



THE ROUNDTABLE

THE HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



Greetings from the Interim Executive Director

Is it really already April 2021? Over the past year, each of us have experienced unprecedented changes and challenges large and small as we've learned to readjust our lives to new health realities. Our UNG Honors Program has also seen tremendous changes and challenges. Yet, one thing has remained the same: Honors students' excellence, perseverance, and academic success.

This continued focus on excellence is especially fitting given that 2021 marks the 25th anniversary of the Honors Program! Though we cannot celebrate together, we are certainly celebrating remotely, currently through our #ONEUNG Crowdfund campaign. We invite you to check it out, and contribute as you can. We also look forward to gathering next year during Alumni Weekend for a belated celebration of the Honors Program.

For now, we hope this "continuing pandemic" edition of the UNG Honors newsletter gives you a sense of what's been happening around UNG for the past year. In it, you'll find information on updated leadership in the Honors program as well as stories of our students' continued excellence. You'll also find information on our robust and growing alumni association.

Be well and keep in touch!

Ana W. Fin



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KAT TORRES DEMONSTRATES RESILIENCE, EXCELLENCE



Kat Torres began 2020 certainly on a high. The Gainesville Honors program student left in early 2020 for a three-country study abroad program in Australia, China, and Chile with several scholarships including the Gilman and honors program funding. Yet, 2020 was already shaping up to be quite an interesting year – she landed in Australia amidst wildfires, and quickly had to cancel her China trip due to the growing threat of COVID-19. Undaunted, Kat was named UNG’s 2020 Newman Civic Fellow.

By March 2020, Kat was recalled home like all other UNG students in the face of COVID-19. Again, undaunted, she began to look for other opportunities, becoming a Rangel Scholarship Alternate, a Pickering Fellowship alternate and earning an extremely prestigious internship with the Department of State under the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs (unfortunately, due to long clearance waits, she was unable to participate in this internship).

Like many Honors students, Kat took all of the changes, challenges, and hardships associated with COVID-19 in stride. She redoubled her efforts in her research, presenting at both the Georgia Collegiate Honors Conference and the UNG Annual Research Conference. She also continued applying for opportunities to move her closer to becoming a Foreign Service Officer on the Consular track.

All of Kat’s hard work, persistence and academic excellence has recently paid off. She has been selected as both a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant to Taiwan as well as a Boren Scholarship recipient to study Indonesian. Now Kat faces perhaps the toughest challenge yet: deciding which opportunity to accept. Kudos to Kat as she continues to model the resilience and excellence of our Honors Program students!

HONORS STUDENTS IMPACT LOCAL COMMUNITY

Wahsega 4-H Center, located just outside of Dahlonega, hosts a youth camp where students are encouraged to build friendships and community with one another. At the heart of Wahsega's mission is to enable youth to gain relevant knowledge and life skills so that they are prepared to be responsible, informed decision makers, effective problem solvers, and well-rounded citizens.

In fall 2020, Honors Program students lent their creative talents to Washega. Sharon Jackson and Kaity Pittard, among other students, partnered with Washega to design and implement a mural in the center as part of a community service project. Royce Dansby-Sparks, Director of Honors and associate professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at UNG, said, "Service to the university and to the community allows students to see beyond their own immediate goals and understand how they can make lasting impacts on the people around them."

The mural, which will be enjoyed by many future participants at Wahsega, also made a lasting impact on students in the Honors Program such as Sharon Jackson, a recent graduate with a degree in studio art with a concentration in graphic design. Jackson shared the following about the experience: "It taught me a lot about keeping things moving along smoothly without inhibiting the creative ideas of the team members or asking too much of them when they are facing academic pressures. We have also learned a lot about problem-solving and perseverance as unexpected issues pop up that we have dealt with by working together."

Gainesville Honors program students Ansley Sparks and Kaylee Boudreaux pose while "Sweeping the Hootch." Honors students helped clean up the banks of the Soque river near Clarksville as part of an ongoing partnership with Chattahoochee Riverkeepers.





"My experience in the UNG Honors Program helped me evolve into my best self. It provided me with opportunities to grow in ways that I never imagined. I applied for national scholarships, I presented research at conferences, and I lived on the Honors hall where I met my best friends. I really couldn't be more grateful for all the support given to me by the Honors Program.

