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HONORS COLLEGE

2016

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UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

On the cover: While studying abroad last summer, honors landscape architecture senior Adel Vaughn recorded her impressions of Turkey in her sketchbook. She writes: "The water spigot, to me, is a symbol for Istanbul. They were all over the city – many right outside mosques where people would wash their hands and feet before entering, and others in seemingly random places. The one that I painted was in Gulhane Park near Topkapı Palace. It was such a beautiful element in the park, carrying a rich sense of history while embracing the newly blooming, bright red roses surrounding it." For more on Vaughn see inside back cover.

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Inside

What You Thought You Knew about the Honors College

LYNDA L. COON


Photo: Matt Reynolds

During my first year as dean, I have discovered that even though I thought I had a firm grasp on the full spectrum of honors scholars at our institution, I was wrong...

Certain facts remain consistent:

+ Honors College students are exceptional and nationally competitive as demonstrated by our incoming class of fellows (Honors College Fellows, Bodenhamer Fellows, and Sturgis Fellows).

+ Data on this extraordinary class proves the point: an average ACT score of 33.41 (placing them in the 99th percentile nationwide); an average weighted GPA of 4.16; and 28 National Merit Scholars (31.1 percent of the cohort).

Certain facts are less well-known:

+ 25 percent of our new Honors College Fellows are first-generation college students.

+ 78.9 percent of these fellows are from Arkansas, proving our commitment to the flagship campus mission.

+ 1 out of 5 of honors students at Arkansas, a cohort of 3,100 undergraduates, is eligible for Pell Grants and Stafford Loans, placing them at a level the federal government classifies as having serious financial need.

+ The Honors College is helping to keep the state's best students right here in Arkansas — and offering study abroad and research opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach for many of these top students.

+ We want all of our students, no matter what their background is, to participate in international education.

+ The Honors College has set an ambitious goal of increasing the number of honors graduates studying abroad from the current figure of 50 percent to 70 percent by 2020.

Fun fact:

+ Two of our new Honors College Fellows, Lexi and Tori Weeks of Cabot, Ark., were ranked as the top two high school female pole vaulters in the country and were featured in the *New York Times*. They will continue to pole vault for the Razorback women's track and field team. No doubt they are headed to the Olympics. We shall keep you posted on their progress!

And finally, an invitation:

My door in Gearhart Hall is always open – please come by if you are on campus. I'd love to share more facts with you about our amazing Honors College faculty, students, staff and alumni.

Sending More Students Abroad

Photo: Joe Burns

Students at the Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome.
From left to right: Emily Sugg, Bailey Pearson, Erick Arrizon, Tayler Trantham, Molly Drewyor, Hunter Vines, Anna Hudgeons.

In today's global marketplace, a college semester abroad is no longer just a nice plus on the resume. In a recent University of California study, students who studied abroad made 25 percent more in their starting salaries and found jobs at nearly twice the rate of those who hadn't.

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Sending More Students Abroad

"Rather than a huge advantage, it's actually becoming a detriment if you don't have an international academic experience," said Carol Gattis, associate dean who oversees the Honors College grant program.

The Honors College is stepping up to the plate with a major new initiative to send more students abroad. Dean Lynda Coon and Gattis have set an ambitious goal to increase the number of honors graduates who have studied abroad from 50 percent (already more than three times the national average) to 70 percent by 2020. Here's how we plan to do it.

Short-Term Options

Finding time for study abroad has been a major obstacle for some students, particularly those in engineering or the sciences who add internships and co-ops to an already heavy course load. The Honors College is partnering with faculty and programs across campus to offer intersession and spring break options. For example, Todd Cleveland, an assistant professor of history and widely published scholar of African history, will lead an intersession course on South Africa in Cape Town and Kruger National Park in May. We are also piloting embedded study abroad courses in the Honors Humanities Project (see p. 7), sending students to Vienna and Prague after a semester of preparatory study.

"The number one benefit here is that we can get students abroad who otherwise wouldn't have time to go," Gattis said. "The embedded courses also provide an opportunity to merge theory with real experience – it makes learning come alive."

The Honors College has also made it really easy for honors students participating in faculty-led programs to apply for grant support. They answer a few extra questions on a partnering faculty member's program application and learn whether or not they were awarded the grant in a matter of days after the program application deadline. Simple!

New Grants, Covering More

The Honors College is also expanding the number of study abroad grants available. For example, students who need just a little help to make it happen can apply for the new Airfare Grant, designed to cover the average cost of airfare to regions around the world. A student going to Asia who gets this grant will be funded $2,000 – with that amount reevaluated annually to ensure that the grant keeps up with airfare costs.

At the same time, the Traditional Study Abroad Grant has been increased to cover 50 percent of student costs for most programs. "Our goal is to take the guesswork out of grant funding, so that students and their families can plan for this experience," Gattis said. Students eligible for federal financial aid will have 65-75 percent of their costs covered.

And more to come ...

The Honors College is also exploring a number of new options to fund research and service learning abroad. "We want all of our students to get their passports and go," Carol Gattis said. "Because it opens your eyes to other possibilities that you didn't know existed. You find what your passion is."

"We want all of our students to get their passports and go, because it opens your eyes to other possibilities that you didn't know existed. You find what your passion is."

–Carol Gattis, Honors College associate dean

Former Chancellor G. David Gearhart addresses the crowd at the rededication of Gearhart Hall.

Photo: Matt Reynolds

Gearhart Legacy Honored

Our historic home has a new name. Last fall the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees voted to rename Ozark Hall as G. David Gearhart Hall, to honor Gearhart's service as vice chancellor for advancement from 1998 to 2008 and his leadership as chancellor from 2008 to 2015.

"Dave Gearhart was instrumental in securing the $300 million gift from the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation, which led to the creation of the Honors College," said Honors College Dean Lynda Coon. "As chancellor, he championed the restoration of Ozark Hall and the development of a beautiful new wing to house the Honors College. Naming this historic building after Dr. Gearhart is a wonderful way to honor his legacy."

Jane Gearhart, the university's "first lady" for seven years, was also honored with the naming of the Jane B. Gearhart Full Circle Campus Food Pantry. Honors College students led the effort to establish the pantry, which addresses food insecurity on campus. Jane Gearhart stepped in to help and became a prominent and effective advocate for the pantry. Julia Lyon (B.S. in biological sciences, *summa cum laude*, '12), the pantry's first president, recalled: "We could not have done it without her help! Mrs. Gearhart served not only as an advocate for the pantry – she was also a wonderful role model for all of our student leaders and volunteers. She'd often stop by to pick up expired goods or to help sweep up!"

Gearhart Hall was dedicated on Nov. 20, 2015. At the ceremony, Gearhart said: "Working together, face to face, side by side, it is our people who make the university. And as chancellor I was very blessed to have all of that: wonderful people who loved the university, and wanted to make it better. That made all the difference for me. Thank you for affording me the opportunity to serve the University of Arkansas for 20 years – it was truly the honor and the privilege of my life."

Our building's name, Gearhart Hall, is new, but our hospitality remains the same. Please come by and visit anytime!

Photo: Staci Coston

From *Mad Magazine* to World Domination:

The Onion Media Mogul Tells All

Scott Dikkers' lecture is the latest in the Honors College Invites series, which brings thinkers and doers to campus to share their craft.

For more information and to RSVP for the reception,
visit honorscollege.uark.edu/invites.

Scott Dikkers' career trajectory is an unlikely one by any measure, from his roots as a Wisconsin farm boy who loved reading *Mad Magazine*, to cofounder of *The Onion*, proud standard-bearer of fake news and improbable headlines in 20-point type.

Dikkers will share the backstory on taking *The Onion* from small campus humor rag to international comedy brand at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 10 in Hillside Auditorium 202. A public "Meet and Greet" reception will take place at 5:30 p.m. in the Honors Student Lounge, Gearhart Hall 130.

The Onion launched in 1988 on the University of Wisconsin campus. Dikkers came on board to draw cartoons, and by the third issue, was editing the publication. "It [operated] out of somebody's dorm room for the first couple of months, and then it was in somebody's house; I don't think we had an office until year two, and I don't think we got paid until year three," he recalled in an *Eye to Eye* CBS News interview in 2013. *The Onion* has been turning fake into funny for almost 30 years now, and today TheOnion.com is one of the world's most popular humor websites, with millions of readers and social media followers.

Dikkers is *The Onion's* longest-serving editor-in-chief, and co-owned the paper from 1989 to 2003. In 2006 he created The Onion News Network, which has spawned numerous viral videos and three TV series. He's the best-selling co-author of *The Onion's* first two original books, *Our Dumb Century* and *Our Dumb World*. His work has won the Thurber Prize for American Humor, a Peabody and over 30 Webby Awards. Dikkers developed and currently oversees *The Onion* training center at Chicago's Second City.

The Onion matters, Dikkers wrote via email, because "it's important to laugh. It's one of the few things that makes us human. (Chimps, I think, are the only other creatures on Earth who laugh, unless that's what dolphins are doing. Dolphins are probably laughing at us.)"

Photo: Chris Buck

Top: Scott Dikkers, cofounder of *The Onion* newspaper. Bottom: Just another day in *The Onion* office, Madison, Wis., ca. 2000.

Q&A with Dean Coon

Photo: Matt Reynolds

H2P veterans know our new dean, Lynda Coon – she's a medieval church historian and has co-taught the second semester of the course sequence for many of the last 20 years. For those who haven't had that treat, here's what you need to know about our new dean: she's passionate about supporting honors students – and faculty – and staff. She writes emails that make you laugh. She's quick to praise a job well done, but she's not afraid to tinker under the hood to make something that runs well, run even better. Here are some highlights from a recent conversation.

Q: / Why did you take this job?

A: I took the job, first and foremost, for the opportunity to create imaginative curricular experiences. Our students deserve them. Of course, we have great courses here! It's just that I think we can do even more.

Q: / Now that you're dean of the Honors College, do you have any new plans for H2P?

A: H2Passport is a new embedded study abroad experience for the Honors Humanities Project. The course follows world cultures from the ancient world up to the modern era, and does so in an interdisciplinary way. The idea is to create this international capstone, which we're piloting this January for students who have been through the first three semesters. So they're doing a heavy unit on Mozart and the Hapsburg empire in H2PIII, and this group is going to go to Vienna and Prague. It's going to be awesome!

The professors include a music historian who works on Mozart and a historian of 19th century Germany. So they've got two pros, different disciplines, going on site to teach some of the things they've studied all semester long. And it might look like it's all European, but you have to keep in mind that the unit on opera will explore how opera in that time period engages in all of these global themes, including imperialism.

The students have intensely worked on things that they're then going to go see. So they don't go as neophytes, they go as people with training – pretty high-level training, by the way – I've seen the syllabus. And that's what we want; we want rigor in the Honors College.

Q: / What projects are you most excited about tackling?

A: Of course, you know me, it's always going to be curriculum. I'd like to develop signature Honors College colloquia – interdisciplinary courses, featuring teaching stars from every college who come to our space and invite these great students into their amazing research worlds.

Q: / What are some of the courses you're thinking about?

A: The idea would be to rotate among the colleges – there are stars everywhere. We would feature local research talent, like Peter Ungar. He could do a seminar on teeth – we'd call it Teeth! We'd like the Law School to be involved – they were thinking they could do a colloquium on crime and the national media. If it got really successful, then the idea would be to gradually invite people from outside to come and teach.

Q: / What aspect of your job keeps you up at night?

A: We have resources, and we have great ideas. Now the key thing is to develop a structure for implementing a well-thought out plan.

Q: / Your latest article, "Gendering Dark Age Jesus" (forthcoming in the journal *Gender and History*) focuses on depictions of Jesus in early illuminated manuscripts and architectural elements. What's next in your research?

A: Well, I don't know how I'm going to do it – that keeps me up at night! (laughs). I have another essay due, called "Merovingian Jesus." I'm going into the hard core world of barbarians, who supposedly had an emotionless religion – "supposedly" being the operative word. That's going to be a hard essay to write. It will be about crypts, tombs; more spatial, I'm guessing.

