Criminal Justice junior Kayla McCarns received one monumental award at the 10th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium: the Assam Scholarship for Outstanding Honors Research. She began her research by assisting her mentor, doctoral student Ashley Fansher, enter data for her dissertation, a study that explores how online dating leads to offline victimization.

"I was introduced to a lot of surveys which led to my interest in comparing self-control, self-esteem, and substance use," McCarns said. "After my mentor's data on the phenomena was received, I constructed tables that presented comparisons of the variables."

McCarns's research supported findings about self-control, self-esteem, sexual orientation, and substance use.

"A significant difference in self-control by sex was present, and females have higher levels of self-control, which is supported by the literature, The General Theory of Crime. No significant differences in levels of self-esteem across sex was present. However, there were different levels of self-esteem in sexual orientation, with heterosexuals reporting higher levels. Students with lower self-control drink greater quantities of alcohol and more frequently. Students with lower self-control reported greater frequency in drug use. Individuals with higher self-esteem drank more alcohol and binge drink more frequently," McCarns said.

She asserts such findings of higher self-esteem individuals drinking more as a way to celebrate or relax with friends in the college culture, which encourages excessive alcohol consumption, rather than drinking as a negative coping mechanism.

Regarding demographics, McCarns's results supported that male students drink more per typical setting and binge drink more frequently. Heterosexual students drink more alcohol per setting and binge drink more frequently. Sexual minority students are more likely to have used illicit drugs in the last three months. There were no significant findings across race.

"It was interesting to see which groups of individuals drank or used substances more, and which groups had

Although this was McCarns' second time presenting oral media at the Undergraduate Research Symposium, she admitted to still being nervous.

"Practicing and running through my presentation a couple dozen times was very helpful in preparing myself for presenting," said McCarns. "Academically my research was good practice for giving presentations to groups of people that may or may not be in my field. It helps me get rid of my dislike of talking in front of people. My research data helped curb my overall curiosity of substance use," McCarns said.

During the closing awards ceremony, McCarns was the first announced winner of the prestigious scholarship awards, winning the Assam Scholarship reserved for honors college students.

"I was completely blindsided and had no idea I would win," shared McCarns. "I loved the level of support from my family, friends, and fellow Honors Ambassadors- they were just as excited that I won as I was, or more."

McCarns will conduct further research regarding crimes surrounding retail stores, and plans to turn her research into an honors thesis.

"I would like to thank my mom, dad, coffee, and friends for supporting me and listening to me practice late at night, as well as my advisor for guiding me through the execution of the research. I would also like to extend a thank you to Dr. Nath for his financial assistance of the Assam Scholarship I was awarded," said McCarns.
Senior biomedical science major Christiana Fakhri and junior biology major Lauren Rudie attended the American Association of Physical Anthropologists conference in New Orleans, Louisiana to present their forensic biological research on post mortem interval estimation using the internal microbiome to study bacterial succession on human cadavers.

"We are both medically oriented, so being able to work hands on with human cadavers was great since students usually have to wait until Medical School to do so," Rudie said. "Our research truly broadened our biological foundation," Fakhri added.

Both students gained this opportunity through their research positions in Dr. Patrick Lewis and Dr. Aaron Lynne’s labs. Other involved students consist of Stephanie Baker, Sarah Bivens, and Laura Spoonire.

Fakhri and Rudie praised the conference for its large number of researchers, incorporating subdivisions of other biology disciplines. "We were in forensics, but there was also archaeology, ontogeny, and primates," said Rudie. "It was international, and we talked to other universities who are conducting associated forensic anthropological studies," added Fakhri.

Both claimed their research was a preliminary study, and that they both have plans to return to their previous projects in animal model morphology: Fakhri in primate and Rudie in reptile.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: **William Bailey**  
by Lane Fortenberry

Sam Houston State University won the first American History and Western Civilization Challenge Bowl, presented by the American Heritage Education Foundation, on January 28 at the Doubletree-Hilton Hotel, Greenway Plaza in Houston.

The first of annual competitions planned, the Challenge Bowl is modeled after the early radio and television college quiz shows of the 1950s and ’70s.

The SHSU team of Scarlet Bolivar-Castillo, Chase Miller and William Bailey, all history majors, earned 644 points to better the 596 points earned by Houston Baptist University.

Sam Houston gained its spot in the finals by besting Texas Southern University in the semifinals on January 27.

“Our team did great,” said Brian Domitrovic, associate professor, history department chair and coach of the SHSU team. “The first part of each match featured each member of the team giving a prepared three-minute speech on American founding principles.”

The teams then participated in two 30-minute question sessions with topics ranging from Aristotle to Rome to U.S. politics.