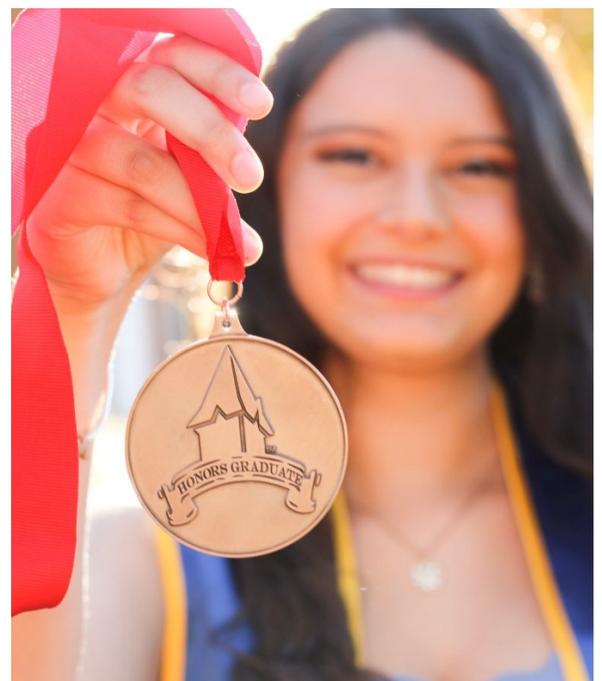
The Honors Program supported my dreams of going to graduate school through its workshops. I recently accepted an offer from the University of Georgia's School Psychology PhD program, starting Fall 2021. While working towards my degree, I will be working as a Research Assistant for UGA's Mary Frances Early College of Education.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

MADISON RODRIGUEZ

Thanks to the Honors Program I received a grant of \$150 to recruit students for my honors thesis. My thesis focused on the impact of immigration on the academic experiences and mental health of Latinx students at UNG. The Honors Program helped prepare me to take on my thesis through their Honors Research Methods class offered each semester. This class pushed me to create a timeline for my thesis and I looked at topics that interested me outside of regular classes.

As a senior in high school, I was worried I wouldn't be accepted into the Honors Program, and now I'm thrilled to call myself an alumni of the UNG Honors Program. "



NEW FACES IN THE LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF UNG HONORS

Dr. Royce Dansby-Sparks is the Director of the Dahlonega Honors Program. Royce has been at UNG for 10 years and has supported Honors at UNG by teaching honors chemistry (6 years), serving on the Honors Program Advisory Council (6 years), and serving as the assistant director of honors on the Dahlonega campus (2.5 years) before transitioning to director of Honors in 2019.



He is an Associate Professor of Analytical Chemistry with expertise in electroanalytical chemistry and chemical sensing and has mentored multiple honors program students in research including John Hayes ('13), Kaylee Todd ('16), Alex Lowery ('18), Caroline Brown ('19), and Brooke Tate ('21). He and his family, wife Casey (4th grade teacher) and two sons Brewer (10) and Grant (8) enjoy living in Dahlonega and taking advantage of the abundance of outdoor activities North Georgia has to offer.



Dr. Anita Turlington is the new Honors Director for the Gainesville campus. She has taught English at UNG since 2003 and enjoys teaching Victorian literature as well as fantasy and crime fiction. She currently lives in Cleveland, GA and loves spending time with her grandchildren Abby and Thomas.

NEW FACES IN THE LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF UNG HONORS

Danielle Hartsfield is Assistant Director of the Honors Program in Dahlenega and Assistant Professor in the Department of Elementary and Special Education. Prior to earning her Ph.D. from Old Dominion University and entering higher education, she was a fourth grade teacher in her home state of Massachusetts. She has a special interest in teaching and researching children's literature, and her work has been published in journals such as Reading Psychology and the Journal of Teacher Education. Danielle lives in Forsyth County with her five pets, and she was happily married to her late husband, Clint, for four years.



Candace Lovell is Administrative Assistant serving the Honors Program. She came to UNG in July 2016. The energy on a college campus and the opportunities for community building with students and coworkers are the most enjoyable aspects of her work on UNG's Gainesville campus. Candace combines her love of fitness and family in her free time.

