



BUFFALO STATE
The State University of New York
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Muriel A. Howard Honors Program

Official Newsletter



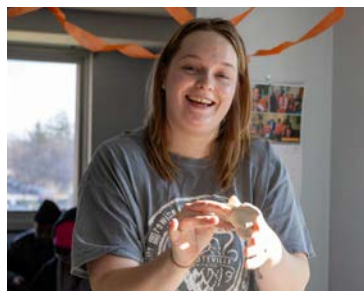
Game Night
with Honors Leaders Tyler and Jamie



Self-Care Day
with Honors Leaders Chelsea and Jenny



Honors Entrepreneurs Pg. 3



Unwind with Clay
with Honors Leader
Ceci



**NCHC 2023:
Chicago**
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Congrats Fall 2023 Graduates!

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Honors Inspiring Honors Pg. 8



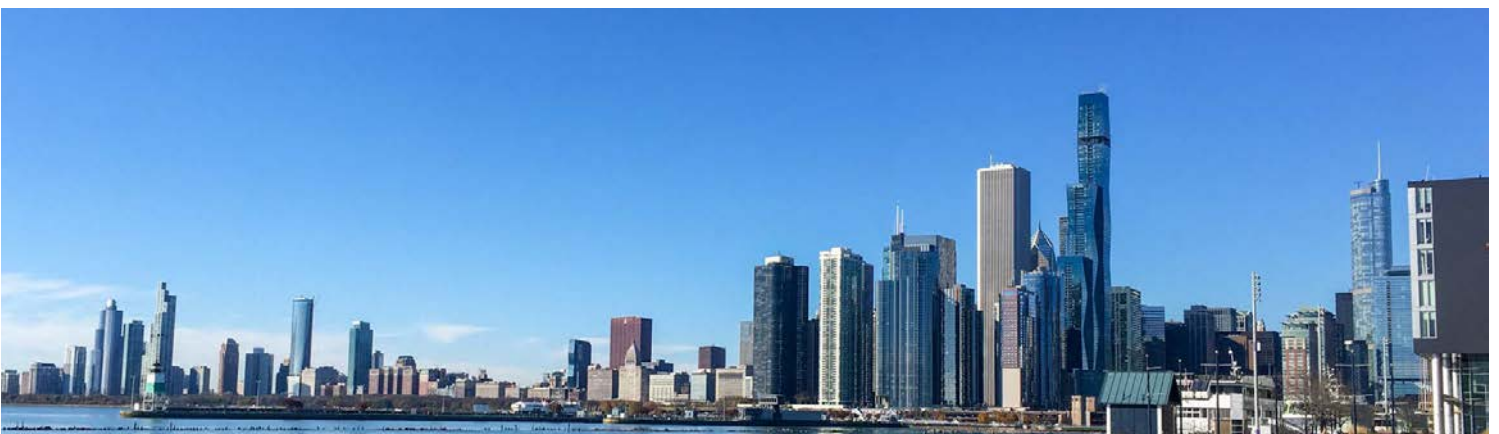
REVOLUTIONARY HONORS

Liberty. Equality. Humanity.

Honors Program Director Dr. Amy McMillan and Assistant Director Matt Baran recently traveled to Chicago to present a workshop at the 2023 National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference. Their workshop, titled “Revolutionizing Your Honors Program: What You Need To Know To Grow,” came to fruition following 5 years of steady growth in the Muriel A. Howard Honors Program. In 2017 when Dr. McMillan took on the Director role, the program had just over 200 students or about 3% of undergraduates at the time. Despite an enrollment decrease at Buffalo State and a pandemic since then, there are over 500 Honors students today or about 1 in 10 undergraduates. The Honors Program has evolved in many other ways too, such as by increasing its racial diversity, expanding Honors Seminar offerings, adding Bishop Hall as priority housing, offering the Honors Endowed Enhancement Fund, opening the Honors Hub and Academic Suite, and launching the Honors Leaders peer mentoring program.