“It got to a point when we were answering about two-thirds of the trivia questions correctly—a very high rate, which assured us the victory,” Domitrovic said.

Bailey was considered the MVP of the match, according to Jack Kamrath, competition organizer.

“William, along with his teammates Scarlet and Chase, would like to start a Challenge/Quix Bowl team at SHSU and have competitions here and on the road,” Domitrovic said. “We will be invited back next year as the inaugural champions of the Houston event, which will expand from eight to sixteen teams regionally, and then nationally the year after that.

**Cultural Outing to Cirque Du Soleil**

Forty honors students were bending over backwards to attend Cirque Du Soleil’s performance tour of Kurios Cabinet of Curiosities, which debuted in 2014, and has been included in the Grand Chapiteau tour ever since.

Students travelled to Sam Houston Race Park in northwest Houston, Texas for the steampunk-themed acrobatic performance involving trapeze acts, juggling, handbalancing acts, as well as acro and aerial. After the performance, students gathered for dinner at BJ’s Restaurant and Brewhouse.

"I’d never been to a Cirque Du Soleil performance before, so I was really blown away by the acts and their talent. The cultural outing was a great experience, and I had so much fun that I would love to go again", junior Brittany Minor shared.

“We were really happy we won—and won by getting so many questions right.”

SHSU’s team members each received a $2,000 scholarship award.

Judges for the event were Stephen Balch, director of the Institute for the Study of Western Civilization at Texas Tech University, and Robert Koons, professor of philosophy and co-founder of the Western Civilization and American Institutions program at the University of Texas at Austin. John Tyler, program coordinator of legal studies and associate professor of government at HBU, was moderator.
Kuwahara named NCAA Elite 90 Winner

Before the NCAA Bowling championships started, the Sam Houston State Bearkats were already bringing home some hardware.

Senior honors college student, Janine Kuwahara, was awarded the most prestigious award of the night, winning the NCAA Elite 90 Award for the second consecutive season. The Elite 90 Award is given to the top student athlete at the championship event.

“Janine has been a model student athlete for four years,” said head coach Brad Hagen. “She was part of our national championship team as a freshman and has been an integral part of our success. And to couple that with what she has been able to accomplish in the classroom has been truly amazing.”

It capped a night that the Kats also took home a pair of All-American honors with Heather Penatzer taking third-team honors and Kuwahara being named honorable mention.

This season Penatzer has earned three all-tournament honors. She is second on the team in scoring with an average of 198.44 over 39 games this season. Penatzer was also a third-team selection last season.

“One of the big things for Heather this year was she stayed healthy,” Hagen said. “She has been so consistent all year and has made plenty of big shots for us all year long.”

Kuwahara is the top scorer on the team, just edging Penatzer with a 198.60 average. She has also been named to three all-tournament teams this season. She becomes the first three-time All-American selection in school history.

Seminar Abroad: Italy

This May, honors students will spend 12 days venturing throughout Venice, Florence, and Rome, Italy as a journey to the food and culture of the country.

The travellers will taste the unique flavor of Italy through the lens of tradition by attending restaurants and wineries, and devour culinary lessons that one can only learn from being behind the stove. Students will also discover the meaning of the Slow Food Movement that continues to influence the global community.

Students and faculty attending the study abroad trip will tour with Education First Tours, who’s mission statement is as follows: "Today's global community challenges each of us to engage people and cultures we might not fully understand. The more we travel, the more likely we are to connect local issues to global ones—and the more culturally aware we become in an increasingly interdependent world."
University Fights Back Against False Accusations aimed at Difficult Dialogues Seminar

by Ethan Horn

University officials fought off a false news story from “Fox and Friends” and The Daily Caller accusing the Sam Houston State Honors College of “paying” students to take a Black Lives Matter courses.

The Daily Caller originally published the article that the Honors College was paying students to take classes on the Black Lives Matter movement and on White Privilege. Fox News grabbed the story and ran it on their morning show “Fox and Friends”. The report is false.

“We were very dismayed that a news source would print a story so negative without ever checking the facts. No one was contacted, no one was consulted, no one was asked if that was true,” said Dr. Richard Eglsaer, University Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The facts are that the Elliott T. Bowers Honors College on campus provides a scholarship to every student who is a member. Those members are required take six honors courses and two honors seminars. There are almost a dozen seminars offered every semester to members of the honors college, so most members of the college will never have a course on the movement, and no students are forced to take the class to maintain their scholarships.

“One of the things that concerned me, from a personal standpoint, was that the course they were complaining about most was a course on difficult dialogues,” Dr. Eglsaer. “If our goal is to prepare people to become effective citizens, what’s more important than being able to talk about difficult subjects in an educated fashion?”