NEW FACES IN THE LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF UNG HONORS

Dr. Anastasia Lin is very excited to return to Honors Program administration as Interim Executive Director. She previously directed the Gainesville Honors Program in 2013-2014. Since then, she has worked closely with Honors students through the

Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities and the Nationally Competitive Scholarships office. She looks forward to continuing to support Honors students in reaching their academic and professional goals both at UNG and beyond. She enjoys spending time with her family, who also call UNG home - the "other Dr. Lin," Neal, teaches Biology on the Gainesville campus, and her son, Rhodes, is Nigel's #1 fan. The Lins are expecting a new baby girl nighthawk any day now.



Keep in touch!



@UNGHONORS

EMAIL UPDATES TO HONORS@UNG.EDU

HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL *UPDATE*

The Honors Program at UNG celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2020, and the Honors Advisory Council organized an online celebration to mark the occasion. Held on Saturday, November 7, the event began with a tour of the Dhlonega campus, followed by a few rounds of trivia hosted by outgoing campus director Steve Smith, and concluded with research updates from four current students.

The 25th anniversary celebration also served as the kickoff for a fundraising campaign for the program, and day-of donations topped \$2250, reaching over \$3000 days later. Thanks to work on the part of HAC member Pete Mistr, the UNG Parent-Family Association committed to matching donations up to \$3500, and all funds will go to support the work of the HP. If you'd like to contribute, you may do so online at <http://ung.imodules.com/honors25>. The graduating class that raises the most money overall will be added to a perpetual plaque to be displayed in the fishbowl meeting room in Barnes Hall, and the top individual donor will receive a pigeon.

Congratulations goes to the students who graduated during the 2010s decade, as they won the trivia competition! The Honors Advisory Council would like to thank Royce Dansby-Sparks, Anastasia Lin, Gina Diodati, Emma Anderson, Jared Oenick, Natalie Macy, Steve Smith, Isabelle Pobanz, Madison Ammon, and Lauren Silvers for their help with the event.

In spring, we offered our career workshop event online, which was a tremendous success. The event included a keynote, career speed dating, and a talk from the Student Money Management Center. Thank you to all of our fantastic alumni who gave of their time.

If you're interested in volunteering, you may contact our president Amy Burger at amybburger@gmail.com. In addition to Amy and Pete (mentioned earlier), the HAC also includes Holly Jones, Jennifer McCall, and Heather Deweese.

If you'd like to stay in the loop, consider joining our Facebook groups:
"Honors Program," at www.facebook.com/groups/UNG.Honors
and
"UNG Honors Program Alumni," at
www.facebook.com/groups/1397637190466507/.

ALUMNI UPDATES

2020

Jennifer Garcia

Jennifer is currently in Gainesville, Florida at the University of Florida in her first year as a physical therapy graduate student. She and others in the program have had to learn how to adapt during COVID, but they are still getting in-person hands on experience.

Madison (Barber) Gramlin

Jennifer is currently in Gainesville, Florida at the University of Florida in her first year as a physical therapy graduate student. She and others in the program have had to learn how to adapt during COVID, but they are still getting in-person hands on experience.

2019

Hannah Coltrain

Hannah has been working at a small biotechnology/medical devices company called StimLabs in Roswell for the past year as a tissue processing technician. She says the best part of her job is getting hands-on dissection experience with donated placental and umbilical cord tissues before they turn them into human allografts. She took this job because she still aims to work in clinical and/or forensic tissue grossing! Right now, she is applying to graduate schools for pathology and would like to thank the Honors Program for providing research opportunities that has set her apart from other applicants. She believes utilizing all the student resources at UNG, including her many amazing Honors mentors and biology professors, prepared her well for working as part of a team wherever she goes and that the Honors Program emphasized the importance of good leadership.

ALUMNI UPDATES

2018

Charlotte McDonald

In November, Charlotte was promoted to Digital Marketing Specialist at her job with BDO USA, LLP where she supports their national marketing team.

Margaret Owens

Margaret is still employed at UNG in the postal services department and enjoys assisting the Honors Program in any way she can while still on campus. She was very honored to receive a Japan English Teacher (JET) Assistant Language Teacher position after applying last Fall. She was unfortunately not able to participate in the program due to Covid-19, but she was very grateful for the chance and will keep an eye out for any future opportunities to teach English or visit Japan.

2017

Jessica Braswell



Jessica is currently working as a registered nurse in the Emory GI clinic and has started collaborating with one of the doctors there on esophageal disorder research. She and her fiancé Dipo were in December 2020 in a micro wedding with just their immediate family and small wedding party present (thanks to COVID-19). Molly Young, a fellow HP alum, was her bridesmaid. It had been a year since they've been able to see each other in person (Molly lives a few states away) and COVID sabotaged their plans this summer. Overall, she is doing well and is looking forward to married life.

