



THE ROUND TABLE

THE HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

UNG
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NORTH GEORGIA™
HONORS PROGRAM

UNG Honors Program Students Earn Fulbright and Gilman Awards

The Honors Program is celebrating four Fulbright winners this year. Donna “Katie” McCullough, who graduated with her BS in December 2016 and completed a spring SULI internship at the Los Alamos DOE lab, won a Fulbright to further her biology studies at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. Timothy “Noah” McDaniel, Arabic major and cadet in the UNG Corps, will travel on a Fulbright Teaching Assistantship to India. International affairs major Mitchell Fariss was awarded a Teaching Fulbright to Germany, as well. Lindsey Smith, a junior psychology major, spent the summer on Fulbright travel to Dundee, Scotland, to explore the area’s culture and history. In addition to these four Fulbrights, Tatum McMullan, nursing major, won a Gilman

scholarship to study abroad in Italy. These students serve as exemplars for the Honors Program motto, “Learning Locally, Reaching Globally.”



Honors Program Recognizes Director’s Years of Service

June 2017 marked Dr. Stephen Smith’s 16th year as Director of the Honors Program at UNG’s Dahlonega campus. In addition to teaching as a psychology professor for over two decades, Dr. Smith has, since 2001, built the Dahlonega Honors Program membership to its present number of over 150 students, serving as instructor, administrator, advisor and friend to those who have moved through the program. Alumna Catrina May, who is currently pursuing a PhD in mathematics at UGA, expressed gratitude for Smith’s guidance: “Steve was one of my strongest and most steadfast supporters in my undergraduate career. He was a constant source of encouragement for my academic and extracurricular endeavors, and he was always available to give the perfect amounts of advice and sarcasm. I wouldn’t be where I am today without him.”

The investment Dr. Smith has made in Honors students over the past 16 years has fostered ties among alumni, cultivated graduates’ loyalty to the university, and prepared numerous young people for meaningful contribution to the region and the world. The Honors Program offers Steve sincere “thanks” for his years of service and for his continued dedication to our students.

Honors Students Recognized at UNG for Top Academics

Honor Program students distinguished themselves among their peers this year in a multitude of recognitions. Jenna Davidson received the Oconee



Scholarship for demonstration of service to the community and the university, and Jennifer Dickerson was named the Clark-Theodore Outstanding Nontraditional Student Award. On the Dahlonega campus, Katie McCullough was recognized with the Honors Program’s Rachel Ford Springer Award for academic excellence. Taylor Allen won the Harvey E. Hawkins Citizenship Award for outstanding campus citizenship, in addition to multiple honors for her performance as a scholar-athlete. Allen was also nominated for the 2017 NCAA Woman of the Year Award. Moreover, Ashley Brooks was recognized on the Gainesville campus with an Achievement Award for her excellent academic performance and progress.

First Honors Thesis Defended at Gainesville Campus

In April, business management major Emile Phommavongsy completed and defended the first Honors thesis completed at UNG's Gainesville campus. Springing out of her Enactus work with Gainesville's Angel House, Emile's thesis explores the effectiveness of yoga in reducing stress levels and improving sense of well-being for women transitioning from incarceration back into society. About 25 students are on track to complete Honors theses in 2017-2018.

Dansby-Sparks Joins Honors Program Administrative Team

Dr. Royce Dansby-Sparks will serve as Honors Program Assistant Director on the Dahlonega campus beginning August 2017. Dr. Dansby-Sparks is an associate professor of chemistry at UNG.

Service a Priority for Honors Program Students

Honors Program students are required to give five hours of service to their community each semester, but they often go above and beyond, exemplifying the program's commitment to improve the region and the world beyond. Cyndy Solis-Cruz trained with Gainesville's CenterPoint organization in early spring and volunteered as a Reader-Mentor each week for the rest of the semester at New Holland Elementary School. Solis-Cruz, currently pursuing an associate's degree in chemistry, explained that she was motivated to complete the training and service in this capacity because "The real future lies in the hands of every child and it is very important to expose them to



books in and out of the classroom, even before they're old enough to begin school. Not just for them but for us, sitting down to read with a child is a beautiful and fascinating experience."

This year, UNG Honors Program students volunteered their time and talents with organizations all over the North Georgia region, including Habitat for Humanity, local women's shelters, Life South Community Blood Centers, local assisted living facilities, Oconee County Chamber of Commerce, Road Atlanta, Jaycees, and area animal shelters. Honors students are committed to improving the lives of their fellow community members.

Bound for Graduate School

A number of 2016-2017 Honors Program graduates will begin graduate programs in the next year to expand knowledge of their fields and pursue advanced credentialing. Holly Mize, who completed her BS in chemistry at UNG, will begin pharmacy school at Samford University in Alabama. Alyssa Thompson defended her Honors Thesis about methamphetamine effects on

the brain in spring 2017, and will soon be applying to medical school. Molly Young has already started her MS in occupational therapy at the Medical University of South Carolina. Haley Patterson will begin her MA in Spanish Linguistics at University of New Mexico, and Andrew Miller is starting the PhD program in Information Systems at Mississippi State.



