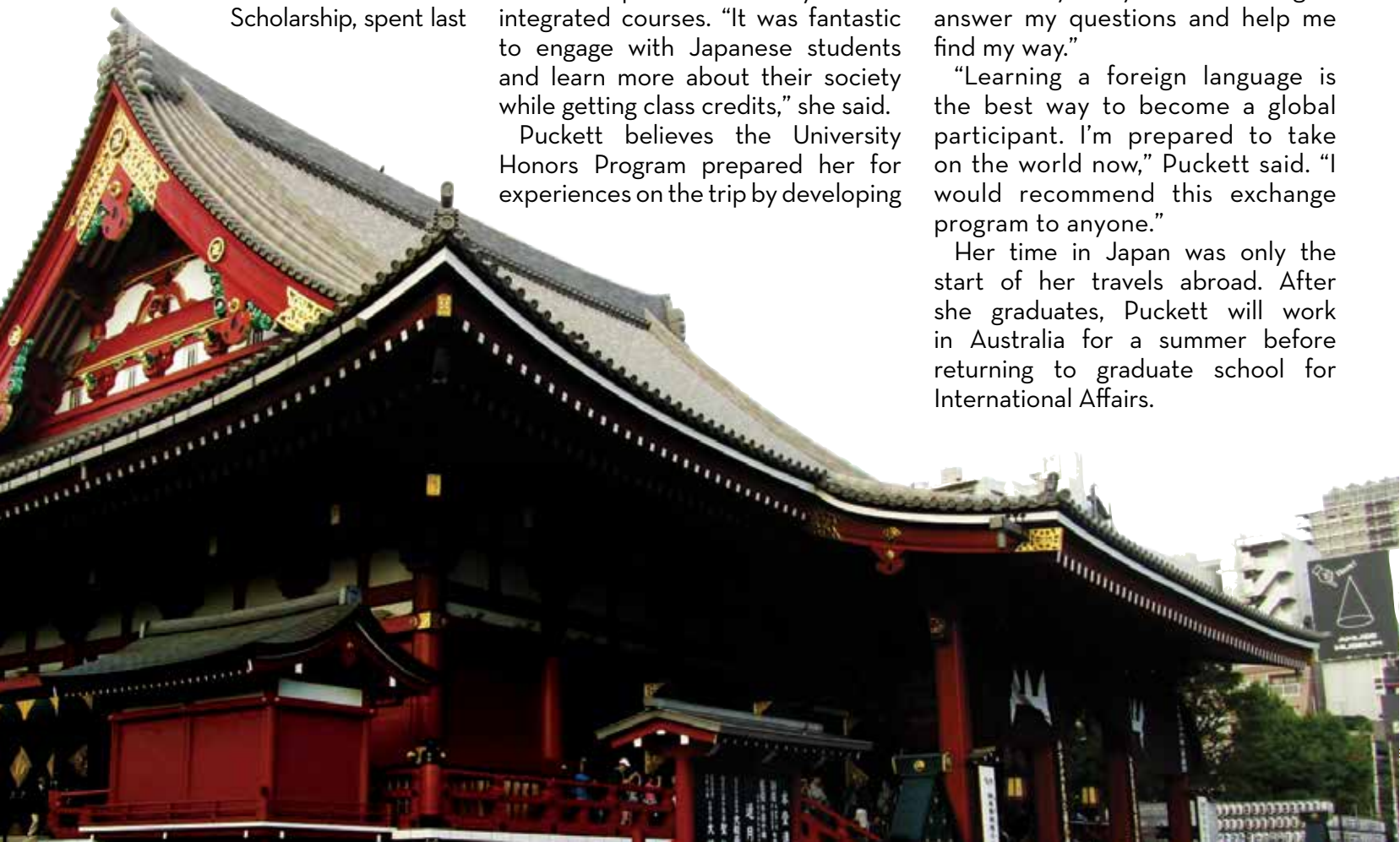
While abroad, Henderson studied at Keimyung University, which has a population of around 27,000 students and makes up a large

person," she said. She also noted that, given the opportunity, she would return to South Korea without a second thought. Upon graduation, Henderson intends to attend graduate school and get her Master of Forensic Accounting. "The University Honors Program not only

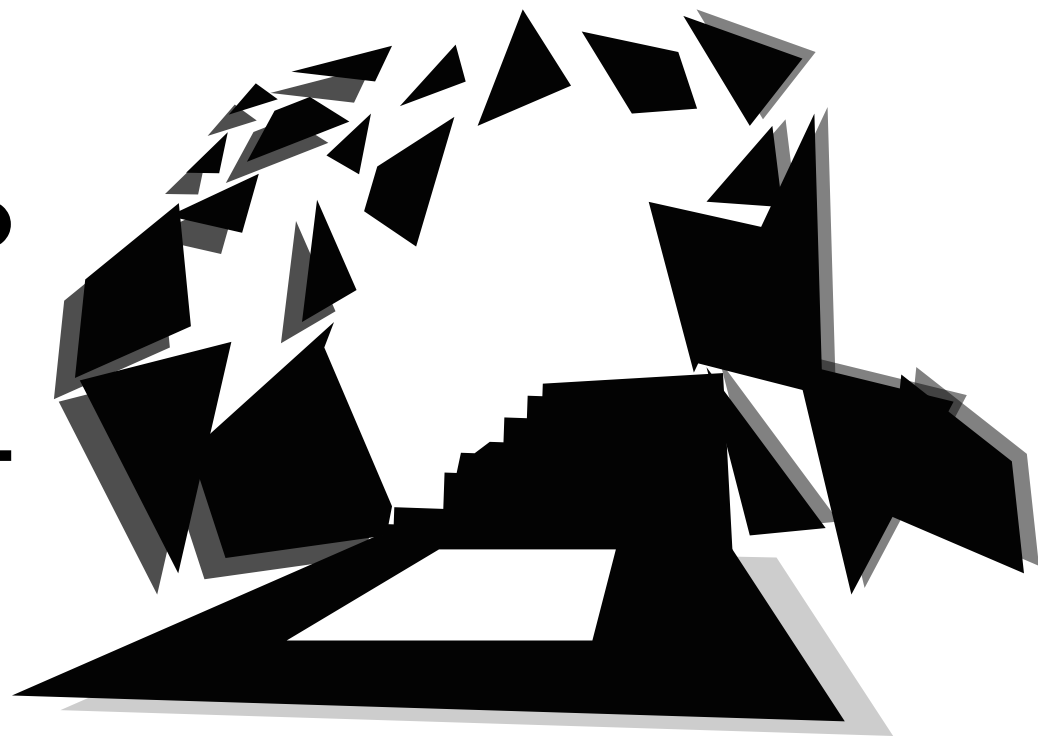
The way you can just be immersed in a culture, learning the language and meeting the people, it just... you just can't describe what it does to you as a person.