Q: / What do you do for fun?

A: I love to walk up on Mount Sequoyah, with dogs of course – right now I have three. I like to read historical fiction – I love *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*, I can't wait for the third installation. I like to go to Europe and visit medieval sites, especially religious architecture. Travel might look like it's work related but – no. When you're a medievalist, it's not a job, it's a calling.

Honors College staffers have won "Employee of the Year" two years in a row: Kelly Carter won in 2015, and Michael Zachary was honored in 2014.

Photo: Matt Reynolds

Kelly Carter is Employee of the Year

"Nurturing students" is not listed in Kelly Carter's job description, but providing chicken noodle soup and crackers for fellows downed by the flu gives some idea of how she earned her nickname, "Mamma C," and why she was one of five honored as a University Employee of the Year in 2015.

"I was a sophomore in 2009 when the H1N1 "swine" flu swept through Fayetteville and, seemingly giddy to find a campus full of Hogs, brought life to a feverish, achy standstill," recalled Bodenhamer Fellow Jacob Morgan (B.S.Ch.E, '12). "After my first day laid up in Yocum Hall under every cover I could find, Kelly sent out a mass email and let us know that she had brought in soup to the office for anyone who needed it. This was my first time being majorly sick so far from home, and that gesture meant so much."

As the fellowship financial manager, Carter helps our fellows keep their finances – and their lives – on track. In addition to processing thousands of requisitions each semester for 300-plus fellows' tuition and fees, room and board, books, and other educational expenses, Carter takes time to connect with each of these exceptional students. She is always ready to drop what she's working on to listen and provide support.

"Kelly serves as each student's mentor, confidante, coach, advisor, cheerleader, reality checker and consoler," Associate Dean Carol Gattis wrote in the nomination form. Bodenhamer Fellow Naseer Naseem sums it up: "Our problems become her problems, and our successes are her successes."

2015 marked the second in a row that an Honors College staff member won "Employee of the Year" honors. Michael Zachary, Honors College information technology specialist, won the award in 2014. In addition to Zachary's everyday awesomeness as a computer whisperer and all-around trouble shooter, the award recognized his heroic effort in helping the Honors College work through two major construction and renovation projects, and for leading the move from three separate locations into the college's new home in Ozark (now Gearhart) Hall.

"We are extremely proud that both Kelly Carter and Michael Zachary received the university's highest staff honors for going way above and beyond their job descriptions," Dean Lynda Coon said. "The Honors College staff rocks!"

H2P By the Numbers

Last fall marked the 20th year that intrepid honors freshmen embarked on the four-semester, interdisciplinary exploration of world cultures that is the Honors Humanities Project. Taught by teams of the university's top professors, this "humanities boot camp" takes students from the shrines of early Christian martyrs and Mayan ball courts to the shag splendor of Elvis' Graceland. The goal of the course is to build bridges across disciplines and colleges and to inspire students to think about what matters – opening their eyes and minds to a complex world.

Class Motto
Solvitur Ambulando

Extra credit: Translate *Solvitur Ambulando.*

500+
Number of pencils distributed to H2P1 students by Daniel Levine since 2011

Start up funding
$242,000
National Endowment of the Humanities Curriculum Grant, 1995

Best swag
H2P t-shirts, designed by H2P students

National awards won by H2P students: 118,
including 1 Rhodes Scholar, 3 Marshall Scholars, 5 Truman Scholars, 15 NSF Graduate Research Fellows, 17 Fulbright Scholars and 18 Goldwater Scholars

Academic profile of H2P students
From all 6 colleges, 100+ degree programs

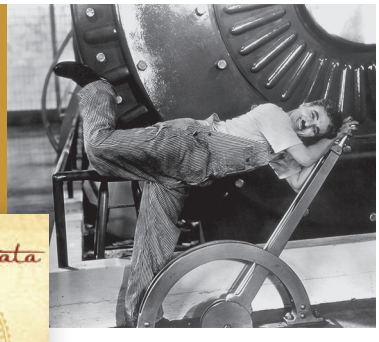
Pilgrimages
1. Memphis, Tenn. (Civil Rights Museum, Sun Records and Graceland)
2. Devil's Den State Park, Ark.
3. Kansas City, Mo. (Nelson-Atkins Museum)
4. Tulsa, Okla. (Congregation B'Nai Emunah, Hindu Temple of Greater Tulsa)
5. Vienna, Austria (Vienna State Opera)

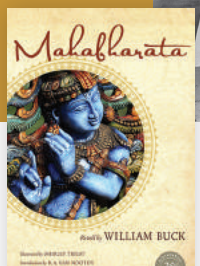
Photo: Linda McMath

83%
Current graduation rate of students who took H2P

2,400+
Number of students who have taken at least one semester of H2P

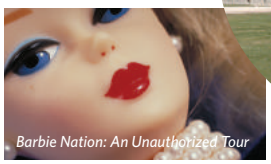
Classic texts
The Mahabharata; Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji;* Wolfgang Mozart, *The Magic Flute;* Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times.*



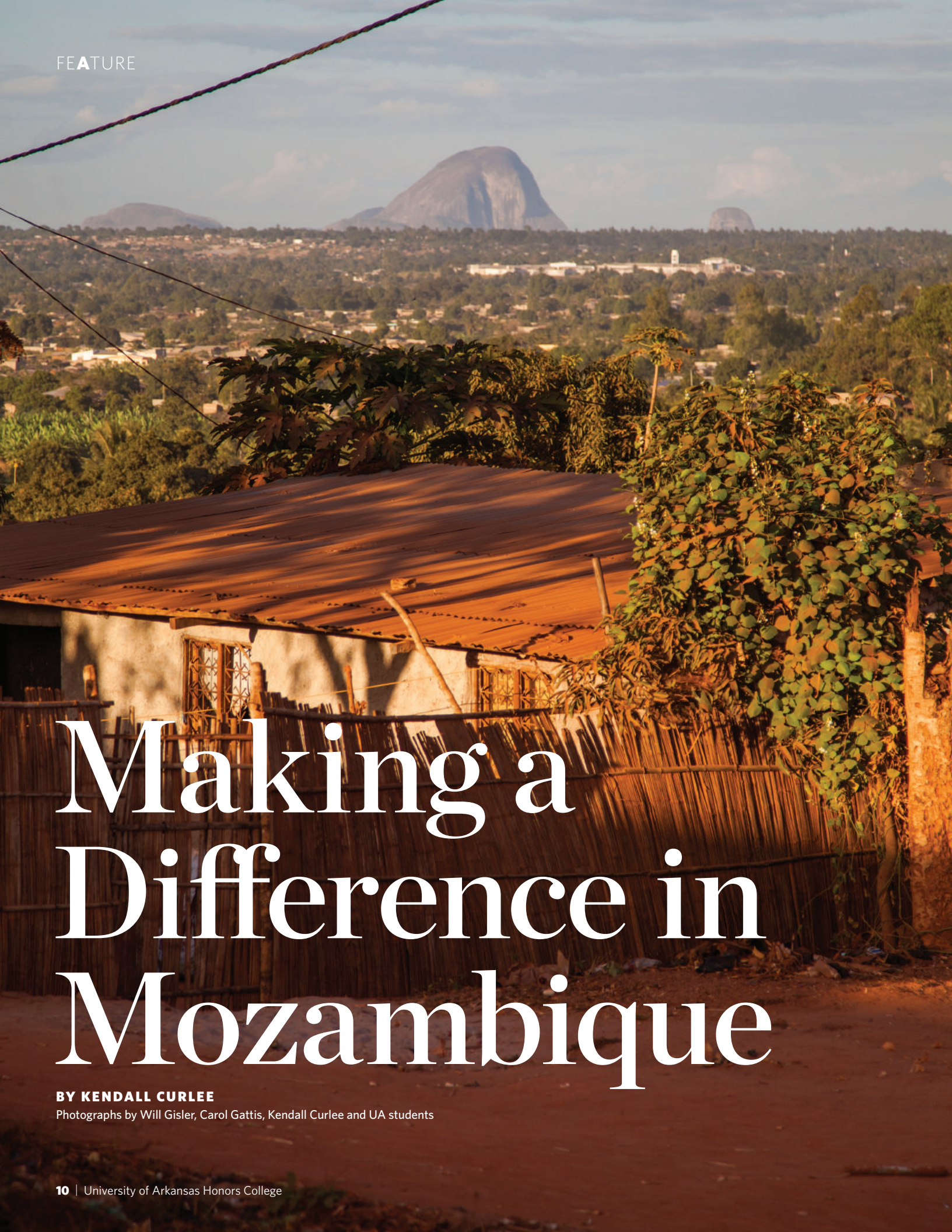


Monuments
+ Parthenon
+ Great Ball Court at Chichén Itzá
+ Brooklyn Bridge
+ Barbie

Photo: Kim Sexton



Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour



Making a Difference in Mozambique

BY KENDALL CURLEE

Photographs by Will Gisler, Carol Gattis, Kendall Curlee and UA students

Left: Schoolchildren serenade the UA students; Right: Joe Hiltz and Stephanie Philpot work on a biosecurity checklist for poultry farmers.

Full disclosure, right up front: Nampula, Mozambique, is not a glamour destination. In the summer program Community Development in Mozambique, the day starts at 6 a.m. and stretches into long, dusty hours working on a poultry farm in the African bush. Students are sustained on a steady diet of chicken, rice and French fries, heavily dosed with *piri piri* sauce and washed down with Coke and instant coffee – a far cry from the flavor-blasted, calorie-packed variety they're accustomed to back home. Internet access and plumbing at the Bamboo Hotel can be sketchy. Nightlife? Think lukewarm shower, dinner, a group debrief by the pool and lights out by 9 p.m.

So why is this program full and turning away half the students willing to pay serious money to fly 9,000 miles to East Africa?

"It feels good to work and do hard labor, sometimes frustrating labor, for something you believe is making a difference," said Caleb Petersen, an honors finance junior.

The thrill of helping real people in real situations and learning on the fly are also major selling points for the program.

Take the water quality team: For three weeks they partnered with farm employee/translator Miguel Goncalez Jr. to demonstrate to local farmers that adding a capful of chlorine bleach to a 55-gallon drum of water made the water safe to drink. The concept of bacteria was completely new to the farmers, so the students used a handheld ATP test to put numbers on the invisible threat. The first time they dipped the monitor into untreated, then treated water, witnessed by a quiet group of Mozambican chicken farmers, the bacteria count dropped from 2049 to 20, rendering the water safe to drink.

"We showed that science works!" civil engineering junior Claire Stewart recalled. "I've never experienced something in school where I wanted to cry." The farmers asked a lot of questions, with several taking detailed notes.

"The risks are so much greater," said Annie Makuch, a biological engineering senior who led the team. "If you don't answer correctly, that changes their life. But the rewards are crazy."

Now in its fifth year, the Community Development in Mozambique summer program unites teams of poultry science, business and engineering students who tackle problems that range from assessing chick quality to corralling data from 33 different chicken farmers. Two faculty members working in international development lead the program: Lanier Nalley, associate professor of agricultural economics and agribusiness, and Amy Farmer, the director of the Office of Global Engagement and the Margaret Gerig & R.S. Martin Jr. Chair in Business. Both professors provide thoughtful support and worry over every upset stomach and bug bite—and both leave room for the students to figure things out on their own.

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Clockwise from left: Emily English, Anna Tovar and Austin Berry deliver hard-boiled eggs to schoolchildren; Claire Stewart adds a capful of bleach to the bucket while others look on; Andrew Cunningham, executive director, New Horizons

"This program teaches students the power of the individual to make a difference. I think they come back changed forever, with the responsibility that they need to do the same."

–Amy Farmer, Director, Office of Global Engagement

"For me, it's all about the kids learning to solve problems by themselves," Nalley said. "They might fall on their face 100 times, but I think it's how they get back up that defines who they are."