The course on the Black Lives Matter movement is one of the Honors College’s “Difficult Dialogues”, classes designed to approach topics charged with political, racial and social energy. “Our goal is not to ‘brainwash them’, or tell them that this is way to think,” Dr. Eglsaer said.

An official statement from the Provost office at Sam Houston was published after the release of The Daily Caller article stating that students are not required to take the course or receive money for doing so.

“No honor students are paid to take any classes or given scholarships to attend a particular course. The seminars mentioned in the media are optional and not required,” said the released statement. “Seven to eight seminar classes covering a number of topics are offered each semester and are limited to 25 students. Students can choose the seminar they wish to attend and must complete two over the course of their degree in order to graduate with honors.”

This course is offered to Sam students due to the importance of teaching students to listen to opposing points of views and acknowledge their view on the topic.

“Our job is to say that if this society is to be effective, we have to be able to listen to someone whose point of view we completely disagree with, but we acknowledge their right to have that point of view.” Dr. Eglsaer said. “We also realize that it’s very important for us, without having to change our minds, to realize why that other person is taking that point of view. Those are life skills which we think are essential to being an effective citizen in our society.”

Fox News pulled the report from The Daily Caller, a website whose validity is called into question regularly by organizations dedicated to maintaining integrity in journalism. The author of the article was Rob Shimshock. He is a recent college graduate who has contributed to other right wing news agencies such as Brietbart, and has interned at the Charles Koch institute. Shimshock has previously worked at satirical papers, and contributed falsified news stories throughout the presidential campaign.

“One of the things we want people to realize, when we say we want them to be media literate, is to find out who benefits from the information who gets out there,” said Dr. Alex Avila, a visiting professor in Sam Houston’s Mass Communications Department. “Too many people don’t look beyond the headlines and the ledes.”

The Daily Caller isn’t the only site that has been using a combination of social media and rapid news cycles to create sensationalist news for economic gain.

“There are people whose job it is to make fake news,” Dr. Avila said. “There are economic reasons that drive this, clicks that translate to dollars.”

For anyone engaging with the news Dr. Avila had advice to help distinguish between legitimate information and falsified stories.

“Go beyond the headlines, and go beyond the lede. The lede is just the first couple of sentences, but it captures your attention. Those who are doing this know how to write in newspaper style,” Dr. Avila said. “Check the source.”

According to Honors College Dean Kimberly Bell, "One nice thing has come out of this: We have our topic for the Spring 2018 Difficult Dialogues course--Fake News."
Senior honors psychology major Jaren Crist became interested in the importance of leadership due to his involvement in SH ELITE as a member of the Board of Directors. His research stemmed from the organization’s weekly discussions. “Each week we had leadership discussion in which one person would pick an article and lead a discussion centered on said article. A lot of the ideas presented during these discussions formed the basis for many of the ideas and concepts that were in my presentation.”

Crist presented, "The Role of Purpose in Leadership" at the National Collegiate Leadership Conference held at the University of Arizona.

“My research helped me in two ways. It caused me to think critically about leadership; I wanted to go beyond that general surface level thought. Trying to go deeper into leadership helped me realize the kind of leader I want to be, and the kind of leader I want people to see me as. Ultimately, it helped form a more concrete idea of leadership in my own life.”

When asked how the conference and his presentation went, Crist was eager to share his experience.

“My presentation actually went surprisingly well. I was a little anxious as usual, but it gave me the energy to help me focus on what I needed to do. I genuinely questioned whether I had enough knowledge to talk for an hour about leadership. Being tired of the generic talks about leadership, I wanted to say something worth hearing. Many people asked questions about my views on different matters relating to leadership. The majority of my evaluations were highly positive, which made me happy to know that I was able to present and people actually enjoyed what I was saying. The conference itself was so much fun. The other presenters were amazing, plus the food and music was surprisingly entertaining. Overall, I had a blast the whole time.”

Crist mentioned his ideas and expectations for leadership in all aspects of life have been positively shaped due to his eye-opening life research.

“In my experience, life has a way of forcing us into situations where you are either a leader or a follower. In both cases, leadership becomes incredibly important and hard to ignore. Because of that, I feel leadership and its related concepts will always be relevant to me in some way. During my time at Sam Houston, I have been fortunate to meet many great faculty and staff members who have given me various different views on leadership relative to their own experiences. I like to think that all of those conversations culminated into my personal idea of what leadership is.”