In Memoriam

The Honors Program lost a young and vibrant member this year to a car accident. The April incident claimed the life of Brittany Morgan Smith, freshman at the Oconee campus, along with the life of her boyfriend, Michael Rhodes. Both were graduates of Morgan County High School. Oconee Honors Program students planted a tree on campus in memory of their friend and classmate, marking the spot with a plaque to honor her life.



First Annual Summer Soiree a Success

On June 3rd, the Honors Advisory Council hosted a Summer Soiree dinner in the Dahlonega campus Banquet Hall. Program supporters convened to enjoy music by The Gentry, a poetry reading by Tim Bellows, and photography exhibited by Charlotte McDonnold.

The event raised \$1,400 in donations to support educational enrichments for Honors Program students, helping fund activities such as undergraduate research, study abroad, and field trips to venues like Atlanta's Shakespeare Tavern.

ALUMNI NOTES

Class of 2003

Eva Isselstein is transitioning to a new job after over 10 years with Ferchau Engineering, and will begin in October with Danfoss (www.danfoss.com), a large international company (25,000 employees) based in Nordborg, Denmark. Eva will be their new Talent Acquisition Specialist for Northern Germany and will be building their Hamburg office from the ground up.

Class of 2005

Ginger (Grantham) Collins and husband Ryan had a baby girl - Taylor James Collins - on March 24. Ginger is halfway through her Master of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Alabama.



Class of 2006

Ashley (Pearce) Smith lost her husband, Dusty, in March. Although it felt like the end of the world, she and her kids have taken on a brand new adventure—they call it “Smith, Party of 3.” Ashley was also recently named as the first volleyball coach at Appling County High School, and her daughter’s all-star team is ranked 3rd in the state.

Class of 2007

Lauren (Foust) Petro had a baby boy, Jack, on June 1. Lauren has one year left to complete her master’s degree in mental health counseling, and continues to run a portrait photography business.

Class of 2008

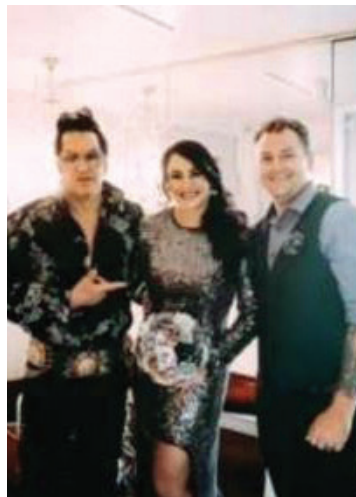
June (Koehler) Black is still at the Boise Museum of Art and loving it. But what she is loving even more is her baby girl, Pearl Elaine, who was born on May 11. Pearl is ‘all sunshine and smiles.’



Class of 2009

Tori (Arcus) Hilton is still working in the ICU at Piedmont Mountainside Hospital and just closed on a new house that was recently completed. She and husband Chris have taken up strength training and 5K runs, and are participating in three 5Ks in the coming weeks.

Heather Stacey just got married – she and husband Riley Hunt (an Australian citizen) eloped to Las Vegas on 7-7-17 and just returned from their honeymoon in Mo’orea.



Class of 2010

Sam Harbison has been working as a Medical Physicist since May 2011 and living in Cumming, GA, in a house he and wife Sarah purchased in 2015. Sam travels across the Southeast evaluating medical imaging equipment at hospitals, imaging centers and doctors’ offices for state and federal compliance.

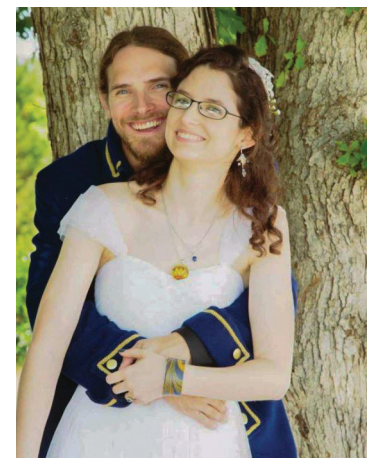
Class of 2011

Chelsea Gibson is in Russia on a Critical Language Scholarship, studying in Vladimir. She’ll return home in August and hopes to defend her dissertation next summer.

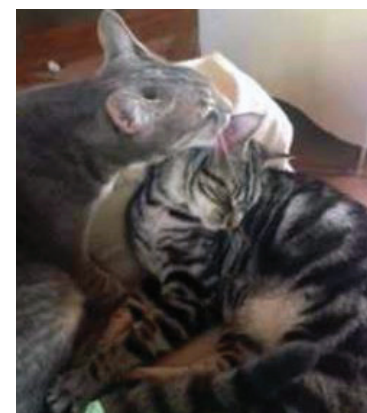
Class of 2012

Hillary Doyle completed her Ph.D. in Neuroscience from Georgia State University in May and moved to New York City to do science writing. She published a first-author paper in the Journal of Neuroscience in March (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28219988>), examining gender differences in the analgesic effects of morphine.