"This program teaches students the power of the individual to make a difference," Amy Farmer said. "I think they come back changed forever, with the responsibility that they need to do the same."

New Horizons: Cultivating Hope, and a New Business Model

This hands-on service learning experience builds on the vision of a very dedicated team of people, both international and local, who have built New Horizons poultry farm from scratch. Andrew Cunningham, an owner and self-described "coach," moved here from his native Zimbabwe 10 years ago.

"When we arrived, there were no roads, no water, no electricity. We lived in tents for the first six months," he recalled. Blessed with a keen eye for talent, he began building a team to help him raise chickens and run the farm. Out of the first 70 hired, only a couple had held a job before. "Where some people see need, we see opportunity," Cunningham said. "One of the things that happens here is that you become a part of making things happen."

To date New Horizons has created several hundred jobs, has purchased grain, corn and soya from more than 40,000 individual farmers, and generated affordable protein in an area where there is chronic malnutrition. Outgrowers, the local farmers who raise chicks for New Horizons, have on average increased their annual income tenfold – in cycles lasting just seven to eight weeks.

The team has expanded the enterprise to include an egg business and schools that provide education and training opportunities for workers and their families. In the process, they have flip-flopped the usual business model. "For a lot of organizations, people are a means to an end – to make a profit," Cunningham said. "We want to see people grow and develop, and feel a productive and profitable environment is one of the best places for this to happen. It's a subtle difference, but it has a lot of potential."

Cunningham's message is an inspiring one, delivered the first day that the students arrive at New Horizons. The students would do anything to help the team – and the poultry team had the satisfaction of getting immediate results.


Photo: Paige Acklie


Photo: Jess Garross

Clockwise from left: Paige Acklie cradles a chick; Lunch at New Horizons; A local woman prepares cassava flour, a starchy staple in the Mozambican diet; Stephanie Philpot confers with Lanier Nalley, one of the professors who leads the program.

Team Chicken

The poultry team launched its efforts with two all-night vigils in the hatchery, checking hourly to record every egg hatched. One thousand songs from poultry science major Joe Hiltz' middle school playlist kept them up, and by the end of the week, the farm saw a 4 percent increase in hatchability – money in the bank for a chicken farmer. "We're not sure why – it's possible that people working in the hatchery were pulling the egg trays too soon, at midnight instead of 7 a.m.," said Dustan Clark, an extension poultry health veterinarian who came to Mozambique to share his expertise. "We're also looking at hot and cold areas in the hatchery, since the data suggests that ventilation could be a problem."

Clark and the poultry students also spent hours monitoring biosecurity at outgrowers' farms. With their thatched roofs and adobe block construction, Mozambican chicken houses look different from Northwest Arkansas' metal sheds. But the principles that govern chicken health and profitability remain the same: a secure entrance, a foot dip to clean bacteria from shoes, and a fence to keep predators away from the chicks, to start.

"Our goal is to make a biosecurity checklist for the outgrowers that is thorough but as short and simple as possible," said Stephanie Philpot, an honors poultry science senior. When asked about the biggest biosecurity challenge faced by the farmers, poultry science major Matthew Coale responded: "They don't know what bacteria is, and it's difficult to grasp the concept that something they can't see does hurt them. The coolest thing about it all is there's only room for improvement. In the U.S. you visit farms, and it's not as clear how you can contribute."

Surveying Hunger

Helping New Horizons prosper is a big plus – but the team also wants to measure its own business' impact on the community, which will help in fine tuning and focusing the services provided.

Armed with scales, measuring tape, and packages of rice, beans and other staples, the Micro Nutrient Survey team set out to collect current data on one of Mozambique's toughest issues: hunger. Currently 38 percent of the population is undernourished, and 44 percent of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition. Cassava – a starchy, tasteless tuber with low protein content – is the main staple here. Fresh vegetables, fruit and animal proteins are in short supply.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Clockwise from left: Craig Cobb (left) and Katelyn Romero measure the arm circumference of a child; School children line up for lunch: a hard-boiled egg; Business students conducted market research for Eggs for Africa, an outgrowth of New Horizons.

The UA team surveyed the diet of 60 families in the area, comparing the health of outgrowers to those not employed by New Horizons. The process was a lengthy one. Every family member, from father to tiniest child, stepped onto a scale; the team also measured height and middle upper arm circumference. Then the children spread out a grass mat on the dusty ground, and the interview began: detailed questions on items in eight food groups, designed to ascertain exactly what each family ate, how much, and how often.

"We're still analyzing the data, but with food, for example, employees of New Horizons might eat beef once a month. Non-employees might eat beef once a year," said Maggie Jo Hansen, an honors alumna and graduate student in agricultural and extension education who led the team. The survey concluded with some general questions about nutrition that underlined the need for follow up. "More than half of the New Horizons employees couldn't define nutrition," Hansen said. "And when asked to identify the three healthiest foods and why, they'd say maize, rice and bananas because it 'makes me full.'"

The next steps are clear: an educational campaign on nutrition, and input from soil and environmental science students on how to improve the sandy soil so families can grow their own fruits and vegetables. "It's so doable – our students can do it, and that's what's so inspiring about this," Hansen said.

Taking Care of Business

Business students also made an impact, though their work tended towards the more workaday study of spreadsheets and market research. Austin Berry, an honors junior pursuing majors in economics, marketing and supply chain management, led the team aiding Eggs for Africa, an outgrowth of New Horizons that focuses on bringing fresh eggs to local markets.

"We were tasked with doing basic market research to figure out who the competitors were, and to see if the various venders were interested in becoming agents for EFA," Berry said. The team proposed the idea of wholesaling the eggs, a concept that would up sales volume considerably. "This is actually my first true work experience in marketing, and I found that I absolutely love it," Berry said. "Now I know for a fact this is something I want to do in the future."

Berry's team also helped Eggs for Africa director John Wayne Kennedy prepare hardboiled eggs for children at a school near the poultry farm. They doled out one egg per child, per day – for many, the only meal until dinnertime. The UA students measured the kids' height, weight and upper arm circumference to establish a baseline on the nutritional impact of the egg program. After every last bit of egg was eaten, pick-up games of soccer and tag erased language barriers and readied all of the students for an afternoon of study and work.

From left: Maggie Jo Hansen (center), translator Ibrahim Hamido and Paige Acklie conduct a dietary survey; At the Bamboo Hotel, Beth Huff (left) and Stephanie Philpot check in with family and friends.

Struggles ... and a Starting Place

The data team faced the toughest task of all. While other students rode off into the bush to connect with local farmers, they camped out under a shade tree at New Horizons and struggled to convert hieroglyphic spreadsheets from five departments into a single Access database.

The scope of the project proved too large for the three weeks they were in Mozambique, so the students narrowed their focus to the outgrowers. Now, the team can track how many chicks and how much feed each grower receives and how many pounds of meat are ultimately sent to market. It's a good starting place. "People's lives are being changed by this business," Caleb Petersen said. "So if we can make New Horizons perform more efficiently, that's not just money in their pocket, that's food on people's tables, more people being hired from villages – and that's a better future for people."

Making a Difference – In the Students

Yes, this program provides a crash course in on-your-feet problem solving and solid experience for the resume. The opportunity to make a difference is prized by all of the students. But the greatest takeaway may be the lessons they learn from the Mozambicans they travel so far to help. Those hot dusty days, hard work and so-so food? Craig Cobb, an honors dietetics junior, is up for more. "I wish I could live here for a little bit ... They've taught me a ton about life, about family, and working hard, and loving what you have, and not always wanting something else."

The experience more than 9,000 miles from campus will also impact these students once they return to the classroom. "It will change the way I study, for sure," Caleb Petersen said. "It's shown me so much what I don't know, and what I hope to be in the future. There's so much of an impact that I can make in this world, just the resources I have and that I have access to – as a student, that motivates me."

"They've taught me a ton about life, about family, and working hard, and loving what you have, and not always wanting something else."

–Craig Cobb, honors dietetics

View the video documentary on the Mozambique trip:
honorscollege.uark.edu/videos

"The flowers, not quite in full bloom, entice viewers to come closer to view the center, while the gold spikes gently remind them not to get too close."

Zoë Eagan

Zoë Eagan is an honors ceramics and art history major from San Antonio, Texas. Her work is inspired by formal gardens, decorative ceramics and her own family history. The lush pink and green foliage seduce the viewer: "The flowers, not quite in full bloom, entice viewers to come closer to view the center, while the gold spikes gently remind them not to get too close," Eagan noted.

Got art and want to share it?

Send your creative work (poems, paintings, sketches, short stories, videos ...) to honorscollege.uark.edu/portfolio. Your work, like Eagan's ceramic sculpture and Adel Vaughn's cover sketch, could be featured in *A+ Magazine* or selected for display in Gearhart Hall.

Ailon Haileyesus at work in the cell culture room.

Photo: Matt Reynolds

Studying Brain Trauma, and Developing New Biomedical Tools

A bleak hospital ward in Mozambique sparked Ailon Haileyesus' determination to improve health care in developing countries. She visited the hospital while in high school, one of several service trips that she has made to sites around the world. "People were lying in beds with no sheets, and there was no electricity, no air conditioning, and it was really hot," she recalled. "It was mind blowing to see that!"

Haileyesus' parents grew up in Ethiopia, where health care is similarly compromised, and she still has many relatives there, so the issue strikes close to home: "Everyone deserves equal rights in health care," she said firmly.

Ailon Haileyesus plans a career developing low-cost biomedical devices that can deliver test results within minutes in demanding environments. She's launching that effort by conducting research on the effects of traumatic brain injury in a very high-tech lab at the UA's Engineering Research Center. Together with mentor Kartik Balachandran, an assistant professor of biomedical engineering, and graduate student Nasya Sturdivant, Haileyesus is studying astrocytes, the primary neuron-supporting cells in nervous tissue.

The team is focusing on TRPV4, a membrane protein channel that converts mechanical force into electrical stimuli. These electrical signals in turn open up channels that release calcium into brain tissue, which can disrupt the brain and lead to cell death. "The more we know about the calcium signaling, the more research can be done to reduce the amount of calcium released into cells," Haileyesus said.

Haileyesus starts her work in the cell culture room, growing astrocytes in an incubator set at body temperature. She periodically washes the sample to remove waste and feeds it with a special solution. Then, she transfers the cells to a membrane cradled in plastic tubing and stretches the sample to mimic brain trauma. Immediately after stretching the sample, she measures calcium signaling using a fluorescence instrument. Haileyesus also measures protein expression, using the Western Blot technique, to determine how many of the TRVP4 channels are present before and after force is applied.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

STUDYING BRAIN TRAUMA, AND DEVELOPING NEW BIOMEDICAL TOOLS

Haileyesus with faculty mentor Kartik Balachandran.

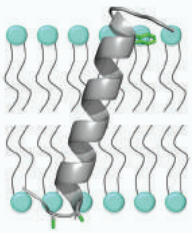
"These are difficult experiments to do, because the cells need to be kept alive," Kartik Balachandran said. "You have to be quick, because the cells get unhappy quickly, and start to die." Balachandran's team is already using this system to test acetazolamide (AZA), a drug currently used to treat altitude sickness and brain injury. "More than anything, this system is an effective platform to test drugs that treat brain injury," he said.

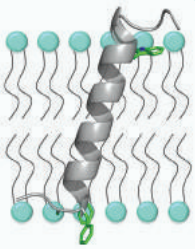
Haileyesus did get a hands-on opportunity to develop a low-cost diagnostic device last summer, thanks to a Harvard-Amgen scholarship. She worked in the lab of George Whitesides, a chemistry professor at Harvard who leads in the development of paper-based diagnostic tools. Her project focused on printing wax channels on color-sensitive paper, so that a single biological sample could be used to test for the presence of several important markers, such as proteins, glucose and liver enzymes. "You can use the simplest materials, like paper, to create a useful screening tool," Haileyesus said. "It confirms my desire to create medical devices that could be used in developing countries."