As a part of the McNair Scholars program, Crist has spent the past year working on a research paper concerning the rights and personhood of artificial intelligence with Dr. Maria Botero. His future endeavors for research involve his plans to turn his research into an honors thesis.
Senior International Business major Stephanie Luk Bounsawat received the opportunity to conduct research with the Enhancing Undergraduate Research Experiences and Creative Activities Program or E.U.R.E.C.A.

"EURECA is an undergraduate research experience for students to engage in academic studies and recognize the significance of discovery and application. It involves the close mentorship of a professor who helps the student develop the professional skills essential to research. Not only adding credentials to a student’s professional experience, the program also contributes financial support for the proposed project to enable a richer learning experience with a one-on-one relationship with one’s professor", Luk Bounsawat noted.

Luk Bounsawat was introduced to the research opportunity by her economics professor, Dr. Santosh Kumar.

"A professor I have worked with for an honors contract, Dr. Santosh Kumar, introduced me to the EURECA program. He saw my interest in further education and hoped to enhance my analytical skills with practical exposure to data analysis. We kept in touch and talked about each other’s life and how my academic work was progressing. Noting the achievements I have accomplished, he extended a challenge where we may work together in his research and get into the EURECA, in which we are now,” said Luk Bounsawat.

"The research began after a new system was implemented in Mexico where detailed birth data was collected for newborns in Mexico for a decade.

Upon gathering the appropriate consent and acknowledgements, our project titled “Prenatal Care Demand and Neonatal Outcomes in Mexico” will study the causal impact of prenatal care on birth outcomes of the newborns. We propose to use advanced econometric technique to isolate the effect of prenatal care on birthweight and apgar score of the newborn," Dr. Kumar and Luk Bounsawat explained.

Luk Bounsawat has future plans for her research based on this opportunity.

"The methodology and tools granted to me by this experience will allow me greater accessibility to maneuver large data sets. In addition, this research may open my eyes to focusing on policy implementations. With skills gained from this experience, I will be able to create quality findings for my honors thesis," Luk Bounsawat shared.

Faculty Notes

Dr. Kimberly Bell presented Bobs and Games in British Library at the 52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Dr. Maria Alexander Holmes submitted her chapter, "Community Engagement in Honors First Year Experience: How to Ace the A's", for inclusion in the forthcoming book, Community Engagement Across the Disciplines: Applying Course Content to Community Needs, Dr. Heather Evans, Editor.

Dr. Maria Alexander Holmes was selected for the panel presentation, "How Campuses Are Infusing Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Learning into FYE Programs," at the 36th annual National First Year Experience Conference in Atlanta, GA. The panel session featured FYE educators certified in EQ coaching and counseling from University of Virginia, Dillard University, Sam Houston State University, and Pfeiffer University. Dr. Korell Kanoy, the panel leader, is the author of The Student Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Academic and Personal Success.

Alumni Notes

Jacob Luna, 2013 BS Agriculture Business, was promoted to Senior Business Analyst with The Context Network in St. Louis, MO. Previously he was a Grain Merchandiser with CGB Enterprises, Inc. Luna writes, “As a member of The Context Team, I provide business, market, and financial analysis support to management consulting projects for clients throughout the Agriculture industry. I obtained a master’s in Agribusiness from TAMU and a BS from SHSU. Some of my fondest memories and greatest friends were made during my time at these two fine institutions. I’m always interested in hearing from former colleagues, other professionals, or just interesting people, so please feel free to contact me if you’d like to connect and talk.”

Kyle Maguire, 2014 BBA Management, was promoted to Area Manager for Amazon.com in Fall River, MA. He writes, “Developing as a leader in such a dynamic environment has proven an incredible journey I am ever thankful for. As an Area Manager I thrive on leadership opportunities, driving process improvement, and continuing individual and professional growth while accomplishing company goals. Providing world class customer experience through operational discipline, team building, and continued learning remain at the forefront of my professional goals.”
SPRING 2017 GRADUATES

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Gregory Curatola     Christian Darthard
Natalie Denman     Martez Jones
Brenna Popsisil     Sarah Stoecker
Breuna Williams

College of Criminal Justice
Lizette Andrade     Myanah Davis
Daniela Gomez     Hallie Hicks
Carla Hobbs     Elise Howard
Dylan McFarland     Jessica Northam
Vanessa Quintanilla     Jessica Razo
Tiffany Schlage     Morgan Stickley
Derrick Verdun     Brandi Villarreal

College of Fine Arts and Mass Communication
Katelyn Anderson     Allison Baker
Denisa Micliuc     Anna Morris
Jason Womack*

College of Health Sciences
Mia Brown     Juana Campos
Matthew Pallini     Ashley Platero
Miranda Prado