About 40 honors faculty and administrators from across the country participated in the workshop, each with goals of ‘revolutionizing’ their own honors program/college. Dr. McMillan and Matt led attendees through an interactive, six-step process using the SOLVED framework created by Buffalo State alum Mike Cardus (’10). “The participants were incredibly engaged throughout our 80-minute workshop,” says Dr. McMillan. “One of the main points of our workshop was to push participants to intentionally reflect on the current situation in their honors program/college and discuss with colleagues before jumping straight into a decision – something directors are rarely forced to do – and the resulting dialogue was fantastic!”

In addition to facilitating their workshop, Dr. McMillan and Matt each attended a variety of other sessions on topics ranging from student programming ideas to leadership development and creative solutions to curriculum. Matt writes, “Attending and presenting at my first NCHC conference was immensely rewarding for me. It was so validating to meet honors professionals from around the U.S. who not only are working through similar challenges as ours, but who are also often implementing innovative ideas that we are already doing at Buffalo State in big ways. I left Chicago feeling grateful for the opportunity and inspired to influence how our program will continue to evolve in the next 5 years.”



Honors Entrepreneurs

Two Honors business owners won big at the inaugural Bengal Entrepreneurship Competition on November 14th! The competition was hosted by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which offers a wide range of services for students and community members seeking to start or grow a small business. Hannah and Molly were two of eight finalists who each pitched their small business ideas and goals to a panel of guest judges.

Hannah Esslie (right), owner of the Hudson Valley Crusaders since 2021, won 3rd place and \$500 to grow her semi-professional women's soccer team. Seeking to expand women's sports, HVC provides an opportunity for players to be seen by scouts and improve their abilities. Beyond the women's teams, youth camps and clinics are offered to foster a passion for soccer in youth. "I am grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the Bengal Entrepreneurship Program. It was a great networking opportunity and a chance for me to work on my public speaking ability." Follow @hvcrusaders or visit hudsonvalleycrusaders.com to learn more.



Hudson Valley Crusaders



Freshman Molly Galvin won 4th place and \$250 to grow her fashion brand, *Molly Margaret*. Started in 2021, Molly's business is a custom apparel and tailoring brand with a commitment to sustainability and creating a connection with its customers. "I joined this entrepreneurship program in order to build my brand up and create an outline of the goals I would like to achieve through my garments. While participating in this competition I had to think logically to solve issues that I was running into and create a plan of where I would like to be in the next five years. While I am confident in my sewing and design abilities, I needed help on where to start as a business owner. Along the way I was able to receive help from the SBDC to create my brand's logo and create financial statements." Follow @_molly_margaret on Instagram to explore her brand and send a DM to inquire about purchasing a retail garment or custom commission.

BABEL: Michelle Zauner

Honors students returned to Kleinhans Music Hall on November 9th to enjoy a riveting talk by author and musician Michelle Zauner. First-year students in HON111 and seniors in HON444 read Zauner's bestselling memoir, *Crying In H Mart*. Zauner is also the lead vocalist of the alternative pop band Japanese Breakfast. "I was in great anticipation of attending Michelle Zauner's BABEL talk and it did not disappoint," says Honors Administrative Assistant Celestine Simmons. "She is only 34 but I was impressed with her depth, life experience, and her ability to take moments and bring them alive in your mind's eye. As she spoke of shopping with her mother at Korean markets, her family eating together, how her fashion sense evolved, the racial bias she endured, the pain of seeing her mother die, the regret she had thinking about the times she gave her mother a hard time, she pulled you into those moments and we relived them with her. I admire her ability to do that. It made her relatable."



Fall 23

Honors Graduates

Congratulations to our 22 graduating senior Honors students! We are amazed at all you have accomplished in and out of the classroom, and are excited to see what you will achieve next!



Marcella Rodgers

**B.S. in Earth Science
Minor in Astronomy**

My favorite thing about Buffalo State is the relationships I have built with my professors. My most influential professor was Dr. Kevin Williams. He brings such enthusiasm and passion to the classroom that makes you want to learn.