Haileyesus' research was supported by a State Undergraduate Research Fellowship. An Honors College study abroad grant supported her participation in the Global Community Development in Vietnam program in January.

The Molecular Machinery of Biomembranes

Photographs by Matt Reynolds



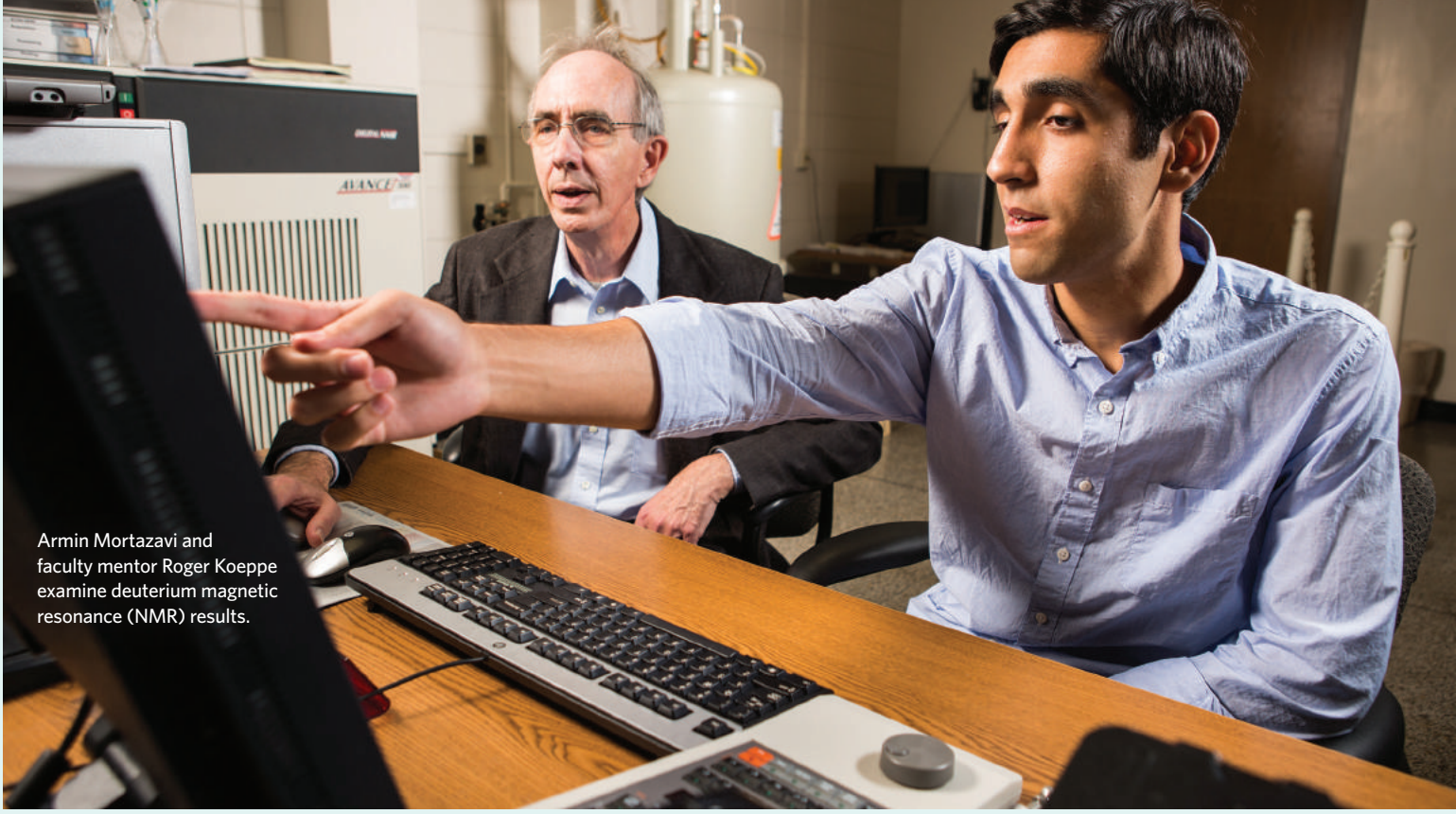


Models for membrane-spanning peptide helices displaying fraying of the helix ends. Figure courtesy Armin Mortazavi.

Armin Mortazavi carefully removes the glass cuvette from a protective vial and gingerly places it in the magnetic resonance probe. He's right to take care, because that tiny glass receptacle contains two solid weeks of work. Inside the cuvette, he's packed 40 microthin glass plates that cradle 1.33 micro moles of identical alpha-helical peptide molecules, which Mortazavi synthesized in an adjacent chemistry lab. Two out of the 23 amino acids on each peptide are tagged with deuterium (or "heavy hydrogen") labels that will aid in magnetic resonance imaging.

Now, Mortazavi inserts the probe into the magnetic resonance spectrometer, flips the switch, and waits 24-48 hours for results – the jagged peaks and valleys of nuclear magnetic resonance spectra, which he will analyze to understand how the peptides tilt and move within lipid bilayers that simulate cell membranes.

"It's like doing an MRI on a molecule," said Roger Koeppe, Distinguished Professor of chemistry and biochemistry, and Mortazavi's faculty mentor.



Armin Mortazavi and faculty mentor Roger Koeppe examine deuterium magnetic resonance (NMR) results.

This painstaking work contributes to knowledge of the molecular properties of membrane proteins, which play a critical role in cell signaling, both for diseased states and basic biological functions. The Human Genome Project found that about 30 percent of proteins encoded by the human genome are membrane proteins; since this discovery, up to 50 percent of modern drugs have targeted membrane proteins. By providing fundamental understanding, this research could lead to ideas for treating neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's.

"It could be useful in understanding how proteins aggregate, which is characteristic of some neurodegenerative diseases – but that's long down the line at this point," Armin Mortazavi said. "Our main purpose is to understand how they interact in the body."

Mortazavi is an honors chemistry and physics double major, a Bodenhamer Fellow, and the recipient of the Goldwater Scholarship, a national award that recognizes mathematics, science and engineering students planning careers in scientific research. His research builds on earlier work by honors student Kelsey Sparks, who studied the role aromatic rings play in the movement of the same family of peptides. Sparks was the first author on a paper published in 2014 in *Biochemistry*, a leading journal in the field.

Previous work in Koeppe's lab found that a similar peptide helix might be unwound or "frayed" at the end. Mortazavi has confirmed that there are multiple peptides that fray at the end, limiting their extent of motion and helping to anchor them within a lipid membrane.

"It's like doing an MRI on a molecule."

–Roger Koeppe, Distinguished Professor of chemistry and biochemistry

"What Armin has found suggests that there may be more importance to the loops within membrane signaling proteins, which have largely been ignored up to now," Koeppe said. "His work may point us in a new direction."

Mortazavi presented his work at the 2015 meeting of the Biophysical Society and will present his latest results at the February 2016 meeting in Los Angeles. An article listing him as first author recently appeared in *ChemBioChem*.

Koeppe has mentored more than 25 honors students, with six of them publishing their research.

"To this point, I've not had a student publish before they graduate," he said. "Armin started research early, in his freshman year. He's well organized, dedicated, hardworking, and he's produced a lot of results."

Medical school is next on the agenda; Mortazavi is applying to both MD and MD/Ph.D. programs. He's considering surgery and oncology, but hopes to carve out time for the lab: "I really enjoy research, and want to continue with it and practice medicine, too."

Mortazavi's work has been supported by a State Undergraduate Research Fellowship and Honors College research and travel grants.

Stalking the Saw-Whet Owl

Photo: Mitchell Pruitt

Pruitt poses with the first saw-whet owl that he captured with faculty mentor Kim Smith.

Photo: Mitchell Pruitt

They strung up their mist nets, began blasting an owl call, and waited in the November chill at the Ozark Natural Science Center north of Huntsville. Around 9:30 p.m., honors student Mitchell Pruitt, his faculty mentor Kim Smith, and another birder crept down to check the nets.

"There was an owl calling in the woods, and it was pure, just the one," Pruitt recalled. Then, a two-note alarm call came, and another owl flew directly over Kim Smith's head.

"I booked it back to the building, and waited until the next net check — and there it was, a saw-whet owl," Pruitt said. They bagged it, used a fluorescent light and wing and weight measurements to determine age and sex, then banded and released the tiny owl, which posed for a photo op on a nearby branch before flying off into the night. The next week, they did it again, catching another adult female saw-whet.

Catching and banding the elusive northern saw-whet owl is a big deal in the birding world. Prior to Pruitt and Smith's two successful captures in 2014, only 13 had been sighted in Arkansas since 1959 – and many of those were road kills. Northern saw-whet owls traditionally have been known to migrate along the east coast, but Project Owlnet, which started as a science fair project in Massachusetts, has led to captures in unexpected places – South Carolina, Alabama, Missouri, and now Arkansas.

Kim Smith, a distinguished professor of biological sciences, was eager to get in on the project. "I've been waiting since 2009," he said. "When Mitchell was in high school, I recruited him to come here, and he's been the perfect student to do this as his honors project."

Pruitt, a senior in the crop, soil and environmental sciences program from Jonesboro, has been following birds since age 13, when he took an ornithology class at camp. In 2011 he completed a "Big Year," a yearlong competition to identify the most birds in a given geographic area. "I was 16 for most of that year, and I'd just started driving, so my parents helped. We logged 15,000 miles across Arkansas," Pruitt recalled. He is ranked 4th in the state for documenting 311 avian species that year, and hopes to complete a national Big Year at some point.

For now, he's set his sights on the saw-whet owl. This past fall Pruitt and Smith got an earlier start in mid-October, and caught and banded 22 saw-whets, with five captured on one especially busy night.

"This project is adding another piece to the puzzle," Kim Smith said. "Establishing that this is a bird that occurs in Arkansas is important."

The Arkansas banding operation is the southernmost one in the United States, and it is remarkable that the number caught in fall of 2015 surpassed the total number ever recorded in the state. Pruitt plans to pursue graduate studies this fall in ecology and ornithology at the U of A with Smith, and continue this project for at least another two years. Saw-whet "invasions" from Canada happen about every four years, the last being in fall of 2012. "We are really looking forward to fall of 2016," Pruitt said, "because we might catch even more birds this year."

Pruitt's research project has been funded by the Arkansas Audubon Society Trust.

WOO PIG PROFITS

BY ANTHONY BLAKE

Photo: John Baltz

Game day: 70,000 fans file into Razorback stadium and thousands more call the Hogs in local restaurants, homes and watering holes. To the tune of $10 billion a year, the college sports industry has become a big business.

With substantial coaching salaries and hundred-million dollar renovations to stadiums highlighted in the media, athletic programs are often seen by the public as "cash cows" and thought of not only as self-sustaining but as revenue-generating machines for universities.

According to honors accounting major Andrew Pisechko, this is far from reality for most institutions. "Before I started this research, I would have said probably all the major programs were profitable," he said. "When you look at a football team that's attracting thousands of fans consistently with jersey sales and concessions, you think 'that's a lot of money.'" Instead he found that the University of Arkansas is one of only 20 top-tier, Football Bowl Association schools, just over 15 percent, that make a profit. "What a lot of people who aren't as tied to athletics don't realize is that most sports are non-revenue generating. So track and field, swimming, gymnastics, etc. only really represent expenses on the balance sheet."

For his honors thesis, Pisechko worked with Clayton Hamilton, senior associate athletic director for business operations and CFO for the University of Arkansas' athletic department, to discover what has led to the Razorbacks' success. While there has been research over median profits for NCAA programs, Pisechko's work marks the first time that a single university's finances have been tracked this way over an extended period of time. Using economic formulas for data covering the 2004 to 2013 seasons, he dug up key figures that explain the program's profits: The Razorbacks have been able to control increases in facilities and athletic aid spending while generating growth in contributions and royalties. It doesn't hurt that the Razorbacks have less competition than other markets, either. "In the state of Arkansas, we don't have any professional teams so this is as big as it gets," Pisechko said. As a result, most of the state's three million people are eager to don Razorback red on game days.

