



**BUFFALO STATE**  
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# Muriel A. Howard Honors Program

## Official Newsletter



**Recent Honors Events:**  
Honors Open Skate *(above)*  
Valentine's Day Crafts & Candy *(below)*

**Special Visit From  
Dr. Muriel A. Howard**  
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**A Day in the Life of  
an Honors Senior** Pg. 4-5

**NEW: Crochet Club** Pg. 6



*Dr. Howard meets Honors students Joe Cannizzaro and Alexandra Ahmed.*

## Dr. Howard Visits Honors Hub

At the end of the Fall semester, Dr. Muriel A. Howard paid a special visit to South Wing 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor to see the growth of the Honors Program that bears her name. Dr. Howard, who served as Buffalo State's seventh president from 1996-2009, has remained a fervent supporter of the program both during and since her tenure at Buffalo State.

This was Dr. Howard's first time exploring the new Honors spaces which opened in 2021-2022. The Academic Suite, a study/work space for Honors students, and the Honors Hub, a multi-purpose lounge and program space, have steadily gained popularity. Dozens of students use the spaces daily to print for free, meet with an Honors Leader, grab a quick snack, or relax in-between classes.

In addition to exploring the suite, Dr. Howard also spent time meeting a few of the Honors students who utilize these spaces. Dr. Howard talked with students about their experiences during Covid, their plans and aspirations now, and how they have excelled at Buffalo State. The Honors staff also highlighted student accomplishments and creativity by pointing out student work on the walls of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, including the design by former Graphic Design student Crista Sukennik ('20) behind Dr. Howard in the photo above.

Dr. Howard continues to influence the higher education landscape. As President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), she advocated for public higher education at the national level. She also serves as an Executive Coach for Academic Search Inc. providing guidance and mentorship to college presidents and executive leaders.



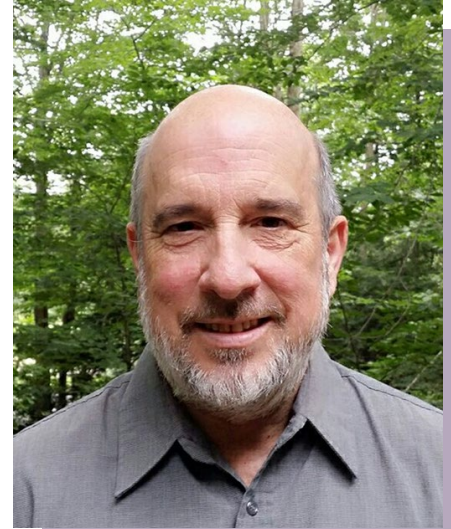
**“The Honors suite was so welcoming, as were the staff and students. The space is great for study groups, small classes, team work, or just one-on-one time with staff. I hope students will take full advantage of this special space, even if it is to grab a bite to eat or to have some alone and downtime between classes.” - Dr. Muriel A. Howard**

# Professor Stephen Vermette

## Honors Faculty Spotlight

### SUMMARIZE YOUR PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY AND CAREER INTERESTS

I embraced the discipline of Geography early – in high school – and like many, my career path was influenced by several mentors. My second love was the Arctic which was sparked by a university course and summer field trip. While a student, I took any excuse to go north, whether through a small grant or by assisting researchers. As I worked through the many courses in university, my interests focused on weather, specifically the spatial distribution of storms and the influence of cities on downwind precipitation, which was followed by an interest in air pollution. As a doctoral student I had the opportunity to work in a nuclear reactor where I would analyze the chemistry of environmental samples. This helped pay my way through university. These interests led to a move to Illinois to work for a state agency for several years to model the dispersion of air pollutants, then on to Buffalo State. This last move was prompted, in part, by a desire to do more than apply for grants and write and shelf reports. There certainly was a calling to teach and interact with students in a university setting. The move was somewhat selfish too – I’ve learned so much from those whom I’ve taught.