-Rebecca Henderson

supported my trip to [South] Korea, but it's also given me a critical eye for my work, making sure that what I accomplish is of the highest grade. The way that Dr. Engel and Dr. Desiderio both worked with me to make sure that I was and still am completing my goals is something that I'm going to hang on to even after I have my master's degree and as I make a name for myself in my field," Henderson said.



ANCIENT GREECE BROUGHT TO LIFE BY HONORS STUDENTS AT BLACKBOX THEATER



Behind the curtain, many of Georgia Southern University's own students contribute to the magic seen on stage in Theatre South productions. Honors students Olivia Carter's and Zo Haynes' backstage work in set design and lighting for this year's spring production, *Metamorphoses*, transformed the Blackbox Theater from a bare room into a mystical world where seven of Ovid's Greek myths sprang to life.

Carter (theatre '15) began work on the show's elaborate set as part of her honors thesis over a year ago. After reading American theatre director and playwright Mary Zimmerman's postmodern take on Ovid's classic book of myths, Carter fell in love with the play and knew she wanted to contribute to its production by Theatre South, Georgia Southern's theatre club.

"I'm a bit of a Greek mythology nerd," Carter admitted, "so I loved Zimmerman's modern interpretation of the gods. When Zeus enters and lights a cigarette, I was absolutely sold on this play."

But even more than Zimmerman's update on Greek mythology, which features, among other changes, Phaeton as a whiny teenager and Bacchus as a drunk, Carter especially admired the play's complex set, which called for a pool center stage.

"I was really drawn to the challenge of designing the pool," Carter said. "I like to challenge myself."

After discussing her ideas with mentors, Dr. Lisa Abbott and Kelly Berry, Carter began work on her project. Designing the pool came first; after several sketches and lots of tweakings, the pool was completely built by the end of fall semester. Its conception was complicated, to say the least.

The pool, which featured a 4-inch wooden deck and was lined with a 20-by-24 pool liner, required the same maintenance of any outdoor pool, meaning Carter had to install a heater and filter that ran constantly. And if building a wooden pool was not difficult enough, the show also called for a swim-through, a secret entrance into the pool that made characters like Poseidon appear suddenly, as if they had emerged from the bottom of the pool. This feat was achieved by hiding the back end of the pool behind a wall under which cast members had to swim.

In addition to the pool, Carter also designed large, muslin-covered columns, as well as triangles which were suspended from the ceiling to create the effect of a chandelier.

"It wasn't easy," Carter said of creating the show's centerpiece. "But my mentors kept me on track, and it was amazing to see the actors interact on something I had designed. It was an amazing feeling."



Illuminating Carter's set was Haynes' (theatre & mathematics '15) vibrant lighting design, which also served as her honors thesis, which was mentored by Dr. Sarah McCarroll and Kelly Berry. Like Carter, ambition and desire for a challenge prompted her to work on *Metamorphoses*.

"My first thesis proposal actually centered around the lighting design for the production of *Race*, which was produced during the fall semester," said Haynes. "During the process, I found that the project wasn't in-depth enough to satisfy my need to push boundaries with this project, so I looked at productions that were taking place in the spring as replacement options for my thesis topic. I had read the script for *Metamorphosis* a few months before and I was also excited about what I was hearing about how Lisa, the director of the production, wanted to approach this project, so I asked if I could do the design for this show."

Once given the green light, Haynes began her preliminary research, which began with analyzing the play and studying the different types of technology required for lighting the show.

"The first step in lighting design is to read the script and note all of the information about a place or character that can be found," said Haynes. "I had a whole notebook full of information and inspirations I found in the script."

Before a designer can begin designing, they have to have a conversation with the director about where they intend to go and they must agree on what the world of the play looks like.

"You have to bring images to a director to show them what you're thinking of when you read the script," said Haynes, "so there was a process of finding images that portrayed exactly what I saw in the script and what I envisioned it looking like on stage."

Haynes' meticulous research and hard work ended in a dazzling display of color that helped bring Zimmerman's play to life. "I feel that my next design projects will be so much stronger because of what I learned through this production. It was definitely a challenge, but it was also a lot of fun and I'm very grateful that I was able to be a part of the team."

In addition to their success with *Metamorphoses*, Carter and Haynes hard work on other productions has not gone unnoticed; both have won awards for their design work. Carter's prop designs for *Hamlet* and *Race* earned second place in the Allied Design competition at the American College Theatre Festival (ACTF), and Haynes was awarded the overall design award and first place at the Georgia Theatre Conference (GTC) for her realized lighting design from *Fuddy Meers*. Haynes also received a second place award for her paper design for *No Exit*, which she created for a class.

Starting on June 22, Haynes will begin a year-long internship at Playhouse on the Square, a regional theatre in Memphis, Tennessee, where she will work with electrics and lighting design. Carter, after graduating next fall, plans to break into the theatre industry and pursue her passion for design work.





PURA VIDA

HONORS IN COSTA RICA

Pura Vida! This Costa Rican term translates literally to “pure life” and is used in many different contexts, often to encourage others to embrace life and be happy. The inaugural Honors alternative break trip to Costa Rica this year adopted the slogan into its identity, Honors in Costa Rica: Project Pura Vida. Nine students, led by Dr. Leticia McGrath, spent spring break in Costa Rica working with the Costa Rica Humanitarian Foundation in La Carpio, one of the poorest slums in San José.

When one thinks of traveling to Costa Rica, images of pristine beaches, lush tropical cloud forests, volcanoes, waterfalls, monkeys, and sloths quickly come to mind. The students did have the opportunity to explore the wonders of Costa Rica such as Manuel Antonio National Park and the Arenal Volcano, but the main lessons they learned were in the conversations and exchanges they had with the residents of La Carpio and their host families.

“It was amazing to witness how students were able to engage in a meaningful way in a community that is often ignored, where individuals are ‘invisible’ and not valued,” said Dr. McGrath about the inequality found in the La Carpio culture. She added, “Despite the language barrier, or perhaps because of it, students reached beyond simple verbal communication and shared their common humanity, discovering that we all share the same basic need to be valued, to be visible.”

Many of the students took the language barrier in stride. “It was eye-opening to not speak Spanish and to try to communicate with people who all knew what everyone else was saying. However, everyone I came into contact with was so generous, caring, and loving,” said Salena Neuwar (child and family development ‘16).



Students stayed with host families and often found themselves pantomiming in order to communicate. “My Mama Tica (host mom) made me feel at home and tried very hard to communicate through charades,” said Bailey Kirk (mathematics ‘17). “She also went through a book with me with English and Spanish translation to find out what I liked and disliked.”