The University of Arkansas makes over three and a half million per year off its athletic program, but universities that operate at a loss post an average deficit of $11.6 million, according to Pisechko. Who foots the bill at unprofitable schools? "At some level, directly or indirectly, it's getting passed on to the students or the professors," he said. Because he found that most programs rely on institutional support to make up the difference, Pisechko, also a standout 800-meter runner for the track and field team, believes the future of college sports depends on this kind of research: "At a certain point, academic communities are going to question this and say that, at the end of the day, 'we are still an academic institution'. If the trend of growth in expenses outpacing growth in revenues continues, it will be tough for an athletic department to explain and justify." Pisechko is an Honors College Fellow currently pursuing a masters of accountancy through the University of Arkansas' accelerated five-year program.

Clockwise from left: Josh Anderson (right) and the other student health coaches meet weekly at Washington Regional Medical Center to discuss their patients with Dr. Mark Thomas (left); Anderson takes careful notes to ensure accurate follow up; Anderson meets with his patient, Robert W.

Care Partners a Win-Win Relationship

BY ANTHONY BLAKE

Photographs by Stephen Ironside, B.S., biology and anthropology, *cum laude*, '10

"The dog gets fatter every time I come over here," Josh Anderson joked after he entered the small, dark apartment. The shepherd-mix mutt wasn't the only thing he had an eye on. The honors pre-med senior has a packed schedule but carves out time every week for an easy chat with this patient, Robert W., who agreed to share his experience in this article. They discussed squirrel hunting and the IRS but also touched on the patient's two-pot-a-day coffee habit and the dizzy spells he's been having lately.

For the last year and a half, Anderson has been making these home visits as part of the Care Partners program, a new partnership between the University of Arkansas and Washington Regional Medical Center in Fayetteville. He's learning how to connect, listen and process a one-on-one relationship into understandings that lead to positive patient outcomes. His patient has benefited, as well: he's seen a sharp decline in hospital visits, and logging his cigarettes has encouraged him to cut down from smoking two packs a day.

The student health coaches get some expert help in navigating those home visits. "We've been having bowel conversations," another health coach reported at Washington Regional Medical Center during one of their weekly meetings. He got a high-five from Dr. Mark Thomas, physician and "head coach" for the Care Partners program, who knows that sometimes uncomfortable conversations are necessary for discoveries. Under Thomas' guidance, the students convene each week to turn observations from visits into a plan of action.

A coach introduced the group to a 77-year-old with hallucinations and chronic pain who can't read. She has a laundry list of serious medications to treat these symptoms but can't read their instructions. Instead she tries to keep to her regimen by memorizing the colors of each pill. "I can't imagine that this is even possible. This little white pill next month might be a green pill, depending on who the supplier and manufacturer is," said Dr. Thomas. The student health coaches came up with good ideas to create a more reliable system for her, including labeling each bottle with a photo of the body part it affects. Given the complexity of her situation, Dr. Thomas also recommended an in-person follow up with her medical provider.

This town and gown partnership launched in 2013 and has been a win-win for the students and hospital. "We have students without any practical touch experience. They need volunteer hours and experience before they make the commitment to a career in medicine," said Fran Hagstrom, assistant dean of health professions. On the other end, because patients with low health literacy are more likely to use the emergency room for primary care, "the top 5 percent of patients use 65 percent of the resources," according to Dr. Thomas. The Care Partners program has proven useful for cutting down on these costly repeat E.R. visits. For example, from the first quarter to fourth quarter of 2014, E.R. visits among a group of patients that included those enrolled in the program decreased from 8 percent to 2 percent, with none leading to hospital readmissions. "This is a small population, but encouraging," Dr. Thomas noted, adding that they are resisting the impulse to grow the successful program. "We don't want to lose the small group dynamics and mentorship we can do with individual students at our current size. Our aim is just as much to change future health care providers as it is to help current patients."

"Being able to go out and experience the human side of medicine has been totally invaluable, and it honestly makes me more excited about the future. It's something that will motivate me through my years in medical school and gives me something to look forward to."

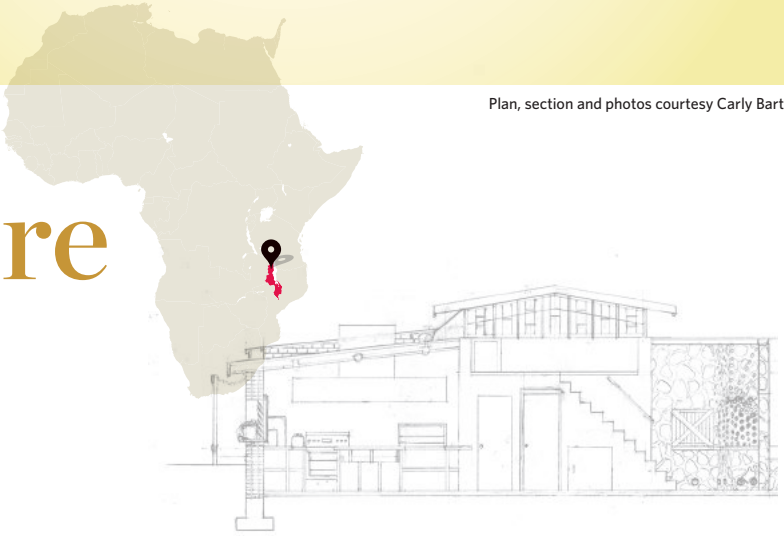
–Josh Anderson, honors biological sciences

In the three-course health coaches sequence, students begin by listening to lectures, viewing case studies and shadowing before getting hands-on experience with a patient. Anderson is a graduate of the pilot class of health coaches but has found the program valuable enough to continue on a volunteer basis. "Being able to go out and experience the human side of medicine has been totally invaluable, and it honestly makes me more excited about the future. It's something that will motivate me through my years in medical school and gives me something to look forward to," he said.

For now, his focus is on his patient's dizzy spells. "If I stand up fast, I'm gone," the patient said. Anderson didn't use the medical term "atrial fibrillation" but casually slipped in advice from Dr. Thomas: "It helps if you sit up for ten seconds before you stand." With the tip passed on, Anderson made a note to follow up in his blue binder and headed out, until next week.

Plan, section and photos courtesy Carly Bartow.

Permaculture Planning in Malawi



Clockwise from top left: Villagers gather to help Carly Bartow measure the site in Chambe; Bartow's master plan for a community center and garden in Chambe; section of kitchen for Pa Nthunzi, a sustainability center in Blantyre; Carly Bartow; Mount Mulanje.

After a dozen or so meetings with community members, Carly Bartow had big plans for the 180-foot by 150-foot parcel of land nestled at the foot of Mount Mulanje. The proposed new community center serving this rural area of Malawi would include a kitchen, indoor and outdoor dining areas, workshops and a bookstore; and a garden with a chicken coop, duck house, fish pond and rain water tanks for irrigation. She'd assembled a small army of villagers to help her take the first, crucial step in design – measuring every inch of the site.

The need for the simplest of tools brought proceedings to a halt.

"I spent all day looking for a tape measure, and when I found one, it broke," she recalled. "I just needed a 15-meter tape measure, you know? We were working with a big site. In America, you'd just go to the hardware store." Unexpected delays are a normal scenario in Africa, she emphasized. "Things go wrong – we had to do a lot of on-the-spot thinking."

Bartow experienced the challenges and the joys of service learning in Malawi thanks to a partnership between the Honors College, the Office of Study Abroad and Peacework. She is an architectural studies and philosophy major, with minors in sustainability and urban planning. Bartow had never gone beyond U.S. borders or traveled alone before, but "I'd always felt called to go to Africa," she said.

She began in Blantyre, working for five weeks with businessman Chris Walker to

design a kitchen and public restrooms for Pa Nthunzi, a sustainability center with demonstration gardens. Permaculture, a type of sustainable agricultural system modeled on natural ecosystems, informed every aspect of Bartow's design. For example, composting toilets would be linked to a biogas tank that would fuel gas and lighting in the kitchen. "Poop never gets in the kitchen," Bartow assured with a grin. In the absence of air conditioning, she researched prevailing winds and the path of the sun, then designed a passive air-cooling tower and clerestory windows to ensure good air circulation.

Although there were a lot of design constraints, Bartow took care to include grace notes, such as a curved wall made of cement, stone, rebar, and empty wine bottles, to let in light. "The rebar is necessary for security, but it's actually kind of beautiful, too," she said.

For the remaining five weeks Bartow gathered input and sketched a master plan for a community center and garden in Chambe, a small village that affords stunning views of tea fields and Mount Mulanje. In this rural area, she relied on translators but quickly connected with locals through community meetings, mountain climbing treks and a wedding.

Once Bartow scored that tape measure, community members, from elders to the youngest school children, helped her measure and then measure again. "Nothing's 90 degrees, and we didn't want to get rid of anything that was important, so we had to work around the mango, lemon and fig trees, for example," Bartow said. "In the end, we had to measure everything five times from every direction."

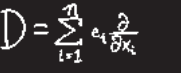
Now back on campus, Bartow continues to perfect her designs, and work is ongoing to source materials and funds. She hopes to see the projects built, but the most powerful takeaway may be the personal growth she experienced from tackling tough projects so far from home. "I gained so much in confidence about who I am, and learned that it's okay to just be me," she said. "I grew into myself."

Carly Bartow's work in Malawi was supported by the new Honors College service learning grant.

Pop Quiz

Match Honors Student Majors to the Real-World Jobs They Landed, Post-Degree

ANSWERS ON PAGE 26



Mathematics

Chemistry and Music

Classical Studies

Chemical Engineering

Spanish, Economics

Pharmaceutical Inventor, Entrepreneur

Psychiatrist

Mobile app design & development

Non-profit to aid homeless people

Non-profit that evaluates social programs around the world

Sketches by Emily Chase, B.F.A. *summa cum laude*, '13.

Photo: Parmita Dalal

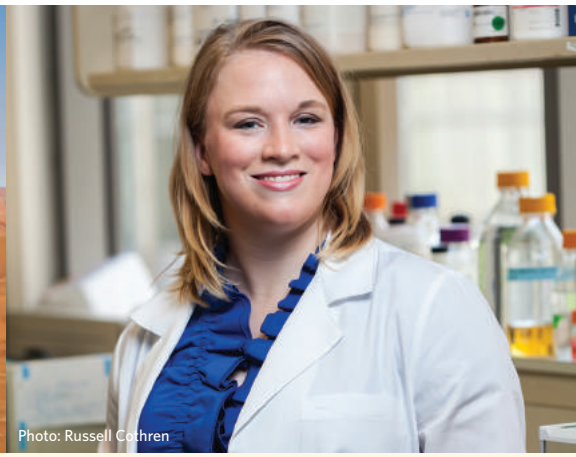
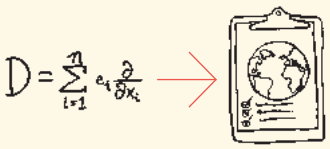


Photo: Russell Cothren

Pop Quiz Answers

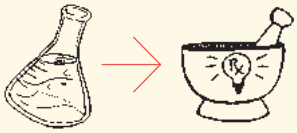
While it's true that legions of honors engineering alumni have landed top jobs at plants, finance majors have launched careers in banks and brokerages, and English majors have gone on to teach Chaucer or deconstruct Derida, other honors graduates have chosen a less direct path to their dream job.



Stuart Shirrell

Stuart Shirrell (B.S. in mathematics, *cum laude*, '11) is tackling some of the developing world's toughest problems as manager for IDinsight, a non-profit firm that evaluates social programs. He has helped to evaluate a rural sanitation program in Cambodia, a preschool nutrition program in India, and a malaria program in Uganda, among others.