Mikeya Nesbitt

**B.A. in Psychology
B.S. in Criminal Justice
Minors in Political Science
and Legal Studies
World Language and
Child Advocacy Studies
Certificates**

My advice to all of the new freshmen is to try something new. College is the place where you go to explore new opportunities, clubs, sororities, and sports.



Brianna Asobie

**B.A. in Communication Studies
Minor in Writing**

I plan to pursue a job in marketing after graduation.



Morgan Harrington

**B.A. in Psychology
B.S. in Criminal Justice**

Most Influential Professor: Dr. McMillan has continued to encourage and support me unjudgementally and consistently for three years. I am forever grateful for her presence in my life.



Lindsey Parisse

B.S. in Dietetics

Favorite Honors Memory – expanding my knowledge and understanding on important topics that impact the world and people around us – Ex: importance of race, diversity, and varying cultures.



Madison Bryant-Wagstaff

**B.S. in Fashion Textile
Technology with a
concentration in Fashion
Merchandising**

Do not be afraid to meet new people, go to that event, etc. you honestly would be surprised how valuable that time spent networking can be in the long run.



Elexa Printup

**B.A. in Public Relations &
Advertising**

My favorite thing about Buffalo State is that it provides resources for non-traditional students like me, allowing me to succeed while juggling multiple roles as a mother, full-time worker, and full-time student.

Katie Furtney



**B.S. in Environmental Geography
Certificate in Environmental Science and Society**
College Advice: Study abroad for a semester, meet new people, and take classes outside of your major! My favorite thing about Buff State was how small and family-like it is!

Kiara Vallenilla



**B.A. in Psychology
B.S. in Criminal Justice
Certificates in Child Advocacy Studies and the World Language of Spanish**
When I graduate I want to work at a school with kids who have mental disabilities and behavioral issues. My favorite memory about being in honors is the opportunities I had and the amazing workshops I went to.

Iris Thomas



B.S. in Early Childhood/ Childhood Education
My favorite thing about Buff State is the Education Program My most influential professor was Fred Gilbert.

Jaylyn Zimmer



B.S. in Social Studies Education
The thing I would have done differently is become more involved, gone to events and more present in the moments. I was too focused on my academics my first few years where it made me feel like I had to be working on something at all times.

Emily Jason



B.S. in Early Childhood/ Childhood Education
My favorite Honors course was Honors Jewelry Making! After graduation, I am planning on working as a preschool or kindergarten teacher.

Joseph Cannizzaro



**B.A. in Philosophy
Minor in English Education (7-12)**
One of his favorite achievements was being accepted into the 2023 SUNY Oneonta Undergraduate Philosophy Conference and receiving the "Spirit of the Conference" Award.

Victoria Sasso



**B.A. in Psychology
Minor in Writing
Child Advocacy Certificate**
I have been Treasurer & Vice President of the Psychology Club, Psi Chi Honor Society, and Child Advocacy Organization. I am also a member of the psychology department's Hulicka Scholars Program.

Ross Simpson



B.F.A. in Photography

Fall 23 Honors Graduates Continued



Jadelene Adams

**B.S. in Biology
Minor in Chemistry**

My heartfelt advice to students facing challenges in their academic courses is to remember to acknowledge your efforts and embrace the wisdom from this quote:

“Dream big, stay positive, work hard, and enjoy the journey.”

– Urijah Faber



Christina Shinnars

**B.A. in Public Relations & Advertising
Minor in Film Studies**
President of Sigma Delta Tau

Matthew Bouchard

B.Mus. in Music Education

Olivia Colby

B.S. in English Education (7-12)

Julianne Guerico

B.F.A in Graphic Design, Fiber Arts Certificate

Sai Sruthi Ravishankar

B.S. in Fashion and Textile Technology

Megan Wenzel

B.A. in Anthropology and Criminal Justice
Minor in Writing

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FALL GRADUATES!