The service project in the trip was organized by the Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by Gail Nystrom. CHRf seeks to create a better life for the residents of La Carpio, people who are mostly immigrants from Nicaragua and other nearby countries. The whole community is surrounded by sewer pipes on one end and a landfill on the other.

Students participated in community restoration projects, such as the installation of a cement floor in a residence. “I loved being able to work at La Carpio because it showed me a side of the world that I would never have known was there without this program,” said Kirk. “It really showed me what is out there and how a few hours of our time could have a huge impact on their lives.”

These changes impact the local Costa Rican culture in great ways. Simply altering a floor from dirt to concrete will impact the health of a family who has no running water, said McGrath.

Yet many students drew comparisons between La Carpio and impoverished towns in the United States.



“Seeing the La Carpio situation really made me think about how similar it is to some situations in the U.S. and it made me think deeply about how I can take what I learned in Costa Rica and apply here in the States,” said Derrick Herrin (mechanical engineering ‘16).

Kirk and her fellow students also created a day of activities for some of the children of La Carpio at a local park. “Playing on a seesaw, blowing bubbles, drawing with chalk, jumping in leaves, and throwing a ball is fun in any language,” Kirk said. “The children did not care that we did not speak the same language as them, to them we were just a new friend.”

The students also had time to participate in excursions around Costa Rica and visited Café Britt, a coffee manufacturer; Fossil Land, where they hiked and rappelled; and Manuel Antonio National Park, a beach front park where by chance they witnessed the hatching of hundreds of sea turtles. They had the rare opportunity of watching the turtles make their way to into the water.

The week long experience gave the students the opportunities to see the value of “pura vida” in action and reflect on how that ethos might make an impact on their lives.

“I did not think that this trip would make such an impact on me, but it has truly changed my perspective,” said Laina Latzsch (biology ‘15). “Of course, the volunteering was such a rewarding experience, but I also loved learning and living a new culture and language and getting to know my fellow honors students,” said Latzsch.

Xxavier Robertson (film & business ‘18) agrees with Latzsch. “This was an experience unlike any other. I have a deeper meaning of what it means to serve.”

Several students plan to return to Costa Rica and continue volunteering in the future. “The lessons learned on humility, racial discrimination, and other social issues such as poverty, teen pregnancy, and immigration will prove valuable to the volunteers as they seek to serve others in our local community here in Statesboro and elsewhere,” McGrath said.



FROM COURSE PAPER TO CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

Southern Regional Honors Council Conference

The University Honors Program was well-represented at this year's Southern Regional Honors Council annual meeting in Greenville, South Carolina. Honors students Lydia Biggs, Albert Codina Sala, and Shelby Herrin all presented research.

Biggs (English '15) gave a poster presentation that addressed Shakespeare's use of a "stock Jew" character in *The Merchant of Venice* to show her audience how mistreated Jewish citizens were in Elizabethan England. Overall, Biggs says her audience was receptive of her research. In fact, one professor was so impressed with Biggs' research, she urged her to publish it in an academic journal.

Codina Sala (economics & finance '15) had a similarly positive experience at the conference as he presented his thesis, "The Economy of Oaxaca Decomposed," an economic study of the southern Mexican state.

"I had never presented before in an honors conference and the experience was amazing," said Codina Sala. "It definitely helped me improve my presentation skills and boost my public speaking confidence."

While Herrin (recreation & tourism management '15) enjoyed presenting her research, her favorite part of the trip was touring downtown Greenville, a historic area laced with waterfalls and footbridges.

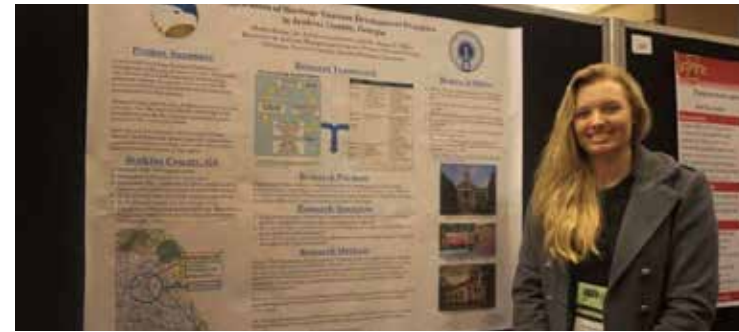
"Being able to see this functioning downtown area was really nice," Herrin commented on Greenville. "I saw the

city and said, 'Okay, what can I learn from this?'"

In her honors thesis, Herrin studied the theory and practice of heritage tourism and created a plan to make Millen, Georgia, into a cultural and heritage zone. Home to Camp Lawton, Magnolia Springs State Park, and the third oldest Baptist Church in the state of Georgia, Millen boasts many historic locations and a quaint downtown area that often go unnoticed by busy travelers.

"The first comment I got after my presentation was 'Hey, I'm going to visit Millen!,'" said Herrin.

The students all received great feedback and said they learned from the experience. "I would recommend presenting at the Southern Regional Honors Council Conference to all the students working on their honors thesis," Codina Sala said. "It was an amazing opportunity."



National Collegiate Honors Council Conference

The University Honors Program was once again honored to have a student presenting on a Student Interdisciplinary Research Panel at the annual meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council in November 2014. Emily Feagin Oliver (English '15) was selected to discuss her work, "Linguistic Patriarchy: Gender and Language in Samuel Beckett's *First Love*." At the conference, she presented to an audience of students and faculty from honors programs across the country. The conference took place in Denver, and Dr. Steven Engel, Dr. Francis Desiderio, and Erin Martin also attended.

In her presentation, Oliver explained her analysis of Beckett's story and focused on his use of gendered language. She based her reading of "First Love" on theoretical ideas developed by Second Wave French feminist thinkers Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Hélène Cixous. Their work in post-structuralist