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Daniel Agey III*     Laura Beene
Clayton Bradshaw*     Melanie Brega
Megan Chapa     Kristen Koci
Rachael McFarland     Cheyenne Moore*
Everrett Moore*     Alely Nava
Troy Oldham     Angela Shackelford
Rebekah Scholz     London Sneden
Tiffany Wimberly

College of Science and Engineering Technology
Sonali Aggerwal     Mercia Bakouetila
Sydney Counts     Heather Deel
Christiana Fakhri*     Alexis Farmer
Emily Kefer     Emily Meridan
Abigail Miller*     Brittanie Miller
Lauren Molina     Clarra Moore
Olivia Ross     Micaela Steward*
Alexis Tuckerson

College of Education
Gabrielle Escamilla     Rohnee Kidd
Hannah Nelson

*Denotes Highest Honors

Clayton Bradshaw: Quietus: A Creative Exploration of the Veteran Experience, Thesis Advisor Dr. Scott Kaukonen


Abigail Miller: Linking Hydrology to the Abundance and Distribution of the Blue Crab in the ANWR Ecosystem, Thesis Advisors Dr. Edward Swim and Dr. John Alford

Cheyenne Moore: Hypermasculinity, Determinism, and Milton in Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, Thesis Advisor Dr. Kandi Tayebi

Everett Moore: Spitting Game: The Intersection of Gender, Ethnicity, and the Receptivity to Opening Gambits, Thesis Advisor Dr. Rick Bruhn

Troy Oldham: Deconstructing Reconstruction: The People of the Postbellum Era, Thesis Advisor Dr. Brian Jordan

Micaela Steward: Synthesis and Characterization of N-substituted Diazaboroles, Thesis Advisor Dr. Dustin E. Gross

Jason Womack: A Critical Examination in Academic Advising of Undergraduate Transfers: Hitting the High Notes For Music Education Majors, Thesis Advisors Dr. Kevin Clifton and Dr. Bill Fleming

Graduate Notes:

Daniel Agey II will attend graduate school at the University of Michigan's Center for Japanese Studies.
Lizette Andrade will attend the FBI Training Academy in Quantico, Virginia.
Mercia Bakouetila will attend graduate school at Texas State University for her Ph. D. in physical therapy.
Clayton Bradshaw will attend Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas for his master's of fine arts in creative writing, along with an assistantship and scholarship.
Djalia Canty will open her own online men's retail store.
Megan Chapa will attend South Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas.
Daniela Gomez will attend Stetson University College of Law in Florida, seeking her Juris Doctor degree.
Hallie Hicks will attend Baylor Law School in Waco, Texas for her Juris Doctor degree.
Carla Hobbs will earn her master's in counseling at Sam Houston State University.
Kristen Koci will attend Penn State University for her master's in rural sociology and womens studies.
Dylan McFarland will attend graduate school at Sam Houston State University to earn his master's in homeland security. After graduate school he will pursue a position as a state trooper with the Texas DPS.
Rachael McFarland will stay in Huntsville, Texas working as a personal trainer at Anytime Fitness.
Emily Merdian will attend graduate school at Sam Houston State University for general agriculture.
Denisa Micluc will attend the school of music at the University of California Irvine for collaborative piano performance.
Everett Moore will attend University of North Texas at Denton's Ph. D. program for clinical psychology, specializing in Marriage and Family.
Anna Maria Morris will work at Main Street Theatre in Houston, Texas helping in showcasing the youth production of The Wizard of Oz.
Vanessa Quintanilla will attend graduate school at the University of Arlington for her master's in social work and criminology in hopes to work as a social worker for CPS Dallas.
Angela Shackelford will attend Sam Houston State University for her master's in digital media.
Alexis Tuckerson accepted a position as a Software Engineer in North Carolina.
Lixin Zhang will work in the Houston Medical Plaza in the field of healthcare administration.
A message to our Honors College Alumni and Friends

Many things have changed since your time on campus—even if you’re a recent grad!—and The Elliott T. Bowers Honors College remains committed to providing the best possible environment for our students to learn, grow and contribute to the world around them. If you would like to help us and contribute back to Honors, we ask you to either engage with our current students or donate to help all future students.

Engage
Drop us a line at honors@shsu.edu and let us know what you’ve been doing since graduation. We’d love to hear your story—it could inspire our students and open up some ideas they might not have considered.

Donate
Support The Elliott T. Bowers Honors College by donating through our secure online giving form at shsu.edu/giving Call (936) 294-3625 if you’d prefer to make the donation offline. Your donation contributes to our programming efforts in the areas of scholarships, internships, study abroad fellowships, undergraduate research support, and leadership experiences. All donations are tax-deductible.
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