ALUMNI UPDATES

2017

Victoria Beck

Victoria is still at NOA (No One Alone), a non-profit that supports victims of domestic violence in North Georgia. She is about to start her fourth year there and still loves her job! The one big super wonderful update is that she now has a perfect baby boy, and she and her husband couldn't be prouder! William Henry Dunston, but they call him Liam is the sweetest!



2016

Briana Bailey

Briana is currently teaching chemistry at Jasper County High School in her hometown of Monticello, Ga. She is also working on her Masters of Education in Secondary Science. She got married last November and her and her husband celebrated their first anniversary this year.

Sid Patel

Sid started a new job in August with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as a member of the Brownfield Unit. They accept and review applications regarding the cleaning up of abandoned/contaminated sites in order to spur development and business in Georgia, along with cleaning up environmental contamination in soils. Overall, they do great work regarding keeping the environment clean and he is happy there.

ALUMNI UPDATES

2016

Kaylee Todd

Kaylee is still working on her doctorate in chemistry at UF (University of Florida) and has made it to her 5th year. She is getting close to the end of her doctoral research, but because research is research, she doesn't know when the end will come just yet. She still loves teaching introductory chemistry and being a teaching assistant. She will teach the Introduction to Chem course for the 4th time this coming spring as the instructor - her favorite teaching appointment because the course is all hers. This past August, she was awarded one of her department's Graduate Teaching Awards for the second time, and she is currently being considered for a university level graduate teaching award. Last month, her first first-author paper was published!

She says life is pretty good in Gainesville (Florida), even in these weird times of COVID and lack of traditional football Saturdays in the Swamp. DOI: 10.1039/D0RP00185F (Paper) Chem. Educ. Res. Pract., 2021, Advance Article

2015

Nora Sutton

Nora is still at James Madison University and is working in Annual Giving. She got engaged to her fiancé, Kyle Rothemich, in May and is planning a wedding for next fall, barring any COVID complications.

They met in their graduate program at West Virginia University. She is also looking to start a Master of Public Administration program at JMU in the spring

ALUMNI UPDATES

Lacie Warren

Lacie is recently engaged (to Andrew Laramore), and they are planning a fall wedding next year in Dahlongega! They moved to the DC metro area last year. She started an exciting new position this year - project analyst with CACI supporting engineering and fabrication contracts with the Naval Surface Warfare Center Carderock Division in Bethesda MD. She says they always seem to be hiring engineers and software folks, so send any new grads wanting more info her way! Interns too!

2015

Sydney Smith

Sydney married Michael Ramey on September 12th and they are living in East Ridge, TN, pictured below. She recently started a new job as a Staff Accountant at Oriental Weavers in Dalton, GA.



ALUMNI UPDATES

2013

James Dodds

Dr. James Dodds graduated from Vanderbilt University with a Ph.D. in chemistry in 2018 studying Ion Mobility-Mass Spectrometry with Prof. John McLean. He is currently a postdoc with Prof. Erin Baker at NC State in Raleigh, NC.

2012

Eric R. Craig, MD

Eric is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology F. Edward Hebert School of Medicine. He recently finished his residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He remains in active duty in the Navy and will be headed to his first(ish - long story) duty station in Iwakuni Japan soon!

Dr. Laura Laxton - DVM

Laura earned her doctorate from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine in 2015. She has a passion for supporting the human-animal bond by helping dogs, cats, and their humans too! As a small animal veterinarian, she has a focused interest in puppy pediatrics, animal behavior, nutrition, and virology (



the study of viruses). She cares about your pet's emotional well-being and uses Fear Free techniques to reduce pet stress and anxiety during examinations. She is also a certified Pet Nutrition Coach and creates tailored treatment plans for pets struggling with obesity. She enjoys spending her free time practicing yoga, kayaking, and watching movies with her husband Matthew, 5 dogs (Lindy, Cara, Wilfred, Cass, and Chuck), and caique parrot Peaches. She currently resides in Bonita Springs, Florida.