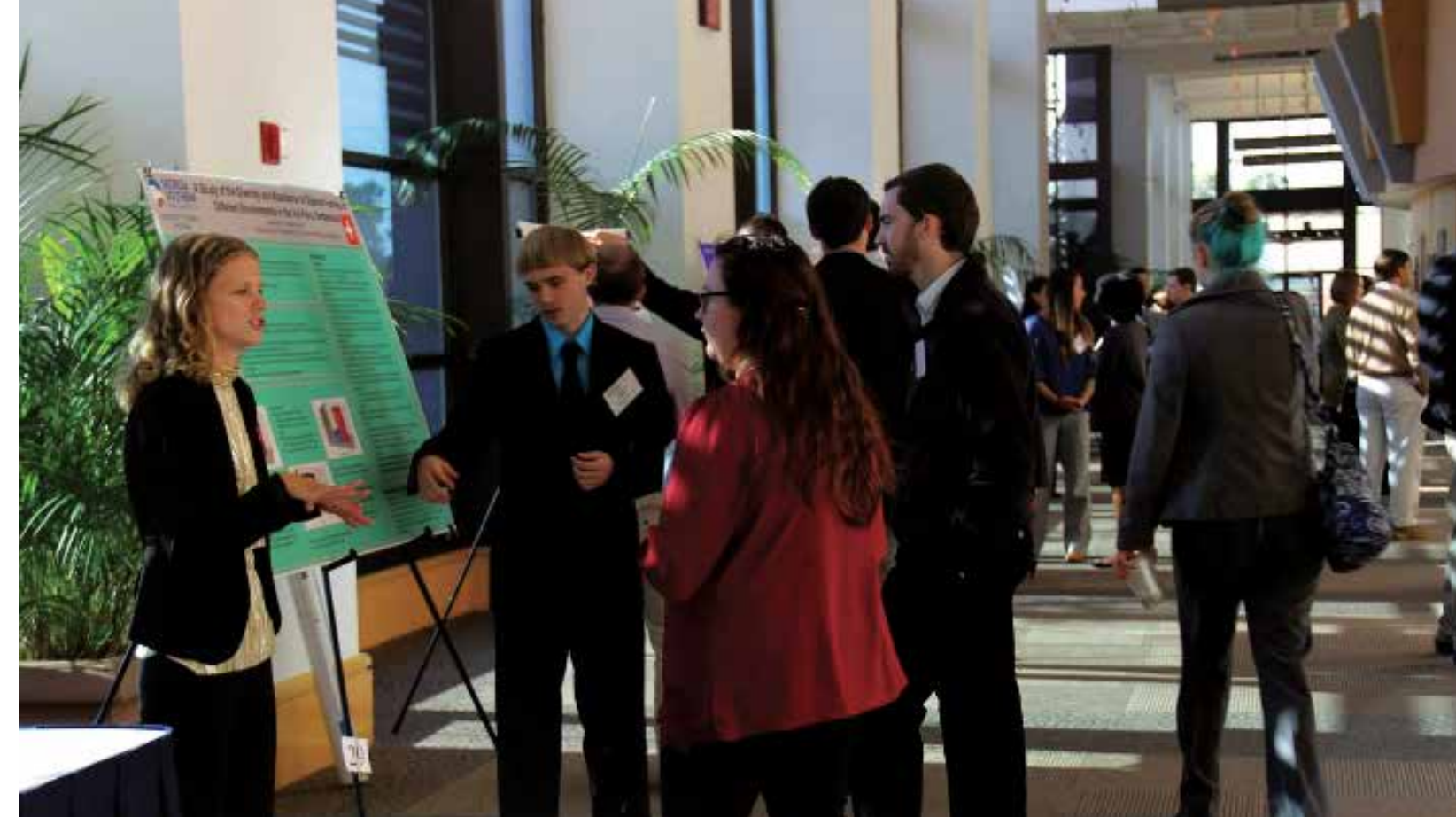
feminist theory also examines women's rights in society. Oliver discussed language and the use of language in terms of character and gender roles.

In the past, Oliver has presented at the state and regional conferences, but attending a national meeting was new to her: "Presenting at the national conference was a new challenge for me. It's always good to hear different

perceptions on your work," Oliver said. "In the feedback, people will mention books that I would never have thought would be relevant to my research," Oliver said.

Since presenting at NCHC, Oliver's research has expanded to include three of Beckett's short stories, which were written during different periods of his writing career. "Researching three short stories has let me see the longitudinal scope of Beckett's work," Oliver said. "I got to see how his work evolved as his career progressed and understand him better as an author and a person."

This fall, Oliver will attend Kent State University, where she will pursue a Master of Arts in English and work as a graduate assistant. After eventually completing her Ph.D., she hopes to become a college professor. "I love the academic environment," said Oliver, "and I want to be a part of the academic environment for as long as possible."



Honors Represented at Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference

Georgia Southern University hosted the Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference in fall 2015, welcoming undergraduate researchers and their mentors from colleges and universities all across Georgia. Among the approximately 175 presenters, 30 University Honors Program students discussed their research in panel presentations or during poster sessions.

Several honors students shared their experience from the conference:

After discussing her paper, "Popular Appeal and Nostalgia in Developing the Myth of the Frontier," Rachel Neuhauser (sociology '15) said, "Presenting undergraduate research and representing Georgia Southern is always fun work. A lot of effort was put into these presentations, and it's obvious in the quality."

Aleyna Rentz (English & writing and linguistics '17) presented her research, "A Wexford Migration to Savannah, Georgia." She was on a panel with several other students who participated

in the Honors Inquiry to Ireland study abroad trip last summer.

Jessica Davis (early childhood education '16) discussed "Teachers Perspectives on Inclusion and Co-Teaching." "Presenting my research in its preliminary state at GURC was a good way to get some new perspectives. I'll definitely consider the comments I received as my research develops," Davis said.

Presenting his poster, "Green Recycling - Fabrication Nano-Engineered Advanced Aluminum Alloy with Aluminum Machining Chips Using Friction Stir Extrusion Processing," Tyler Hedges (mechanical engineering '15) said, "Participating in undergraduate research has provided me an opportunity to go really in-depth on a subject matter that interests me. I have gotten the opportunity to apply what I have learned in several classes to a real world situation in an attempt to solve a problem that very few people have undertaken. At this conference, my

partner and I have shared our findings thus far and discussed the future work and its benefits."

Emily Feagin Oliver (English '15) presented her research, "Urban Renewal in June Jordan's 'His Own Where.'" "Presenting at the undergraduate research conference does more than just provide practice and experience lecturing to a crowd of intellectual peers. It also allowed me to forge interdisciplinary connections with students and academics from all across Georgia. The greatest benefit of this conference was perspective—feedback and insight into your own research, and a new understanding and appreciation of others," Oliver said.

The Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference will return to Georgia Southern in fall 2016. Director of the University Honors Program, Dr. Steven Engel is co-chair of the steering committee for the conference.



ALTERNATIVE BREAKS

THE WILD SIDE OF SERVICE LEARNING

Honors students are taking service learning out of the classroom and into the wilderness. This summer, nine students trekked to Red River Gorge, Kentucky for a University Honors Program Alternate Break Trip. Developed by two outdoor recreation students, Julie Swantek and Justin Yun, the five-day trip featured day-hikes, volunteer work, and whitewater kayaking in inflatable kayaks.

Students volunteered at Daniel Boone National Forest doing cleanup and maintenance. The National Park Service strives to promote the management of natural resources, so Yun felt this was a good match for the University Honors Program.