Stay in touch as an Honors Alum!

Save the Date!

Honoring Honors [H²]

March 15th, 2024 from 5-7 p.m. in the Social Hall



FAREWELL FRIDAY!

Hosted by Honors Leader Sarah Zakeri

Friday, December 8th

12:00 - 2:30pm

Honors Hub

Cookies, Crafts and More

Chelsea Kettle '14 Accomplished Alumni



SUMMARIZE YOUR ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL CAREER

I grew up in Endicott, NY, just over 3 hours southeast of Buffalo near the Binghamton area. As a high school senior, I was looking at a bunch of different majors – from fashion design to anthropology to art – and so I knew that I wanted to attend a school that gave me the flexibility to explore all of my academic interests. I also wanted to go to a school that was far enough away where I could be independent, but close enough to home where I could easily be with my family. Buffalo State truly checked all of the boxes for me and that's ultimately why I chose to enroll there. I was actively involved in the women's rugby team and played for all four years that I was a student. I graduated with a Bachelor's in Art History with a minor in Italian (2014) and went on to get a Master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (2017). Shortly after, I started my professional career at Buffalo State – first as a staff assistant in the Office of Enrollment Management and then as an Admissions Advisor in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, which is the role that I am currently still in.

DESCRIBE YOUR JOB AS AN ADMISSIONS ADVISOR

There are many things that I do as an Admissions Advisor, but the main part of my job is connecting with prospective students and guiding them through the admissions process. I recruit in Manhattan and Long Island, so I am often traveling to different high schools and events to meet with students, their families, and high school counselors. I also review admissions applications from those two territories. Outside of that, I am responsible for coordinating reception events for accepted students and their families as well as information programs to educate high school counselors about Buffalo State and the admissions process. I also serve as the admissions liaison for the Honors Program, so I am constantly working with the Director and Assistant Director to ensure that we are providing the best experience for our incoming Honors students.

WHAT WAS THE HONORS PROGRAM LIKE WHEN YOU WERE A STUDENT?

The program has gone through a lot of changes from when I was a student! I am so grateful to the Honors Program for the opportunities that it provided me as a student, but I didn't feel that there was as much of a sense to be engaged in the program outside of the classroom. That has definitely not been the case in recent years. There are always opportunities for our Honors students to engage both socially and professionally and they are encouraged to do so. For example, the Honors Leaders Peer Mentoring Program allows current students to develop their leadership skills while also guiding the newest cohort of students through the college experience. I think another amazing thing that the Honors Program has done is opening up this experience to current Buffalo State students. When I was a student, you had to have a certain GPA and standardized test score to be offered a spot in the program and there were limited opportunities to join at a later time. Today, incoming students are still required to have a certain GPA to be offered a spot in the program, but those who didn't initially meet the criteria and then excelled at Buffalo State have the opportunity to become a part of the Honors Program as a current student. This has opened the door to so many students and is something that I hope the Honors Program will continue to do!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WINTER ACTIVITY IN BUFFALO?

The thing that I love about Buffalo is that it is truly a four-season city, so there's always something to do – which also makes it a bit hard to narrow down just one favorite winter activity! Around the holidays, I really love exploring the different holiday markets in the downtown area. Buffalo is all about shopping local and the markets highlight different business and artisans in the area. I also enjoy trying new spots in Western New York – there are so many great restaurants, cafés, and shops in the area and the winter is the perfect time to go explore them.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CURRENT HONORS STUDENTS?

My advice to current students: Don't be afraid to get involved and don't be afraid to ask for help! Life is all about balance – we want you to be the best student you can be, but we also want you to have fun and experience all of the best things that college has to offer. Sometimes navigating those two things can be really overwhelming and that's okay. Just remember that you have a whole network of support, both within the Honors Program and within the Buffalo State community, that can help you overcome any challenges that you may face.

Attention Honors Artists!

Enter a design for our
2024 Honors T-Shirt!



