

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

CAL POLY, SAN LUIS OBISPO

Spring Quarter 2016

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Celebrating our Seniors

This quarter, we said goodbye to the Class of 2016.

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Special Announcement on Page 9!

STUDENT SHOWCASE & SENIOR CELEBRATION

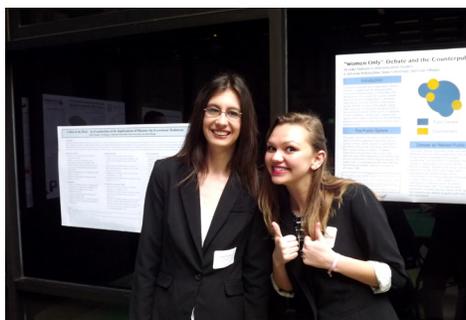
Amber Miller, Philosophy

Each Spring, the Cal Poly Honors Program organizes a special ceremony in honor of its graduating seniors. This year's celebration was held in the atrium of the Robert E. Kennedy Library and was expanded to recognize the work of first-year students enrolled in the HNRS 100 orientation course. The graduating seniors had the opportunity to showcase their senior projects with posters that were hung along the glass walls of the atrium. The 61 students in HNRS 100 utilized the gallery just outside of the atrium to present their quarter-long projects on the 2016 election and connections with sustainability. All those in attendance had the opportunity to visit with the students and learn about their projects, all while enjoying light snacks and cake(!). The graduating seniors and HNRS 100 students were joined by other Honors students, family, friends, faculty, and staff. All in attendance had the great opportunity to interact with Provost Kathleen Enz Finken, Vice-Provost Mary Pedersen, and Dean Phil Bailey, all strong supporters of the Cal Poly Honors Program.

The 23 graduating seniors represented five of Cal Poly's six colleges, and their average GPA exceeded an incredible 3.75! In addition to their undergraduate degrees, the group collectively earned an impressive 16 minor degrees, four graduate degrees, and one dual

degree! Following graduation, many of the seniors are heading off to amazing opportunities, including top graduate school programs, impressive internships, and exciting full-time employment opportunities. One of the two Outstanding Student Award Winners, Jaime Savitz, is attending graduate school at Boston University. Jamie is a Nutrition major who has been deeply involved with the Honors Program during her time at Cal Poly. She served as a teacher's assistant for the HNRS 100 course and as a member of the Honors Task Force.

The Honors Program offers its congratulations to our 2016 graduates as well as our 2015-16 first-year students. You made it! We wish our Honors graduates the best of luck as they move on to new challenges and continue their adventures!



PEER MENTORS

Sarah Iarkin, Child Development

Madison Meredith, Agricultural Environmental Plant Science

A successful first year of Peer Mentoring is coming to a close. From night hikes, donut days and movies, mentors and mentees both agree that this opportunity is like none other in the Honors Program. If you would like to get involved, we have already started planning for next year! Being a mentor means that you are the first face incoming Honors Program freshman will see, and the first to make a lasting impression.

Peer Mentoring will soon be incorporated into the Honors 100 course, meaning that incoming freshman will have the opportunity to get to know one another (and you) through deep discussion, honest feedback, as well as some great events, like a pumpkin carving contests and a thanksgiving feast. Not only that, students will be looking to you to assist them in the daily struggles that the first quarter of college entails: keeping up with schoolwork, scheduling classes, as well as things like roommate problems. Help the new members of our Honors Program family start the year off strong and welcome them into the Honors Mustang Family.



If you are interested
in the Peer Mentoring
program, or want more
information,
feel free to email
honors@calpoly.edu.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