“When we were developing this trip, we wanted to add a volunteer component. We knew the honors program focuses on civic responsibility and we wanted to reproduce that,” Yun said.

Students whitewater kayaked in Wilson Creek Gorge in Boone, North Carolina.

“This isn’t the first time the University Honors Program has done a trip like this, but it has been a long time,” said

Yun. “It’s going to be an adventure.”

Last year, Yun completed a six-month excursion across the Appalachian Trail. The trail is about 2,000 miles long and passes through fourteen states. Yun began at the trail’s southernmost point at Springer Mountain in Georgia and worked his way north to the end at Maine’s Mount Katahdin. “I met the most interesting people I have ever met in my entire life,” Yun said. “People came from California, Oregon, and even abroad. I would never have met them without this experience.”

On the trail, Yun had some strange encounters. He saw a black bear up close and had his first experience with moose, very unpredictable animals in the wild. But Yun says the worst part was the bugs: “It was blackflies season, and they can bite through your clothes. It’s very painful.”

Yun encountered what is deemed, ‘trail magic’—charity for hikers who might need a little pick-me-up. This can come in the form of food left for hikers, such as snacks or cold beverages, and even in the form of people, ‘trail angels,’ who will take hikers into their home and offer shelter

for a night or two. “Those bits of trail magic are a nice treat, and people on the trail aren’t picky. We eat a lot of everything, so it’s really great to see people go out of their way to help a complete stranger,” Yun said.

Yun hiked to Clingman’s Dome in the Smoky Mountains, the highest point of the trail. “The hikers have a running joke, they say ‘It’s all downhill from here,’ but it really isn’t.” From there, he worked his way through the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Shenandoah National Parks in Virginia, where Harper’s Ferry, the halfway point of the trail, is located. “Once you get to the halfway point, you put your name in a book along with all the other hikers. It’s a great feeling of accomplishment,” Yun said.

Yun’s trip became about more than just hiking. “The trail gives you real world experiences,” he said. And out of the experience came some direction for his course of study and for future hikes. Next up is the Pacific Coast Trail after he graduates.

“If you don’t challenge yourself, you’re never going to know where you can go. This trip was a fresh start,” Yun said.

Five Years of Honors @ Camp Twin Lakes

A five-year milestone was reached this past March as honors program students again spent spring break working with Camp Blue Skies, a camp for adults with developmental disabilities. The camp partners with Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge, GA to give its campers a fun week of activities like paddle-boating, zip-lining, sports, and arts and crafts. Dr. Jerri Kropp (child and family development) and Dr. Brent Wolfe (therapeutic recreation) have led the trip all five years. A handful of students have participated in this trip each of their four years at Georgia Southern, and this year featured the return of some alternate break trip alumni.

Camp Blue Skies promotes recreation and socialization, but the students often find that the camp teaches many life skills. “Being with the Camp Blue Skies staff

and campers reminded me that it’s okay to be myself,” said Morgan Herrington (therapeutic recreation ‘17). She added, “Being your own individual helps others feel comfortable in their own skin, and it opens so many doors for friendship.”

Camp Blue Skies founder and director, Dick Sesler, is impressed each year by the amount of energy and enthusiasm the students bring to camp. “I tell people that after seeing these students in action, I know the future is in good hands,” he said.

Herrington says that the week is a great experience, one that all honors students should consider. “It opens your eyes to many different ways of life. You become aware of more things, such as living with a disability, but you become more accepting also,” said Herrington.



TWO STUDENTS WIN DAAD SCHOLARSHIP TO GERMANY



This academic year, two honors students, Jennifer Shaffer and Tabitha Williford, earned scholarships from the German Academic Exchange Service, or the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD). Williford returned in December from her Science and Engineering professional program internship. Shaffer, whose internship is this summer, has been accepted into DAAD's Research Internship in Science and Engineering.

Shaffer (mechanical engineering & German '17) was one of 312 people awarded a research internship as part of the DAAD RISE (Research Internships in Science and Engineering) undergraduate program this year.

Her research investigates the wear resistance of steel at high temperatures in order to develop better steel tools for industrial applications.

Williford (biology '12, M.A. physical science '15) conducted research at BASF, the world's leading chemical company, located in Ludwigshafen, Germany, in the biokinetics and toxicology departments developing physiologically based pharmacokinetic (PBPK) models.

Shaffer's internship will begin in May and last through August, where

she will work in research labs at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum. She will attend weekly lectures from the supervising faculty member, Dr. Theisen, which will center on topics in materials science.

Williford took full advantage of her time abroad. "I went to Oktoberfest and a castle called Burg Eltz," said Williford. "I took my mom to see Paris, one of her lifelong goals and she loved it."

In regard to her free time, Shaffer, who has previously studied abroad in Germany, commented, "I'm very excited and looking forward to traveling and exploring different sites on the weekends!"

Shaffer hopes this internship will help her shape her honors thesis, as she intends to study the steel industry in German. "I love the richness of its culture, and so it is really exciting for me to be able to conduct research there, at one of their top materials-science institutions," said Shaffer.

In the future, Shaffer plans to pursue a Master of Science in engineering and become a registered Professional Engineer. Williford hopes to return to Germany and further her Science and Engineering research.



Pictured: top left Shaffer, bottom left Williford, middle Shaffer, bottom right Williford.



TURNER TAKES THE SHOW

Many writers do not find success until much later in their lives: Toni Morrison was not published until she was 40. Bram Stoker did not write *Dracula* until he was 50. Anna Sewell did not find literary fame with *Black Beauty* until the last months of her life. But Parrish Turner (writing and linguistics) was able to see his own collaborative dramatic work, *By Wheel and By Wing*, on stage in New York City during his senior year of college.

Turner's involvement with *By Wheel and By Wing* began during an extracurricular playwriting class he took during high school from Patti Mactas, the Artistic Director of the Act3 Productions community theatre in Sandy Springs, Georgia. Mactas desired to make a musical based on the experiences of the Parnes family during the Holocaust.

Piecing together the Parnes family's story was more than just fiction writing. During Turner's creative process, he researched the Parnes family and read a book written by a member of the Parnes family. He also met with some of the children and heard their stories firsthand.

Once the initial research was finished, the writers got to work and had a first draft completed within eight months. Turner was among two other writers who stayed with the project, further editing the draft and helping organize a May 2011 staged reading that played to three nights of full houses. A full production in June 2012, directed by Patti Mactas, sold out 11 performances and won the 2012 Metropolitan Atlanta Theatre Award for Best New Work.

Last November *By Wheel and By Wing* had two staged readings, one for Holocaust survivors and one for investors, at the Jewish Heritage Center in New York City.