GUIDELINES:

- You must be a current Honors Student
- Submissions must be original artwork
- You must incorporate "Muriel A. Howard Honors Program" and Buffalo State, Buffalo State University, or SUNY Buffalo State
- Entries should be in EPS format (preferred) or high quality JPG or PNG

Email honors@buffalostate.edu to enter

Entries accepted through February

“My HON 209 course has been the best I’ve taught since before the pandemic. My students have been enthusiastic and engaged in class discussions. I’ve had many excellent oral presentations in the class and active participation in activities outside of the classroom such as a trips to the Whitworth Ferguson Planetarium and the AKG Museum (below), and attendance at movie nights. The quality of the students’ papers has also been notably better than in the past few years. I have always enjoyed teaching in the Honors Program, but student engagement like this makes it even more enjoyable!”

– Dr. John Abromeit



“The HON 202 Social Science Seminar this semester has been truly exceptional. I’ve utilized a critical engagement component in all of my classes for several years where I ask students to utilize course ideas to analyze the political and social world around them or to bring into our class discussions analysis tools from other classes to help illuminate our discussions on politics. This class has taken their engagement to the extreme – I’ve had brilliant analyses ranging from national politics and International Relations to bumper stickers, family dinners, and on-line gaming. These have been insightful, creative, and very entertaining. Perhaps most satisfying is that my students come from different backgrounds and majors, but ALL have been critically engaged and have shared with me what they’ve learned about the social sciences, methods, and their own political views of the world. I’m very appreciative of the chance to work with our Honors students.”

– Dr. Patrick McGovern

“Honors students energize a classroom! This is certainly the case in my blended Arctic Geography course (GEG 359/HON 201) offered this semester. At the beginning of each class, I welcome students to the ‘Arctic’ to help focus them on the regional theme and on the moments ahead. One Honors student stands out this semester – Jamie Ervolina (front left in photo) – for wholeheartedly embracing the moment in each class, whether feeling for, and relating to, those poor lemmings, enjoying the tundra walk, proudly displaying her homemade snow goggles and, more recently, her corny Arctic-related jokes which greet us on the whiteboard. Best of all, she is a contagion – each class I can feel her positive energy spreading across the room.”

– Dr. Stephen Vermette



Honors Inspiring Honors

Hear why our Honors faculty
enjoy teaching Honors students

“I have noticed one absolutely lovely quality in nearly all of my current Honors students: perseverance. Covid schooling and post-Covid life has been a rollercoaster. All of us continue to search for stable footing mentally and emotionally, and these students added a giant life change and intellectual journey on top of that adventure. They juggle home life; family relationships; part time jobs; on campus life; clubs, organizations, and sports all while trying to attend classes, get homework completed, and stay healthy. I am constantly impressed by the passion they carry for not only their schoolwork and individual journeys but their fellow classmates’ lives and journeys as well. Their empathic care and concern for one another’s lives and successes is inspiring. They might think they are struggling, but all I see is a classroom full of resilient, thriving humans. They know how to get it done, and I am so very impressed by and proud of them.”

– Dr. Natalie Szymanski

“This semester has been - simply - fun to be in the classroom! My students are engaged, curious, thoughtful, and making connections between their courses. I’m not currently teaching an Honors course, but it is often Honors students who will linger after class to continue the discussion - with me or with each other. I’m really looking forward to having another Honors course in the Spring and seeing many of these students in my class again!”

– Dr. Leigh Duffy

“It’s comforting to know that they are ready to get going, to explore the magic of Bob Dylan’s poetry through his songwriting. Several of them tap their right or left foot on the floor to the beat of the tune as we watch videos. I can see it in their sparklin’ eyes that they are waiting to dissect the lyrics, to discuss the use of alliteration, enjambment, obsessive rhyming, use of metaphorical language, linear vs non-linear story-telling and ambiguous imagery. They are mesmerized by the world of the American Bard.”

– Dr. Andrea Guiati



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Buffalo State Honors Program



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