DR. RYAN ALANIZ

Colton Marino, Political Science

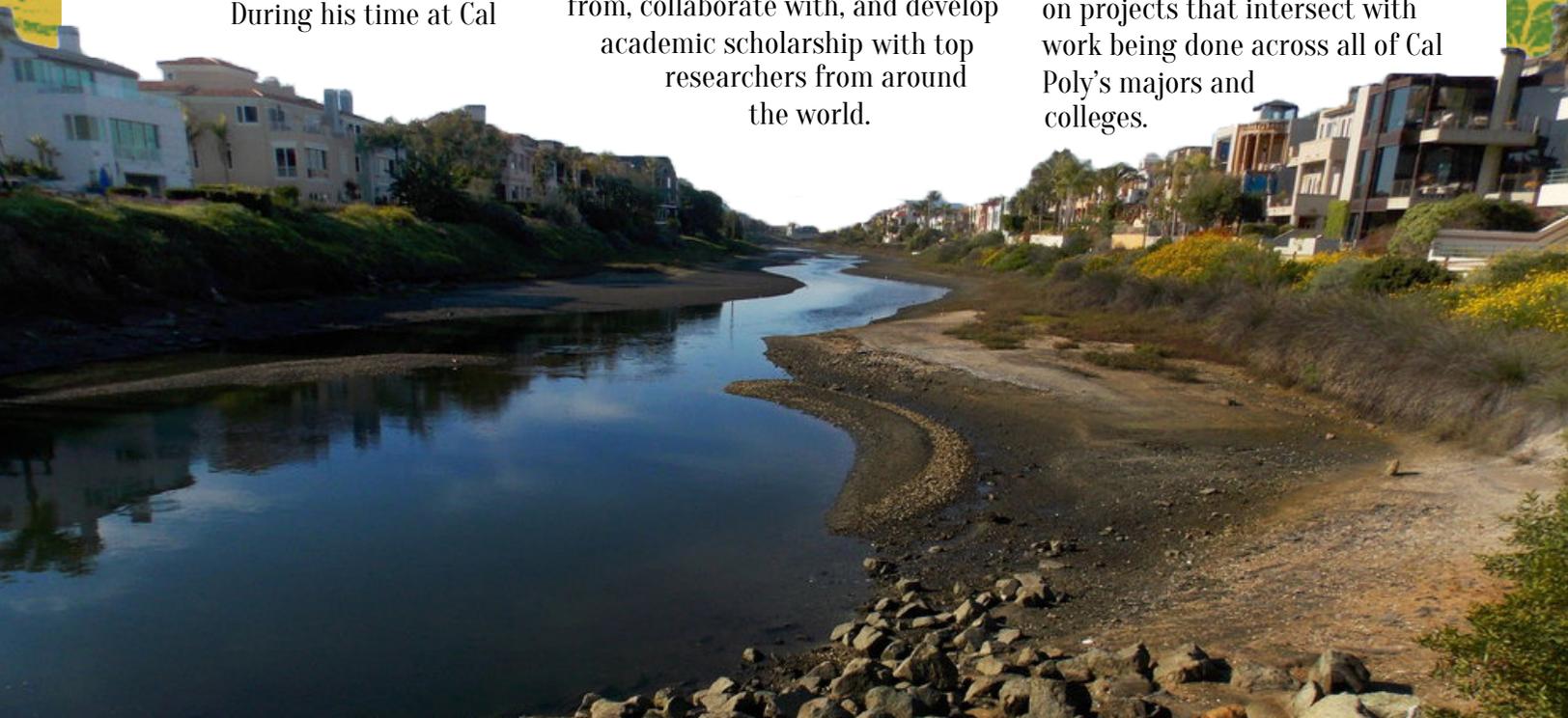
Dr. Ryan Alaniz is an Assistant Professor in Sociology and a Cal Poly alumnus, having received a B.A. in History in 2000. Dr. Alaniz began teaching at Cal Poly in 2012 after receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Since that time, he has been a strong supporter of the Honors Program. He has taught several sections of his popular seminar Honors for Social Change; he recruited Honors students to enroll in his Incarceration and Society course where inmates from the SLO County Jail participated alongside Cal Poly students; he assisted with instruction in HNRS 100 on numerous occasions; and he served on the 2013 search committee charged with recruiting a new Honors administrative support coordinator. The Honors Program is lucky to have the opportunity to collaborate with enthusiastic and supportive faculty like Dr. Alaniz.

During his time at Cal

Poly, Dr. Alaniz partnered with various academic institutions including the United Nations University Institute for Human and Environment Security (UNU-EHS), the International Social Science Council, and the Fulbright program. In addition, he was recently invited to the White House for the discussion “Drought in America.” In support of recent research, he has written policy briefs on the California drought, and he helped coordinate the Disaster by Drought summit held at Cal Poly during Fall 2015. Eighteen representatives from the UNU-EHS participated during the summit. These scholars represented ten different nations and a broad range of disciplines. In total, over 800 community stakeholders, members of the Cal Poly community, and subject matter experts from around California attended the summit. The participants had the opportunity to learn from, collaborate with, and develop academic scholarship with top researchers from around the world.



Currently, Dr. Alaniz is working with the UNU to organize a new summit to discuss water scarcity. He is hoping Cal Poly will be selected as host for this important meeting, which will bring together an estimated 60 international scholars. Dr. Alaniz emphasizes that education and engagement are everything when addressing drought and water scarcity. He urges Honors students to become more involved and aware: “Once our own attitude about water changes, we must then engage with the community and with policy makers.” Additionally, Dr. Alaniz encourages Honors students to look for future collaboration opportunities. He enjoys working with the program and is focused on projects that intersect with work being done across all of Cal Poly’s majors and colleges.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Honors Student and graduating senior Courtney Jacobson is the 2015-2016 Cal Poly Panetta Institute internship recipient. The Panetta Institute, led by Leon Panetta, offers annual internships to one student from each university in the CSU system. Jacobson who will graduate this June is majoring in Business Administration (Information Systems and Finance) and minoring in Sustainable Agriculture. To receive the nomination from Cal Poly, Jacobson went through two intense rounds of interviews, the second of which was with President Armstrong himself. Jacobson began her internship with an invite to the Panetta Institute where she was able to hear from US leaders including Dan Quayle, the Vice President of the United States under George H. W. Bush.