"It was really cool to see such great talent bring our play to life," says Turner. "We were lucky to have such amazingly talented actors."

Not only were there Broadway actors reading many of the roles, but Jayne Atkinson, who plays the Secretary of State on the popular Netflix series

"House of Cards," participated in the reading, as well.

While watching esteemed actors and actresses bring the Parnes family to life was certainly a thrilling experience, Turner says his favorite aspect of the reading was being able to meet several Holocaust survivors afterwards.

"It was incredible to meet people who had actually lived through the Holocaust," says Turner. "After the reading, they were eager to offer feedback on the play. Some even opened up and shared their own stories, which were really amazing to hear."

But Turner's career as playwright did not stop with *By Wheel and By Wing*; in fact, he penned another dramatic work for his honors thesis, *Can it be a Sin?*, a retelling of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Turner's unique reworking of the classic novel explores Frankenstein as a man struggling with his asexuality in a hedonistic world. Writing this play provided a new challenge for Turner, who had never written a full-length play that was not collaborative.

"Working on both plays were two very different experiences," Turner says. "*Can it be a Sin?* isn't a musical, for instance, and it's much more serious."

His work was featured during Theatre South's Ten-Minute Play Festival, where students gave a full-length reading of the play. In addition, Turner's creative nonfiction piece, *Edge of the Map* was published in *Gaslight*, a publication run by Lambda Literary.

After graduation, Turner is heading to New York City, where he will pursue an MFA in creative nonfiction at The New School.



PUBLISHED SCHOLARS

Zachary Strickland

Zachary Strickland's research, "Bacteria Source Tracking through the Detection of Optical Brighteners using Fluorometry: Lessons Learned from the Vernon River Watershed" is in review to be published in the journal *Cogent Engineering*.

Strickland's research examined optical brighteners, or fluorescent agents, in laundry detergents. "If you can detect optical brighteners in waterbodies, it's a good indicator that household wastewater is entering waterbodies, as greywater is almost always mixed with human wastewater," Strickland said.

Strickland's article addresses the issue that there is no information to be found in academic literature or in state environmental agencies' procedures which discusses the issue of using fluorometry to detect optical brighteners in water.



Publications are the main venue for communicating research with the world at large. This year, more honors students than ever before have published their research and coursework. The University Honors Program encourages students to join in academic conversations around the globe.

Laura Smith

"Through the Motions," a short fiction piece written by Laura Smith (writing and linguistics '15) was published in the *Bangalore Review*. Written for Professor Jared Yates Sexton's fiction class, this story follows a military family trying to reconnect after being apart.

"Feedback in the workshops and professors who gave me good advice helped me develop the story" said Smith. "Without them, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to publish as an undergraduate."



Madeline Smith

Madeline Smith's research, "Modified Lignin for Composite and Pellet Binder Applications," was published in *International Journal of Experimental and Computational Biomechanics*.

"In my research we use lignin, which is extracted from a by-product of the paper industry, to make a more earth friendly resin than what is currently on the market," Smith said.

"Currently formaldehyde based resins are very commonly used and we are trying to move away from this and find a more environmentally friendly alternative. We have chemically modified the lignin to enhance its properties as a binder, as well as mechanically testing the strength of the composites that we made."



Mariana Hernandez

Mariana Hernandez (chemistry '15) co-wrote an article with Toan Tran, Dhruvil Patel, and Dr. Ji Wu, "Temperature and pH Responsive Microfibers for Controllable and Variable Ibuprofen Delivery," which was recently published in the journal *Advances in Materials Science and Engineering*.

Hernandez's research focused on controllable drug delivery through the use of electrospun microfibers, and she sought to find a polymer through which ibuprofen can easily be released. Hernandez hopes this research culminates in a wearable patch that can release ibuprofen in controlled doses.

"Participating in this research has not only helped me in terms of applying to graduate school, but has also prepared me for a career in the medical field," Hernandez said. "When I'm a doctor, I'll be able to see the medicine I prescribe my patients from another perspective."



Ashley Johns

Ashley Johns' (chemistry & biology '15) article, "Asolectin from Soybeans as a Natural Compatibilizer for Cellulose-Reinforced Biocomposites from Tung Oil" was published in *Journal of Applied Polymer Science*.

"At other schools, undergraduate student rarely get the chance to have a major role in research, but Georgia Southern is different. Graduate schools had a hard time believing that I was able to conduct as much research as I have, and I think it has helped my credentials extensively," Johns said.



Aleyna Rentz (English & writing and linguistics '17) had three creative works published this year. The first was a creative nonfiction piece called "Proportions," which was published in *Black Fox Literary*, an independent literary journal. "Proportions" is a humorous piece about a spider that highlights the absurdity of existence.

Rentz's other two publications are works of short fiction. The 2014 issue of *Sanctuary* published Rentz's flash fiction piece, "A Fair Trade," which satirizes the high cost of higher education. In contrast to the other two pieces, Rentz's short story "A Mean Heart," which appeared in *Deep South Magazine*, confronts the more serious themes of mortality and death through the perspective of a young girl as she goes to college.

Aleyna Rentz



Rachel Luoma

Rachel Luoma's (biology '15) research article titled "Consequences of Complex Environments: Temperature and Energy Intake Interact to Influence Growth and Metabolic Rate," will be published in *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology Part A* in September of this year.

Her article is an analysis of the research project she worked on with Alicia Jodrey under the mentorship of Dr. Zachary Stahlschmidt.

"I enjoyed working on this project because it was the first research project that I was able to work on as an undergraduate," Luoma said.



Courtney Hartman

Courtney Hartman (education '15) published research on "Teachers' influence on Students' Participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math." Through surveys and interviews, Hartman found that teachers' views were positive when it came to teaching STEM in the classroom.

Hartman's research provided lots of insights for her future. "During interviews with teachers, I discovered what worked and what didn't work in a lot of classrooms," Hartman said. "I'm excited to implement some of these techniques in my classroom in the future."