"My Honors College education equipped me with a wide set of very useful skills: I use my mathematics knowledge to learn new statistical concepts with ease; I use my economics background to analyze data and draw inferences about the programs I'm evaluating; I learned to program in Stata while doing research with econ professors; and I learned how to be independent and resilient by studying abroad and traveling widely."



Ellen Brune

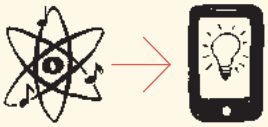
Ellen Brune (B.S. Ch.E., '09, Ph.D., Ch.E, '13) is the owner and chief scientific officer for Boston Mountain Biotech LLC, a Fayetteville-based startup firm that offers a cheaper, faster way to manufacture protein-based pharmaceuticals. Ellen began working as an undergraduate with engineering professor Bob Beitle on the research that led to the new technology.

Boston Mountain Biotech recently got a vote of confidence from the National Science Foundation, which awarded a nearly $225,000 grant to the company.

"The Honors College encouraged me that if I put my mind to something, I really can be successful."


Photo: Quinn McHenry

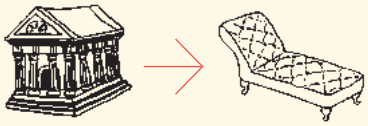

Photo: Shelby Gill



Drew Cogbill

After graduating from the UA, **Drew Cogbill (B.A. in music and chemistry, *summa cum laude*, '06, M.F.A. in design and technology from Parsons the New School for Design, '09)** spent a year coordinating volunteer opportunities for UA students and professors with Peacework in Belize. He worked on a tourism website for the town he lived in and that led him to apply to Parsons and eventually, to his current gig as an executive producer at Small Planet Digital, a New York City agency that specializes in mobile app design and development.

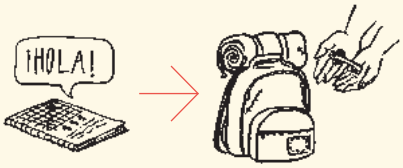
"The academic and leadership opportunities afforded me by the Honors College enabled me to explore widely, pursuing a career I never could have imagined. The Honors College encouraged me to find the novel and unexplored and to dig deeply into those areas that sparked my interest."



Rachel Fiori

Rachel Fiori (B.A. in classical studies, *magna cum laude*, '04, M.D., U.A.M.S., '08) is practicing psychiatry in Fort Smith and serves on the Honors College Capital Campaign Committee.

"At the U of A I learned how to balance my interests with my goal, which for me was medical school. I sought the same balance in choosing psychiatry as a medical specialty and, now, as a physician and mom to a 6-month-old, I strive to find balance in my career pursuits and family time."



Blake Strode

Blake Strode (B.A. in Spanish and B.S.B.A. in economics, *magna cum laude*, '09, J.D. Harvard, '15) is working for Arch City Defenders, a nonprofit that strives to prevent and end homelessness among the indigent and working poor in St. Louis, his hometown.

"The tools and skills that I gained as a student in the Honors College continue to be useful every day as I start my career as a lawyer. The U of A, and the Honors College in particular, also fostered a sense of public service and community engagement that are at the core of our efforts at Arch City Defenders. We're working to ensure equal access to justice and to protect the civil rights of poor and marginalized people."

Photo: Matt Reynolds

Angel Investors

There wasn't an Honors College – yet – at the University of Arkansas when alumni Rick and Valerie Angel earned their degrees here. But they were the first to step forward and name a space in the Honors College's new home, because these proud parents of an Honors College fellow want to "pay it forward."

The Rick and Valerie Angel Entry Hall welcomes visitors to the Honors College wing in G. David Gearhart Hall, formerly known as Ozark Hall, and the Angel's $25,000 gift will support Honors College students.

The Angels visited a host of top schools, including Vanderbilt, Duke and Wake Forest universities, when considering college options for their sons. Their eldest son Adam, now an honors pre-med junior with a minor in classical studies, ultimately chose the University of Arkansas, telling his parents that "you raised me to be a Razorback." The Honors College Fellowship sealed the deal.

"We've seen what the fellowship has provided, and what it's doing for Adam, and we wanted to give back," Rick Angel said.

"It has been an incredible experience for my child," Valerie Angel added. "We want to support this for the next generation of students coming through. And we hope our gift will resonate with other parents whose children have benefitted from all that the Honors College offers."

The Angels' son Zachary, a senior at Episcopal Collegiate School in Little Rock, has already set his sights on becoming an Honors College student at the U of A. "Zac told us he wasn't interested in going anywhere else," Valerie Angel said.

Rick Angel (B.S. in zoology, '83; J.D., UALR, '87), born and raised in Searcy, Arkansas, was the first in his family to attend college. He now practices law in Little Rock, focusing on the health care field. Valerie Angel (B.S.B.A. in accounting, '88) grew up on a farm in Weiner, Arkansas, and followed her parents, both alumni, to study at the U of A. She is now a CPA and works for the Middleton Holding Co.

Both of the Angels are serving on the Honors College Campaign Committee. "This university, through the Honors College, recruits the best and brightest students in Arkansas," Rick Angel said. "We'd like to support these five-star kids, and keep them here in Arkansas, and we think this is the platform to do it."

In addition to giving their time and resources to the Honors College, the Angels have supported the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the Sam M. Walton College of Business, University Libraries, the Parents Fund, the Arkansas Alumni Association and the Razorback Foundation.

Big Picture Giving

If you're one of the roughly 1,800 alumni who have graduated with honors since 2002, chances are you don't have a lot of money (yet). You're in grad school, or getting established in your career, and maybe starting a family... in short, you've got other priorities. We get that!

But if you find that your life has been enriched by the courses, faculty mentors, and friends you encountered here in the Honors College, we hope you'll keep us in mind when you're thinking long-term – for example, if you're drawing up a will after that first child arrives.

For more information on planned giving, naming opportunities and other ways you can "pay it forward" to support current Honors College students, please contact Joe Euculano at jeuculan@uark.edu.

Thanks! Your gift makes a difference.

Student Award Winners

Thanks to ongoing support and encouragement from faculty and staff and a considerable amount of smarts and talent among our Honors College students, the University of Arkansas continues to rack up an impressive list of nationally competitive award winners. This year, Honors College juniors won the "triple crown" of these awards, with one being named a Truman Scholar, one named a Goldwater Scholar, and two named Udall Scholars. Congratulations to the following honors students and all who mentor them:

Truman Scholar
This $30,000 scholarship recognizes students who aspire to careers in government and public service; only 58 students were selected nationwide.

+ **Grant Addison** – History, Political Science
Mentor – Jay P. Greene

Goldwater Scholar
This $7,500 scholarship recognizes outstanding mathematics, science and engineering students who are planning careers in scientific research.

+ **Armin Mortazavi** – Chemistry, Physics
Mentor – Roger Koeppe

Udall Scholars
This scholarship of up to $5,000 recognizes students who have demonstrated a commitment to pursuing careers related to the environment, tribal public policy or health care.

+ **Elise Clote** – Agribusiness Management, Marketing
Mentor – Emerald Hames
+ **Michael Reinisch** – Chemical Engineering
Mentor – Scott Osborn

J. William Fulbright Scholarships
This program awards grants for research and teaching assistantships in foreign countries. Students receive approximately $25,000 for the year.

+ **Erick Axxe** – German, Sociology
Mentor – Juan Bustamante
+ **Grace Gandy** – Elementary Education
Mentor – Grace Kerr
+ **Zoe Gastineau** – History, Asian Studies
Mentor – Elizabeth Markham

National Science Foundation Graduate Fellows
The NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, which awards $32,000 per year and can be renewed for up to three years, is one of the nation's most highly competitive awards. This year's Honors College recipients include the following:

+ **Gage Greening** – Biomedical Engineering
Mentor – Timothy Muldoon
+ **Sean Salazar** – Civil Engineering
Mentor – Richard Coffman
+ **Rebecca Simpson** – Chemistry, Mathematics
Mentor – T.K.S. Kumar
+ **Mariel Young** – Anthropology, Spanish
Mentor – Peter Ungar

ALUMNI UPDATES

↑ **Emily Baker** (B.Arch., *summa cum laude*, '05; M.Arch., Cranbrook Academy of Art, '12) has returned stateside to teach architecture at Tulane University after three years of teaching at the American University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. [•] *Emily Baker mentored two students who produced* Keswa, *a public artwork crafted from folded steel that toured the United Arab Emirates in spring 2015.*

Adam Barito (B.S.M.E, B.S. physics, *summa cum laude*, '10; Ph.D., materials science and engineering, University of Michigan, '15) has a postdoctoral research assistantship at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Adam writes: "The organic solar cells I'm working on are very light and flexible, making them promising in situations where portable energy is important. This could include installation in developing countries (off the grid) or in military scenarios where power sources must be moved constantly. They're also promising for integration into building infrastructures such as windows or shingles."

Sarah Mesko Breckbill (B.M., flute and vocal performance, *summa cum laude*, '08; M.M. vocal performance, Rice University, '10), made her debut at the Glimmerglass festival in upstate New York, then sang her first *Carmen* at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. She is touring through spring 2016 with the Rising Stars of the Met Concert Series, which takes four soloists and a pianist throughout the U.S. to give concerts and workshops for young singers. [•] *Sarah Mesko Breckbill sang the role of Carmen at the Kennedy Center. Photo by Scott Suchman.* →

Erica Parkhill Cason (B.S.E., kinesiology with minor in Spanish, *summa cum laude*, '08; D.P.T., *magna cum laude*, University of Central Arkansas, '11) is working as an outpatient physical therapist for Conway Regional, specializing in manual spine rehabilitation. She and her husband Andy have also launched a business called The Go Store that is stocked with supplies to support a project called Operation Christmas Child. This program sends out gifts in shoe boxes to children in war-torn and poverty-stricken countries around the world.

↑ **Matt Chesnut** (B.S.B.A., finance, with minors in accounting and political science, *magna cum laude*, '09; M.B.A., Harvard Business School, '14) works in corporate development for the Chickasaw Nation. [∘] *Matt Chesnut and wife Chesna celebrate his graduation from Harvard Business School.*

Photo: Robert Black

↑ **Nathanael Franks** (B.S., physics, *magna cum laude*, '12; M.B.A., Walton College, '14) is pursuing a second master's degree from Walton College, in accounting. He was named the 2014-15 Southeastern Conference H. Boyd McWhorter Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year in recognition of his standout efforts in the classroom. Franks is Arkansas' first male winner of the prestigious award, and will receive a $15,000 post-graduate scholarship. He was also a 2014-15 finalist for the Rhodes Scholarship. [∘] *Franks was a stand out in multiple events, and ranks fourth in school history in the heptathlon and decathlon.*

Zach Cooley (B.Arch, *summa cum laude*, '06; M.Arch, Princeton, '09) is licensed in New York and has left Diller Scofidio to work for Brandon Haw Architecture, started by a former partner with London architect Norman Foster. The firm focuses primarily on high-end residential, commercial and institutional work with projects under construction in Miami and in Bogota and Cartagena, Colombia.

Tara Coverdale (B.S.B.A., marketing and management, *cum laude*, '02; M.B.A., '03) is research and insights manager for oOh! Media, an Australia-based advertising company specializing in outdoor advertising solutions.

After completing her B.A. in anthropology, minor in history, *magna cum laude*, '03, **Emily Feuerherm** lived and studied in Switzerland and attended the Handels und Dolmetscherschule for two years, learning German. She completed her Ph.D. in linguistics at the University of California Davis in 2013 and is now an assistant professor of linguistics at the University of Michigan, Flint. Emily writes: "I still remember so many of my H2P classes: the professors were amazing, my cohort was supportive and interesting, and the field trip to Memphis was unforgettable!"