Faith Green got married to Bryan Valentine on June 11 in Auburn, GA.



Katie (Pinkerton) Kerr and her husband Alex are continuing their residencies in pediatrics and internal medicine in the glittering city of Augusta, GA! They are now in their second year. They have two cats, Rosco and Oliver, and some mint in their garden.



Audrey Salley is graduating from the MSN family nurse practitioner program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham on August 12th.

Class of 2013

Kate (Martin) Hayes and husband John Hayes now work at the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. John was recently promoted to Fuel Quality Manager and oversees gasoline/diesel quality for the state. Kate is responsible for calibrating the state's weight measures to national standards (FYI, her job title is Metrologist). They are in the process of buying a house, and expect to close soon.

Jacqueline Hixson was appointed to the Fairfax County Health Systems Agency Board.

Taylor Turner got married to Derek Vandiver on June 23rd. The wedding was at Calvary Baptist Church in Statham with a reception at the Thompson House and Gardens in Bogart.



Class of 2014

Theresa Bucco is serving as an Aide de Camp in the Third Infantry Division at Ft. Stewart; her main headquarters element is expected to deploy in a couple of weeks. She's getting married in November and will honeymoon in Vietnam. Theresa recently earned the Division Volunteer Award for organizing local community service and veterans assistance projects.

Alex Ellis has been serving the Gainesville community as a Young Life leader for the past year. He just accepted a job teaching 7th grade language arts at Gainesville Middle School starting this Fall.

Kerri Gray has been working as in the CADD unit (Center for Autism and Developmentally Delayed) at Bradley Hospital in Rhode Island since July 2016. She helps develop behavior programs, as well as OT, PT, and speech therapies for the inpatient youth there.

Katie Powell graduated in May with a Masters in Middle Grades Math and Science from UNG.

Loren (Stowers) Schaper moved back to Georgia and is now living in Hartwell. She works from home teaching online and looking after son Nate; Blake graduated flight school and is working in Hartwell.

Class of 2015

Emily (Heape) Burns is currently working at an Emory clinic as a medical assistant in preparation for PA school, and which she starts in January (at the Atlanta campus of Mercer University).

Karyn (Davis) Blaylock and husband Brandon are expecting a daughter this October. They are still living in Washington but with hopes to move back south in a couple of years.

Jacob Dietrich had the wonderful opportunity to meet the Prime Minister of Tunisia in July. In addition, he got to sit in on a meeting with the Omani Foreign Minister as well as the Kurdish KRG Foreign Minister. He begins classes at Georgetown on August 26th, pursuing a Masters in Strategic Studies.

Nora Sutton finished her M.A. in Public History from West Virginia University in May. She will be staying in West Virginia for another year, as she recently accepted a one-year AmeriCorps service position at Arthurdale Heritage, Inc., an historic New Deal homestead site and museum.

Lacie Warren is still with the Center for Global Engagement, working primarily on developing international internship programs. She has two more semesters left to complete the MBA program at UNG.

Class of 2016

Briana Bailey is continuing to take over the office of the family plumbing company. She taught 10th grade chemistry at her old high school for a semester, an experience that she reports "was interesting."

Katie McCullough will be in Poland from mid-September until June 2018, researching yeast at Jagiellonian University on a Fulbright scholarship. Beginning in fall 2018, she will be in grad school at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) for Microbiology.

Justin Mueller is still living in Guayaquil, Ecuador, with his wife, Marcela, and teaching English. He will soon be moving "to the highlands" to begin work on a BA in Geography from Kennesaw State.

Sid Patel is working in Dr. Joe Brown's lab at Georgia Tech, studying the role of sanitation in the developing world. Sid is also volunteering with EPA Region 4, working on the Sub Metro Atlanta Contingency Plan.

Rachel Perez got married to Andrew Udell on June 24, bought a new house in Winder, and will begin graduate school in Biology at the University of Georgia in the fall.



Amy Shim will begin her master's degree in Industrial Organizational Psychology at George Washington University this fall.

Kaylee Todd is finishing her first year in the Chemistry PhD program at the University of Florida and reports that she is 'still enjoying being a general chemistry Teaching Assistant' (Kaylee was a TA/Sl for three years at UNG).

Joanna Toso is now a Project Manager for Brightlink IP, a telecommunications company based out of Atlanta. She is working on a novel and writing freelance articles on the side.

Class of 2017

Matt O'Leary was hired as the New York State Historic Interpreter at the Washington's Headquarters site in Newburgh, NY.

Preston Walter passed his real estate exam and became a Licensed Realtor on July 17. Since then, he has joined Keller Williams Realty Atlanta Partners, and is currently working as a buyer's agent with Walter Realty Group. He is very excited to start his career in real estate.