<https://gracevets.com/>

2011

ALUMNI UPDATES

2009

Terrell Ussing

Terrell says he has some good news to share in an otherwise rough year, to put it mildly. He and his wife welcomed their first child, Eleanor, in June. In addition, he was elected to become a partner at his law firm - Morgan Lewis & Bockius, LLP - and became an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center, where he co-teaches a graduate tax course to LLM students.



2006

Ashley Pearce Smith

Ashley teaches science, mostly honors and gifted chemistry and physical science. She just virtually graduated with her Educational Specialist degree from Georgia

Southern University. She started the volleyball program at Appling County High School in 2017 and was the head coach for three years, making it to state all three years. This year she has stepped away from coaching to be a full-time mom to her 6th grader, Scarlett Grace and her 4th grader, Matthew Dalton. Now they travel from ball game to ball game because they both play multiple sports.

Honors Theses are Making a Difference!

- 62 of the total theses submitted to the repository have **54,888 total downloads**
- **29,000 downloads** of Honors theses in the last year.
- **114 downloads** of Honors theses in the **last 24hrs!**



Check them out here:

digitalcommons.northgeorgia.edu/honors_theses/



#ONEUNG

STRONGER TOGETHER

UNGgive.org/oneung

KUDOS & CONFERENCES

Current Honors Kudos:

- **Abigail Meyers** - Fulbright Taiwan English Teaching Assistantship
- **Kat Torres** - Fulbright Taiwan English Teaching Assistantship & Boren Scholarship
- **Zoe Rumbaugh** - Cox State Diplomacy Seminar, Critical Language Scholarship, Freeman Asia Scholarship
- **Dillon Evans** - Boren Scholarship
- **Madison Ammon, Taylor Berry** - UNG 2021 Goldwater nominees
- **Natalie Macy** - 1st place paper in the Natural Sciences at Georgia Collegiate Honors Conference
- **Wesley Rhinehart** - Runner Up Best Overall Presentation at UNG's Annual Research Conference
- **Kathryn Monheim** - First Place Poster Submission at UNG's Annual Research Conference
- **Colton Glaze** - First Place Oral Presentation Submission at UNG's Annual Research Conference
- **Maria Bortolucci** - H. Michael Hyams Jr. Leadership Award
- **Madison Rodriguez** - First Place, UNG Annual Research Pitch, & Rachel Ford Springer Award
- **Bryan Rocha** - Third Place, UNG Annual Research Pitch
- **Gina Diodati, Jared Oenick, Ikechukwu Obi-Okoye, Bailey Bullard, Cole Parker** - Summer Research Experiences

Recent Alumni Kudos:

- **Jasmine Williamson** - 2021 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
- **Joshua McCausland** - published a paper in *Nature Communication*
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-20873>

KUDOS & CONFERENCES

Southern Regional Honors Conference:

Anna Perry - *The Impact of Household Detergent Phosphate Regulations on the Total Phosphorus Levels in the Lake Lanier Watershed from 1987 to 2020*

Daniel Haugen - *malSET: An Automated Symbolic Execution Tool for Assisting Malware Classification Systems*

Kathryn Monheim- *The Effects of Changing Electron Withdrawing Groups to Shift the Maximum Absorption Wavelength*

Maria Bortolucci - *Participatory Budgeting: Analysis of Institutional Fragility Through Crises*

Conference on the Americas:

Bryan Rocha - *Operation Condor and Violations of Human Rights on the History, Anthropology and Pandemic Impact panel*

KUDOS & CONFERENCES

Georgia Collegiate Honors Conference:

Maria Julia Bortlucci - *“Participatory Budgeting: Analysis of Institutional Fragility through Crises” Saturday*

Katherine Torres - *“Examining Female Genital Mutilation in Indonesia through a Tanzanian Lens”*

Natalie Macy - *“The Effects of Microplastics on Sea Urchin Larval Survivorship and Development”*

Anna Møller - *“Testing the Effect of Racial Congruency on Consumer Behavior”*

Colton Glaze - *“Historical Objectivity and the War of Independence in Spain”*

Kathryn Monheim - *“The Effects of Changing Electron Withdrawing Groups to Shift Maximum Wavelength”*

Brett Chafin - *“Racial Profiling: The Domestic Peril of Minority Peoples”*

Daniel Haugen - *“malSET: An Automated Symbolic Execution Toolkit for Assisting Malware Classification Systems”*

Taylor Berry - *“Characterization of Pleomorphic Bacteriophage and Their Endolysin Proteins using *Arthrobacter globiformis*”*