Jacobson describes this opportunity as an “incredible experience, especially since [she] had no background in political science. [She] would consider [herself] reasonably up to date with current events and the political landscape, but, at the institute, [they] had the opportunity to hear from experts in



Courtney Jacobson

every different policy area.” At the conclusion of the Panetta Institute internship, Jacobson interned in the office of Congressman Scott Peters who represents the 52nd district of California in the San Diego area. There she networked with Panetta Institute interns from the other CSUs. Jacobson credits the Honors Program for some of her success at the internship and says that, “overall, the higher academic expectations from the Honors Program is really valuable. Learning

how to dive into an issue and present it in a credible way was really important at [her] internship and is something [she has] been asked to practice in a lot of different Honors classes.”

“Honors II2 [Race, Culture and Politics in the United States] is one of the best classes [Jacobson has] ever taken at Cal Poly. Because Honors class sections are smaller, [she] was able to create a really strong relationship with Dr. Denise Isom [who teaches the course and chairs the Ethnic Studies department],” Jacobson says. Originally from San Rafael in Marin County, Jacobson is returning this summer to the Bay Area to work full time with Deloitte Consulting where she will consult for the private sector and work with cybersecurity and analytics. She is planning to earn a Master’s Degree in Data Analytics from UC Berkeley and hopes to build her skills and make her way back out to Washington, D.C. We wish her the best of luck as she tackles this next chapter of her life.

*Article by Brooke Matson,
Communication Studies*

The shirts are in!



*Come by the Honors
office in room 510
of the library to get
yours today!*

\$10

AWARD WINNERS

Katie Sones, Graphic Communications

The atrium of Kennedy Library was abuzz with students, faculty, and parents on the evening of May 25 for the Honors Program's annual Senior Showcase and Graduation Celebration. Graduating Seniors showed off their senior projects alongside HNRS 100 students displaying their serve projects from the quarter. The event also highlighted outstanding faculty and students in the program, recognizing them for their hard work and dedication.

The event brought the newest students in the program together with graduating seniors at the end of the Honors Program journey. Madeline Feron, a first-year architecture student in HNRS 100, spoke of community in the Honors Program and the "opportunity to interact with other majors."

Industrial Engineering major Johnathon Hawkinson, another first-year in HNRS 100, said he liked interacting with students in other majors, as well as the project-based focus of the class. Hawkinson said that it has helped to learn about "applying sustainability to multiple arenas –politically, environmentally, etc."

Both first-years said they were motivated by being around other high-achieving students in the program. One of the seniors being recognized for her achievements was Jaime Savitz, a Nutrition major.



Savitz echoed the freshman when she praised the Honors Program for being an interdisciplinary community, starting that the staff and students created that community. Her senior project was about the effectiveness of high-energy food vs. a corn-soy blend on treating malnourished children. Communication Studies' Brooke Matson also received the Outstanding Honors Graduate award at the ceremony and credits her success to the supportive Honors Program personnel—Director Dr. Gregg Fiegel and staff Shane McKeague— claiming she would not be where she is today without them.

Dr. Thomas Trice of the History Department and Dr. Ryan Alaniz were awarded the Outstanding Honors Faculty award. Involved with the Honors Program since 2009, Trice said he joined in because he "didn't have the opportunity when I was an undergrad," calling the program an "amazing opportunity and community or everyone involved." Trice teaches Honors classes as well as a section of HNRS 100.

Savitz summed it up perfectly when she gave advice to incoming Honors first-years: "Don't be afraid to get involved or take HNRS classes. Take initiative. Take leadership roles. Challenge yourself."



PSYCHOLOGY

Aditi Vepa, Business

Earlier this year, thirteen Honors students had the opportunity to enroll in an HNRS 299 seminar linked with a course in General Psychology. During the seminar the students worked side-by-side with Dr. Laura Freberg, conducting research on anxiety and depression amongst college students. In a time where student anxiety and depression represent a growing concern, a number of Cal Poly's Honors students decided to dig deeper. Their study focused on the way Cal Poly students view time the impact, if any, on anxiety and depression. The research team administered student surveys and tests to measure the correlation between time perspective and depression and anxiety. The experiment found that there is a large correlation between past negative and depression, meaning that people who focused more on the negatives of a past situation were more likely to experience depression.