↑ **Laura Jakosky** (B.S.B.A, marketing, *magna cum laude, '05*) is pursuing an M.B.A. at Ross School of Business, University of Michigan. Last year she was part of a team of students who traveled to Sri Lanka to develop a hospitality-based business model for an orphanage that would generate revenue and provide vocational training for the orphans. [∘] *Laura Jakosky (third from left, with bunny ears) takes a break with children from the Grace Care Center, an orphanage in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.*

Emily Fitzgerald (B.A., anthropology, *magna cum laude*, '12) and **Andrea Riemenschneider** (B.A., anthropology, *cum laude*, '13) were coauthors on a paper, "Mechanical food properties and dental topography differentiate three populations of Lemur catta in southwest Madagascar" published in the *Journal of Human Evolution*, the premier journal in the field. The paper is based on their undergraduate honors research with Peter Ungar, Distinguished Professor and chair of the anthropology department. Their findings confirmed different patterns of wear in different settings for existing species, and may shed light on the evolutionary fossil record.

David Fryauf (B.S.E.E., *magna cum laude*, '11) is pursuing a Ph.D. in electrical engineering at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He writes: "My research is in thin films and nano materials for a variety of applications, such as the development of more robust corrosion barriers for earth-based astronomical telescopes and flexible thin film thermoelectric devices for waste heat recovery."

J.P. Gavin (B.S.B.A., accounting, with minor in economics, *cum laude*; M.Acc., '12) is now a CPA, working in assurance services with Ernst & Young.

Adam Glasier (B.A., political science, economics and Spanish, *summa cum laude*, '10; M.B.A., Harvard Business School, '14) worked at two startup companies while pursuing his M.B.A., then worked at Walmart in the finance and strategy group of the U.S. business division. Currently he is director of finance at NOWDiagnostics Inc., a Springdale, Ark.-based company that specializes in innovative diagnostic testing.

Donna Graham (B.S., human environmental sciences, with minor in marketing, '08; M.S., human environmental sciences,'11) is director of employer relations for the Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences.

Jennifer Herrera (B.S.Ch.E., *cum laude*, '11) has worked her way up from a 2010 internship with global pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme Corp. to her new role as a sourcing specialist, where she is responsible for managing the Clinical Outcome Assessment Licensing & Translation and Specialty Labs categories that support global clinical studies.

William Hogan (B.A., political science and European studies, with minors in Spanish and Latin American studies, *cum laude*, '11; M.A., geography, University of South Carolina, '13) is pursuing an M.A.T. in secondary education and teaching at Northwestern State University of Louisiana, while teaching and chairing the social studies department at Simsboro High School in Simsboro, La.

Emily Hollingsworth (B.S., biological sciences, *cum laude*, '10) completed a doctor of chiropractic at Cleveland Chiropractic College in '14 and is now launching her own chiropractic and acupuncture practice in Hot Springs, Ark.

Tai Huynh (B.S.Ch.E., *summa cum laude*, '13) works for Riceland Food Corp. Tai writes: "My Honors College research experience opened up many doors. As a matter of fact, at a conference where I presented part of my research, I was offered my current job."

Dawn Koltes (B.S., animal science, *cum laude*, '06) completed a master's degree in animal breeding and genetics and a doctoral degree in genetics, both at Iowa State University. She is currently a post-doctoral researcher at Iowa State.

Julia Lyon (B.S. in biological sciences, with minors in math and Spanish, *summa cum laude*, '12) is pursuing a medical degree at University of Arkansas Medical School, and plans to specialize in pediatrics.

↑ **Alice McMillan** (B.S.B.A. *cum laude*, '12) was selected to be the first director of strategic initiatives at the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which was named U.S. Hispanic Chamber of the Year in September 2015. She leads research, fundraising, public policy and international relations efforts, and the Austin Hispanic Leadership Program and alumni program. Alice also serves on the board of the Walton College of Business and is pursuing an online master's degree in public administration from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, where she is a UNC Fellow. [∘] *Alice McMillan with Texas' First Lady Cecilia Abbott.*

Samantha Meadors (B.S., mathematics, *magna cum laude*, '10; M.Div., Iliff School of Theology, '13) is an ordained deacon in the United Methodist church and serves as director at the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas State University.

Rohit Mittal (B.S.B.A., finance with minors in accounting and Spanish, *magna cum laude*, '13), is Equity Capital Markets Senior Analyst at Stephens, Inc. in Atlanta, Ga.

After completing dual degrees in biology and Spanish, *summa cum laude*, in 2012, **Marie Morris** is pursuing a medical degree at Washington University School of Medicine.

Last fall **Laura Neumann** (B.A., cultural anthropology and international relations, minor in gender studies, *summa cum laude*, '13, began a two-year master's program in cultural studies at Sabanci University in Istanbul, Turkey. Laura writes: "I was awarded a full scholarship for the duration of the program. For my thesis, I will research the preparation efforts for a large earthquake that is predicted to hit Istanbul at some point in the coming decades."

Tyler Nix (B.A., English lit., with minor in psychology, *cum laude*, '07) is pursuing a master of science in library science at the University of Kentucky. He plans to work in medical and/or digital information services.

← **Blake Puryear** (B.S., computer science, *cum laude*, '12) is cofounder of Phactual LLC, an online content publishing company, and is the technology and project management lead for Hayseed Ventures, a venture capital production studio. In addition to monetary investment, Hayseed Ventures works directly with companies to improve operations. [∘] *Blake Puryear was recently selected as one of* Northwest Arkansas Business Journal's *Fast 15.*

← **Hunter Riley** (B.A. in economics and B.A. in international relations and political science, with minor in Spanish, *summa cum laude*, '07; M.P.S., Clinton School of Public Service, '09) is a field director for Peacework. He plans international development projects in coordination with in-country community allies and U.S.-based institutions. He is also cofounder of Schlep, a moving company. [•] *Hunter Riley takes a selfie while relaxing at Tikal National Park, Guatemala.*

↑ **Gale Raymond** (B.S., biology, *magna cum laude*, '08; D.V.M., Louisiana State University, '12) is a veterinarian at Banfield Pet Hospital in Aurora, Calif. Gale writes: "One of the most rewarding parts of being a veterinarian is when I am able to save a pet's life. Many diseases have a grave prognosis if not treated but when they are diagnosed and treated the prognosis for survival is good. With preventive care, such as regular blood work, I am able to make a diagnosis and start treatment early in a pet with a chronic disease so that the pet has a better quality of life and a longer life. I also love cases that are challenging to diagnose and cases that allow me to learn something new." [•] *Gale Raymond with Eva, one of her patients.*

Katherine Rutledge (B.S.B.E. with minor in German, *cum laude*, '11) is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemical engineering at the University of South Carolina.

After completing her B.A. degree in economics, *cum laude*, in 2015, **Cicely Shannon** spent the summer interning in Michelle Obama's office, where she helped the first lady respond to more than 2,000 letters each month. As a participant in the Truman Scholarship Summer Institute, she also attended special sessions and lectures with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Vice President Joe Biden and President Obama. She began a new job as an assistant bank examiner for the Federal Reserve Bank in St. Louis last fall. [•] *Cicely Shannon with her mother Beverly in the White House entrance hall.* ↓

Spencer Shinabery (B.S. in chemistry, *summa cum laude*, '12) is pursuing a Ph.D in synthetic organic chemistry at MIT. He writes: "I'm a member of the MIT-Novartis Center for Continuous Manufacturing. Our goal is to develop technologies to allow the continuous manufacture of pharmaceuticals under a single roof. Most drugs made using batch chemistry have to be shipped from site to site with each site specializing in a single reaction. Ideally, continuous flow allows raw chemicals to go in one end, and ready-for-consumption pills come out the other." Spencer's work on this project helped him win a National Defense Science and Engineering Fellowship from the Department of Defense.

Katherine Shreves (B.A., international relations, French and European Studies, with minor in economics, *summa cum laude*, '10) is pursuing a master's degree in arts and cultural management at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland. As part of her studies, Katherine is working as the sponsorship and development intern at the Edinburgh International Festival, and writes: "I hope to remain abroad in pursuit of a career in fundraising/development for a similar organization."

↑ **Sarah Tarvin** (B.A., German and European studies, '06; M.A., German, '08; M.A.T., University of Washington, '12) teaches and coordinates a team of English teachers at the Sur College of Applied Sciences in the Sultanate of Oman. Sarah writes: "I take every possible opportunity to travel and, in addition to thoroughly exploring Oman, I have spent time this year in the UAE, Sri Lanka, Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia, Serbia, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Canada and the Cayman Islands. I also still work as a freelance travel writer and photographer, as well as a travel advisor, something which I hope someday gets the bulk of my attention." [∘] *Sarah Tarvin at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Muscat, Oman.*

Cheryl Silveri (B.S., biology with a minor in general business, *cum laude*, '09) is pursuing an M.B.A. degree at MIT's Sloan School of Management, with plans to "continue growing my startups."

Kelly Sullivan (B.S.I.E., with minor in mathematics, *summa cum laude*, '06; Ph.D., industrial and systems engineering, University of Florida, '12), an assistant professor of industrial engineering at the U of A, has been selected for the Glover-Klingman Prize for his paper "Exact algorithms for solving a Euclidean maximum flow network interdiction problem," published in the journal *Networks*. Kelly's research centers on the design of critical systems whose disruption poses a threat to homeland security. He teaches courses in network optimization, operations research, and probability and statistics.

Jesse Sutmiller (B.A., mathematics, *magna cum laude*, '12) is a mathematics instructor at Lavaca High School in Lavaca, Ark.

Calli Verkamp (B.S. in architecture, departmental honors, '13) is a project architect with Wheeler Kearns Architects in Chicago. She is currently working on a new facility for the Chicago Children's Theatre and a new high school in southwest Chicago, as well as single-family residences. She writes: "Chicago is a great place to be an architect and this firm is one of the best!"

Zachary Wagner (B.A., history, *summa cum laude*, '07) earned his J.D. at the University of Colorado and is now employed with the O'Connell Law Firm, P.C. in Denver, Colo.

Grant West (B.A., geography, with minor in history, *cum laude*, '08; M.A., geography, University of Arkansas, '11) taught human and physical geography at Northwest Arkansas Community College and Missouri Southern State University before returning to the U of A as a program associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

Mariel Young (B.A., anthropology and Spanish, with minor in psychology, *magna cum laude*, '13; M.Phil in human evolutionary studies, Cambridge University, '14) was coauthor of an article published in the *American Journal of Primatology*. The article, which grew from her undergraduate research with Peter Ungar, analyzed the effects of habitat variation on capuchin and howler monkeys. Young is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in human evolutionary biology at Harvard, where she studies the evolutionary and developmental genetics of pelvis formation.

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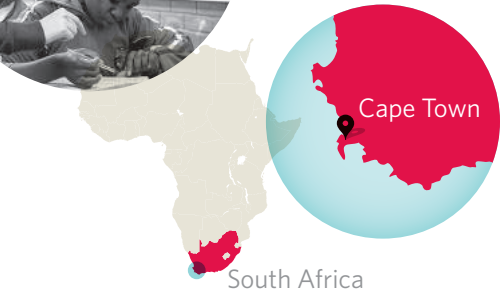
↑ **Callie Williams** (B.S., architectural studies, with minor in medieval and Renaissance studies, *magna cum laude,* '08; M. arch. history, University of Virginia, '10) is a National Register Historian, working with the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program in the Department of Arkansas Heritage. Currently she is working on National Register nominations for various properties across the state, and conducting an inventory of CCC-built structures and sites in Arkansas State Parks. Callie writes: "I did a lot of work recently on an early 20th century Arkansas architect, Frank Carmean, who practiced mostly in North Little Rock. He is responsible for arguably the earliest modernist house in Arkansas, if not the south. This house, the Matthews House at 406 Goshen Avenue in North Little Rock, was built in 1928."
[•] *This 1929 newspaper clipping features the Matthews House, one of the earliest modern houses in Arkansas. Courtesy National Register files, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.*

Tough Questions: A Student Reflects on Service Learning

BY CHELSEA HODGE, B.M., MUSIC PERFORMANCE AND GERMAN, *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*, '12

Photographs by Will Gisler, Carol Gattis, Chelsea Hodge and Kendall Curlee

Chelsea Hodge (left) with Rebecca Francis in Cape Town, South Africa.