2014-2015 GRADUATES

Michael Ackerman
Mathematics

Daniel L. Allen, Jr.
Biology

Meredith Amason
Marketing

Caitlin Barkley
Psychology

Grant Barnett
Biology

Amanda Bastien
Exercise Science

Amber Blazer
Psychology

Laynie Brown
Exercise Science

Rachel Burke
Chemistry



Cameron Feriante
Chemistry

Jenna Florence
International Trade

Stacia Fritz
Psychology

Samantha Goldberg
Nursing

Stephanie Gratto
Accounting

Holly Burrell
Psychology

Hannah Chicowlas
Nursing

Emily Chizmar
Mathematics

Albert Codina Sala
Economics

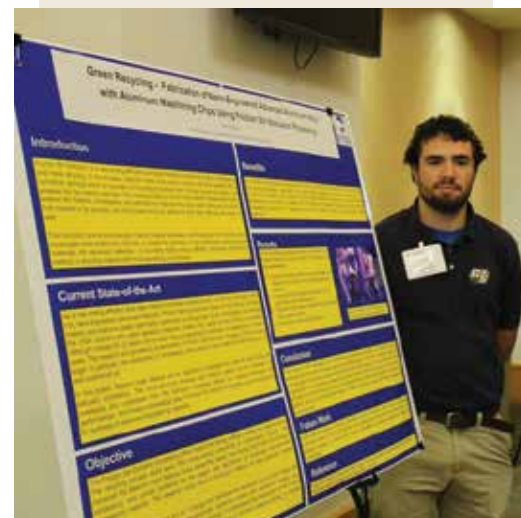
Kymbreana Coley
Biology

James Devlin
Writing and Linguistics

Stephanie Dorminey
Middle Grades Education

Sarah Dunn
Biology

Charles J. Elmore
Biology



Branden Green
International Trade

Shannon Michelle Griffin
Interior Design

Tracy-Ann Griffiths
Fashion Merchandising & Apparel Design

Jaime Grinch
Justice Studies

Emily Hall
Accounting

Shauntel Hall
Journalism

Thomas Hamilton
Logistics and Intermodal Transportation

Kaitlyn Hanley
Biology

Zo Haynes
Theater & Mathematics

Tyler Hedges
Mechanical Engineering

Allison Heiskell
Exercise Science

Mariana Hernandez
Chemistry

Shelby Herrin
Recreation



Julian Hershey
Physics

Angelina Heugel
Marketing

Micah Jackson
Mathematics

Ashley Johns
Chemistry & Biology

Quierra Jones
Nursing

Shannon Kahn
Biology

Michaela Kennedy
Early Childhood Education

William Kite
Economics

Karin Kvam
Nursing

Natasha Laballe
Psychology

Rachel Luoma
Biology

Lan Nguyen
Biology

Beth Martin
Writing and Linguistics

Jacob Mauceri
Biology

Marissa McOmber
Political Science & International Studies



Rachel Melcher
Anthropology

Dylan Mulligan
History

Adam Murfield
Logistics and Intermodal Transportation



Christa Murray
Psychology

Julie Odom-Dixon
Psychology

Mike Ofili
Civil Engineering

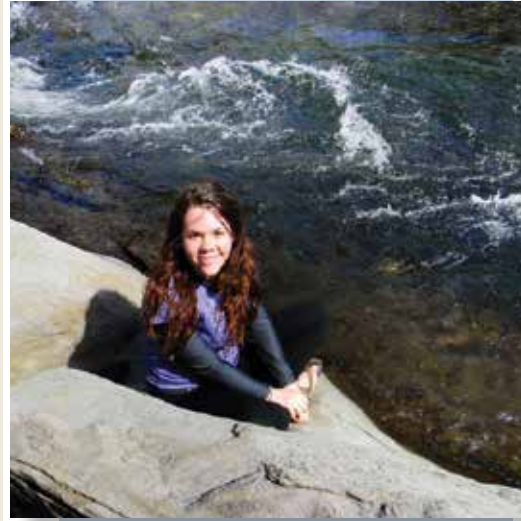
E. Feagin Oliver
English

Joel Page
Chemistry & Spanish

Carolina Perez
Modern Languages

Cesar Perez
Multimedia
Communication

Katie D. Phillips
Interior Design



Charles Powell
Biology

Nicole Puckett
International Studies

Eboni Pullen
Chemistry

Keenya Riggins
Chemistry

Benny Ratliff
Music Education

Andrew Robertson
Electrical Engineering

Caitlin Robertson
International Studies

Madison Rozakos
Writing and Linguistics

Yavaria Ryan
Writing and Linguistics

Sarah Ryniker
Anthropology

Sydney Sewell
Music Education

Amanda Shively
Anthropology

Stephanie Simpson
Accounting

Kayla Smith
Biology



Laura Smith
Writing and Linguistics

Madeline Smith
Chemistry

Zach Strickland
Civil Engineering

Dana Sylvestre
Biology

Taylor Thomas
Psychology



Courtney Tielking
International Studies &
Spanish

Kristen Tillman
Early Childhood
Education

Caitlin Tongco
Finance

Parrish Turner
Writing and Linguistics

William Tyler Stone
Justice Studies &
Information Technology

Jennifer Tyson
Biology

Taylor Tyson
Writing and Linguistics

Kristin Walker
Chemistry

Katelyn Wehner
Exercise Science

Katherine Wheeler
Psychology

Kori S. Williams
Biology

Molly Williams
Exercise Science



Nicholas Wood
Exercise Science



Amber Porter
International Studies



ALUMNI UPDATES

DARIN VAN TASSELL

Bell Honors Program alumnus Dr. Darin H. Van Tassell has inspired others since he first earned his Political Science degree in 1989. Since then, the program has had some updates, but the core values have remained the same. "The Bell Honors Program taught me two things above all. One was to read a lot, and the other was to write a lot. For every honors class I took, I read seven or eight books and wrote just as many papers. I still have some of the books from those classes."

Dr. Van Tassell was a student athlete, and after graduation took a position with the International Baseball Federation. He took his interest in sports and politics to his career as an Associate Professor in both the Center for International Studies and the Center for Political Science. "I did not know I was going to graduate school when I got my undergraduate degree, but when I got there, I really focused on sports as a social institution and how they play into the spirit of politics and international cooperation."

He moved on from the International Baseball Federation to coach at Georgia Southern University, where the University created a faculty position for him as a professor, a position he has maintained even after leaving the baseball diamond. "I don't think I'm just a professor," said Dr. Van Tassell. "I see myself wearing many hats."

His work as a professor has been heralded by many, but his gratification does not come from teaching International Studies or Political Science. "Most people see students as sponges that are just going to absorb all the information you throw at them, but that is just a poor way to teach. No, my satisfaction comes from the students discovering how to give a damn."

Dr. Van Tassell said, "When I went through the Bell Honors Program, it felt like climbing Mt. Everest and finally reaching the top. But the University Honors Program and all of the other organizations have one thing that glues them together, and that is Georgia Southern University."



Darin Van Tassell
Assistant Professor
Georgia Southern University



MIKE KLUG

(BHP, Geology, 1988) is Chief of Facility Strategic Planning with the Directorate of Installations and Mission Support at the Air Force Reserve Command, as well as a freelance writer for the *Houston County Magazine*. He resides in Warner Robbins, Georgia with his wife, Lisa, and his two children, Andrew and Megan. This year marks both his twenty-fifth year of marriage and his twenty-fifth year of Air Force service.