The study also found that there was a medium correlation with past negative perspectives and anxiety. The honors students were then asked to present their findings at the 16th annual Stanford Undergraduate Psychology Conference in Palo Alto.

Honors Student Maya Fernandez stated that this seminar "provided the opportunity to work directly with faculty doing research, and gave the class the ability to discuss more ideas through the incredibly small class size." In addition, "the interdisciplinary aspect of the class allowed for much more diverse viewpoints." Though she is a Psychology student, Maya believes input from students in different majors allowed for deeper discussions and reflection. Maya was one of six students who presented at the Stanford conference. She hopes to continue working with her fellow Honors students on this research topic.



CATCHING UP WITH HONORS PROGRAM GRADUATES

Amanda Schafer, Economics

As another school year comes to an end, it's fun to check in with our Honors alumni. Recently, we connected with two graduates, both of whom received Honors student awards while they were here at Cal Poly. James Sofranko and Alisha McGoldrick, shed light on their experiences in the Honors Program and update us on their work since then.



James Sofranko graduated in Spring 2015 with a degree in Psychology with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. James is currently finishing an 11-month assignment with AmeriCorps and will be returning to Cal Poly this summer to serve as Program Coordinator for the Quarter-Plus (Q+) Program. Soon after he will begin work on a graduate degree in Education with an emphasis in counseling and guidance in higher education. When asked to reflect on recent activities and challenges, James emphasized "supervising the Cal Poly Q+ Program last summer was the most rewarding professional experience". He guided 21 undergraduate students working as learning assistants for the program. In addition, he served 150 incoming first-year students who enrolled in the rigorous three-week learning opportunity. We wish James the best of luck as he undertakes this challenging assignment again this summer.



Another Spring 2015 graduate; Alisha McGoldrick completed her degree in Business Administration with a concentration in accounting. This past year Alisha continued her education at Cal Poly and recently graduated from the Tax Specialization program. Alisha will begin working in the fall in San Francisco as a Tax Associate at Grant Thornton. Before she begins her job, Alisha has been busy planning her wedding (congrats Alisha!) and a tour of Europe. Alisha plans to earn a license as a CPA in California and hopes to someday become a manager at Thornton. Alisha greatly enjoyed enhancing her education through her graduate courses. The graduate program cohort is a tightly knit group with only 24 students. She feels fortunate to have "formed connections and made friendships that will last a lifetime."

Continued▶

Both Sofranko and McGoldrick were highly involved in the Honors Program. When asked to reflect on her experience at Cal Poly, Alisha feels her “time in the Honors Program taught her to put herself out there and seize every opportunity available.” James agreed. He encouraged students to become involved. “It is a fantastic way to be in a community with academically driven students. It’s also great way to work with faculty who are not only excellent educators, but are passionate about their field and genuinely enjoy working with honors students.” The Honors Program allowed both past students to showcase their creativity and gain experience leading peers. The challenging program helped prepare both James and Alisha for the demands of a graduate program. Thanks to both for their contributions and recollections!



*Thanks for
a great year!*

HONORS PROGRAM UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL

The Honors Program is proud to announce the publication of the Honors Undergraduate Journal which will recognize creativity, innovation, empirical reasoning, scientific inquiry, and research by Honors students. The journal aims to connect students from different disciplines to encourage collaboration and to promote academic, professional, and personal development. The journal is managed by an Editorial Board comprised of students from every college as well as faculty members Dr. Tom Trice (History) and Dr. Sara Daubert (Business Administration). Expect to see the journal published this Summer 2016, featuring submissions from students in every college. If you are interested in participating as part of the editorial board or in submitting your work for review, please e-mail honors@calpoly.edu.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Happy summer, Honors students! I commend you on your accomplishments this year. Additionally, I offer special congratulations and thanks to our graduating seniors for their hard work and contributions to our community. During our recent transition to a new and improved program you hopefully have noticed an increased emphasis on community. Building and strengthening our Honors learning community represents one of our most important goals. I encourage you to investigate opportunities for community in Honors, including those summarized in this newsletter. It is difficult to be successful in this world if you decide to go it alone. I know this based on many years of observations and experience in the classroom and serving my profession.

Individuals with large and diverse support communities exhibit remarkable confidence; demonstrate excellent interpersonal communication skills; handle setbacks and failure well; earn fantastic personal and professional opportunities; and understand their own strengths and areas for improvement. My own support community has contributed significantly to my success as a teacher and engineer. I encourage you all to continue to devote time, when you can, to the Honors Program and the development of your community. Although not the underlying motivation, the rewards will be awesome!

*Dr. Gregg Fiegel,
Honors Program
Director*

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