Last summer alumna Chelsea Hodge, our assistant director of recruitment and a doctoral academy fellow in history, spent two months in Cape Town, South Africa, where she and honors accounting major Rebecca Francis worked with high school students in Philippi township. Only 18 percent of students in this impoverished area go on to study at a university or technical school. Chelsea and Rebecca worked with the South African Education and Environment Project to design and administer a survey that will identify the gaps that block the path to higher education, and how the SAEP can help fill those gaps. Here, Chelsea reflects on the experience.

Photo: Chelsea Hodge

"Is America nice?"

The question caught me off guard. I was standing in a classroom full of rickety desks in Philippi, a township outside of Cape Town, South Africa. Eighteen 12th grade students looked at me expectantly. I had just finished explaining the purpose of my research to them and was about to hand out the survey I wanted them to fill out. I asked if they had any questions for me.

"Is America nice?"

When she asked it, all of the students laughed. I laughed too. Such a simple question, but I had a hard time answering it. "Yes, but it isn't perfect." "Yes, but we have problems too." "Yes, but so is South Africa."

Yes, but.

Was that really the right answer? Out the windows of the classroom I could see the fence that circled the school compound. In South Africa, all the schools are required to have fences, to make the grounds as safe as possible. Beyond the fence I could see the corrugated tin shacks, the stray dogs, the electricity lines that made a patchwork across the sky.

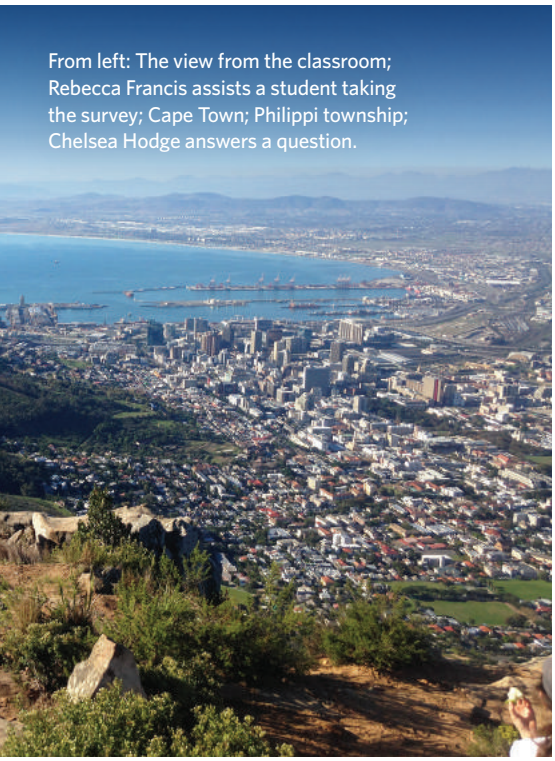
Yes, but. We also have poverty. We also deal with entrenched racism. We also deal with homelessness.

But the students laughed at the question, and so did I. Because they already knew the answer, and so did I. When I stood in that classroom, there was not a single standard by which America wasn't "nice."

But I desperately wanted them to know that nice doesn't mean better. I wanted them to know that I was inspired by their joy, impressed by their dedication to these after-school programs, moved by their determination to achieve higher education.

When you're engaged in service learning or community development, there are moments where you become suddenly and painfully aware of just how rich you are. You become self-conscious of your status. You feel as though you are acting condescending and superior, which makes you feel guilty. And all that awareness, self-consciousness, and guilt hit me full force when she asked me that question.

Am I rich by American standards? Definitely not (I am a graduate student after all). But even in Cape Town, I was about to get in a car and drive to the "nice" part of town, where I would go home to an apartment that had solid walls and a roof, not tin sheets and a tarp. And in a few weeks I would get on a plane, using a ticket that cost more than one of those student's families makes in a year. And I would return to my American life that was warm and comfortable.



From left: The view from the classroom; Rebecca Francis assists a student taking the survey; Cape Town; Philippi township; Chelsea Hodge answers a question.

Was I just a "voluntourist?" Was my presence there just fulfilling some need I had to be useful, or was it fulfilling someone else's need? Did I somehow feel entitled to come do this because of my education, my race, my nationality?

I had been asking myself those questions before I ever left American soil. And I went home the night the girl asked me about America, and I asked myself those questions again. I looked hard at why I was in Africa. I went over the work I had already done, and I considered where it was going. Every time I went into a school in that township, I asked myself those questions. I never quite got over that painful awareness that I was an outsider doing research on an environment I could never really understand.

But I needed to feel that discomfort. I needed to never stop asking those tough questions. Because here's the thing: my work there was valuable. I was working through a fantastic organization that really helped these students, and my research was going to help them improve their programs. By engaging with my discomfort and asking myself the tough questions, I kept the students at the center of my work and not myself.

Service learning is much more than signing up for a fun volunteer trip. It's a lot of work before you go, it's a lot of work while you're there, and it's a lot of work afterwards. It's not about easy solutions; it's about long-term development. So ask yourself: Will I be doing a project that the beneficiaries could easily do themselves? What is the impact of my project, both good and bad? Does my project engage beneficiaries in the planning and implementation?

"Service learning isn't about a warm fuzzy feeling. It's about knowing that your work will have a lasting impact on a community."

And then ask yourself the even harder questions: Why should I be the one to go? What skills am I providing that are unique? What is my motivation? Do I feel I know the solutions already, or am I prepared to research, listen, and learn in the process of serving?

Don't be afraid to ask yourself the tough questions. Because if you don't, someone else will ask them for you. And the question might not be as easy as "Is America nice?"

In the end, service learning isn't about a warm fuzzy feeling. It's about knowing that your work will have a lasting impact on a community. Yes it's hard work. But it's meaningful work. It teaches you skills you will never acquire anywhere else. You meet incredible, dynamic people, and you experience the world in ways you just can't as a tourist or an international student. It's also a lot of fun.

"Is America nice?" Yes, but so is the rest of the world. Go see it!

Save the Date

February 11

An Evening with Carlotta Walls LaNier: A Mighty Long Way

5:00 p.m., Verizon Ballroom, Arkansas Union

Photo courtesy National Park Service, nps.gov/chsc

March 10

Honors College Invites: *The Onion's* Scott Dikkers

5:30 p.m. reception, Honors Student Lounge, Gearhart Hall
6:30 p.m. lecture, Hillside Auditorium 202

April 8

Mellon Manuscript Symposium

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Second Floor Study Hall, Gearhart Hall

Image courtesy Medieval Folios Collection (MC1997), Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries

April 12

Honors College House Concert: Schola Cantorum

6:00 p.m., Honors Student Lounge, Gearhart Hall

Photo: Christopher Barnett

For more information visit **honorscollege.uark.edu/engage**

Clockwise from top left: Adel Vaughn practices her Turkish with some local students while sketching in Ephesus; working at the cafe; Vaughn and Courtney Tarver at the cafe; sketches of the staff of Moses, tiles, the Qur'an and the Sulleymaniye Mosque.

Sketching Connections

Last summer Adel Vaughn and 12 other landscape architecture students from the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design explored two very different 21st-century cities: Istanbul, Turkey and Copenhagen, Denmark. For Adel, a sketchbook assignment became much more than an exercise in observation – it helped her to connect and bond with locals.

Since much of studying landscape architecture in the built environment is done through observation and documentation of form, structure, physical elements and overall character of a space, the sketchbook acted as our medium for this documentation. The sketchbook went everywhere with me – every day, for hundreds of miles. I would normally start the drawings on-site and get as far as I could, then finish it out later while sitting at a cafe or restaurant.

Drawing at some of the cafes led to unique and unforgettable interactions with the locals, because they would give us insight on the symbols we were drawing, tell us a story about the sites we were drawing, or ask about the sketchbooks. There was one cafe in particular that my friend and I went to many times – we became friends with the guys who worked there, and they would even give us free çay (Turkish tea) and dessert. It was actually a tearful goodbye on our last night in Istanbul because we had grown close to the people there in such a short amount of time. We ended up doing some paintings for them to keep so that we all could remember those times.

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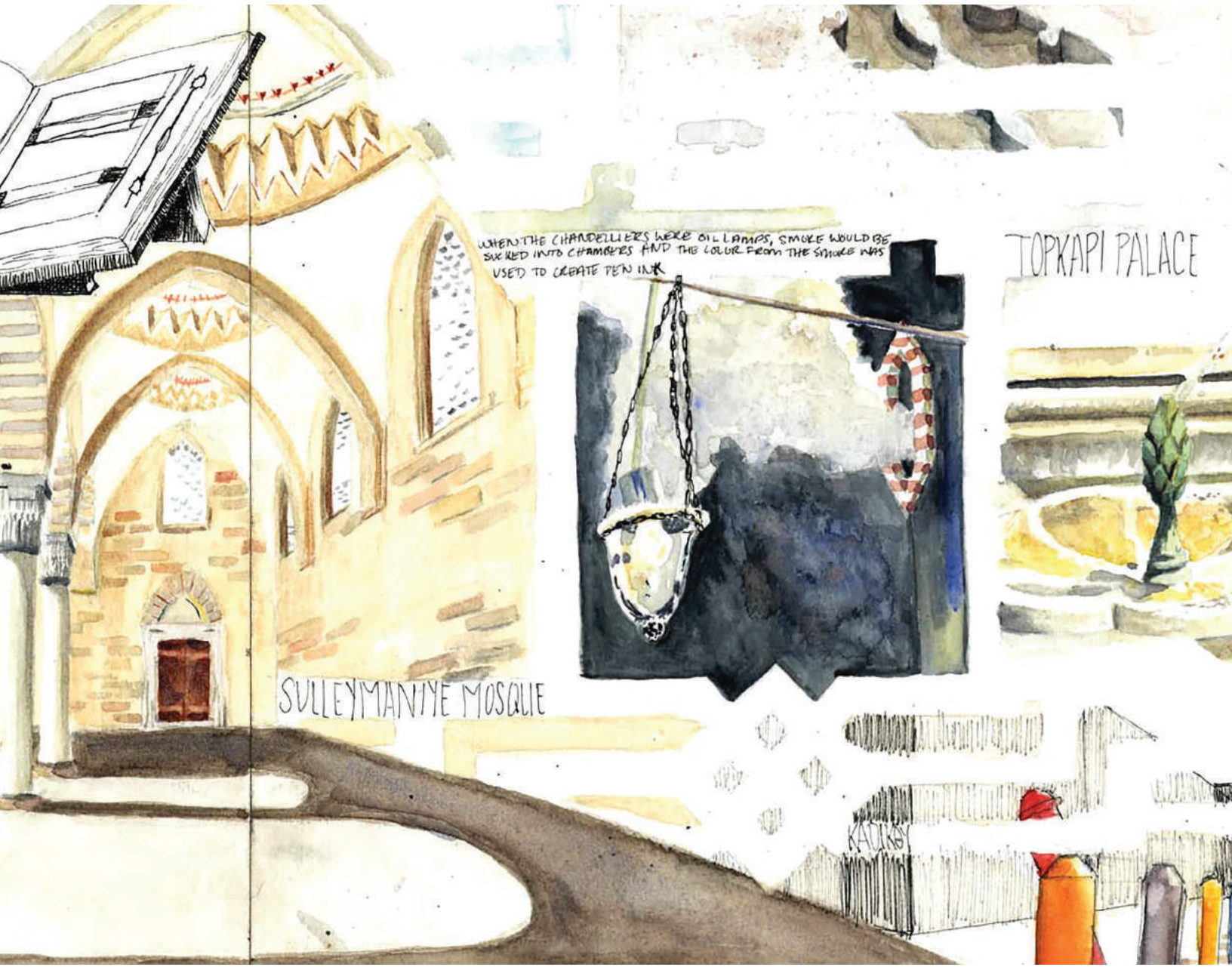

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