LACRISSA DAVIS (BHP, Biology, 2001) is the youngest and first female principal biologist at Rincon Consultants, Inc. She lives in Oxnard, California with her husband and two children.

ASHLEY ANDERSON (BHP, Painting, 2005) just finished the 2013/2014 Leap Year artist program through Atlanta's MINT Gallery and sold to the High Museum of Art three large pieces from his 2012 solo show, "Shinobi Marilyn." He lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

SARAH ANZJON

(UHP, Nursing, 2010) is completing a Masters of Public Health in infectious disease microbiology. She works as a resident director at the University of Pittsburgh. She lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and works as a registered nurse in the operating room at The Western Pennsylvania Hospital.

CAITLIN MADIGAN

(UHP, Chemistry, 2010) works as a chemist technician at Southern Nuclear Company in North Augusta, South Carolina.

BRADLEY WILBUR

(UHP, Biology, 2010) is a student naval aviator in the Navy and graduated OCS as an Ensign in January 2015. He lives in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

AMIRALI NATHOO

(UHP, Information Systems, 2011) works as a Sr. B&SI Analyst at Accenture in Atlanta, Georgia.

JANESSA DUNN

(UHP, Chemistry, 2013) is currently a graduate student at Vanderbilt University in the Peabody College of Education. She lives in Hermitage, Tennessee.

ALEXA LOWERY

(UHP, Early Childhood Education, 2014) works as a missionary and English teacher for Destino del Reino. She lives in LaGrange, Georgia.

AMBER PORTER

(UHP, International Studies, 2014) lives in Washington D.C., where she works as a staff assistant for Congressman Lynn Westmoreland.

Send your Alumni Updates to:

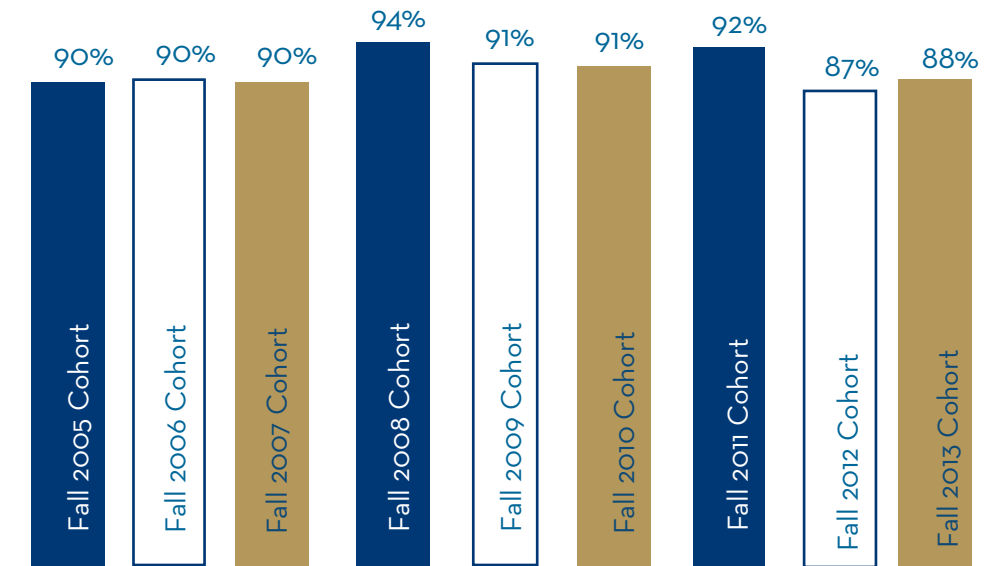
<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/honors/about/alumni-update/>

HONORS BY THE NUMBERS 2014-2015

Honors 2014-2015 Data

- ◀ 470 Honors Students
(36% Men, 64% Women, 79% Caucasian, 21% Non-white)
- ◀ 418 Georgia Residents (89%)
- ◀ 13,496 Hours of Service and Leadership
- ◀ 88% Freshman Retention Rate
- ◀ 146 Faculty teach Honors courses
- ◀ 84 Honors Courses Offered

Honors Freshman Retention Rates



Honors Students by Academic College

Liberal Arts and Social Sciences	123
Science and Mathematics	105
Engineering & Information Technology	81
Business Administration	62
Health and Human Sciences	62
International Studies	15
Education	13
Public Health	3
Undeclared	6

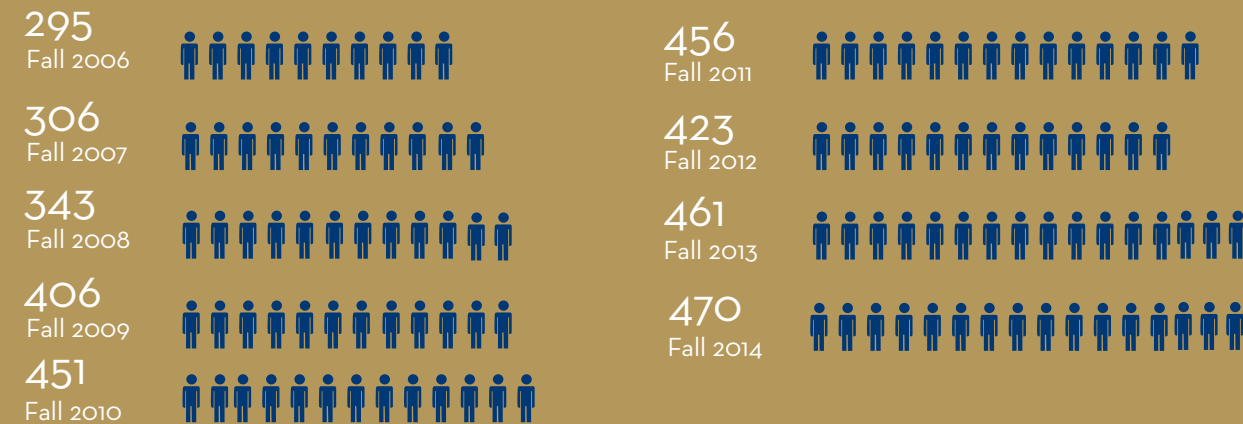
2015 Incoming Freshman Class Projections

- 154 New Freshmen
- 127 Georgia Residents (89%)
- 15 States Represented
- 1234 Average SAT
- 28 Average ACT
- 3.79 Average GPA (Unweighted)

Program Applicants



Number of Honors Students



Invest in Honors

You can invest in the outstanding students of the University Honors Program by visiting our website and clicking "Invest in Honors."



**GEORGIA
SOUTHERN**
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

PO BOX 8130
STATESBORO, GA 30460-8130
georgiasouthern.edu/honors

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
STATESBORO, GA
PERMIT 286