On a more personal note, my interest has always been the natural environment. While I enjoy the spectacular, I take great joy in the simplicity of a nature walk and observing those little things around me. I also find that I’m a child of the Great Lakes (born on the Canadian side and now living on the other side), missing the shoreline and open vistas when away.

### WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS? WHAT MAKES WNY A UNIQUE LOCATION FOR YOUR DISCIPLINE?

I’ve been in Western New York and at Buffalo State now for over 30 years. Moving to the area my research interests evolved to focus on local weather and climate. In many areas the weather expression used is *“If you don’t like the weather wait five minutes”*. In WNY, we can add *“If you don’t like the weather drive five miles”*. My point: the weather and climate of WNY is variable, from day-to-day and from place to place. A prime example are lake effect snow bands. I learned so much about WNY’s weather that I had to write a book: *“The Face of WNY’s Weather”*, if for no other reason than to keep all that information from being bottled up. I love sharing these observations with my students.

### WHICH HONORS COURSES HAVE YOU TAUGHT?

Teaching for Honors has been a more recent experience. The last several years I’ve taught two courses: HON102 World Natural Environments where we explore our planet, our home; and HON201 Arctic Geography which allows me to bring the full immersion experience – nature, culture, indigenous perspectives, music, song, etc. to the student. I look forward to teaching Honors courses – whether as a combined course or as a course of its own – as Honor students typically are prepared to learn and bring passion, curiosity and a willingness to connect in the classroom.

### DESCRIBE YOUR DREAM HONORS COURSE TO TEACH

A dream course might be a field or experiential course. In the past, I’ve organized field courses to numerous countries and places and can imagine that an Honors field course would raise the bar from past experiences. One of my favorite choices might be spending a week or two on a small Bahamian Island studying its natural environment or exploring and studying caves in Pennsylvania and Virginia. I’ve offered both courses in the past.

### WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO THE CLASS OF 2024 HONORS GRADUATES?

Graduation is not an end but rather a beginning to learning. So, as you move on from here, promise yourself never to stop learning and to stretch beyond your comfort zone. As a professional or parent or whatever high-end achievement you obtain, never shed the label of ‘student’.

**Register for HON201 Arctic Geography with  
Professor Vermette this Fall: W 4:30-7:15pm!**

*(You can also find him tossing pumpkins off the roof  
of Buckham Hall for the Autumnal Equinox!)*

# A Day in the Life of an Honors Senior:

## Hear how these students are spending their final semester



### Sebastiano Lombardo - Music Performance

#### WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THIS SEMESTER?

I am involved in my voice class and accompaniment for an upcoming recital, A Digital Music CAPSTONE, two choirs, and two online classes. I recently went to Pittsburgh to complete a second-round audition at Carnegie Mellon in hopes of entering their Master's program for Vocal Performance.

#### DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU.

I wake up around 8:30 for breakfast. I live off-campus, so I drive in afterwards to warm up. I typically warm up for around 15 minutes, though I am going to extend it to 30 so that I can increase my vocal endurance for a 50-minute senior recital. After that, I log into my online classes and start hammering away at assignments. Then I attend Chamber Choir or Chorale rehearsals midday and continue singing. Previous semesters would have a lot more classes each day, but this semester isn't as heavy. So I use the rest of my time to practice my songs for my upcoming concerts and work on extra assignments or tasks for outside of school. I work on weekends, so I'll head into the restaurant and be there until 11.

#### HOW DO YOU STAY ORGANIZED?

I work well with a planner. Seeing what I need to do in a day also allows me to see where I can take breaks for my sanity. Early on in the degree where I was taking 19-21 credits a semester, time management was a MUST.

*PHOTO: Teaching an original composition in Chorale for the upcoming Choir concert!*

### Kalisha Joseph - Art & Design (Metals/Jewelry)

#### DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU.

I want to be involved with the Fashion Show again this semester! The typical day for me consists of heating up metal, doing a French technique to form metal called *chasing and repoussé* and to end the cycle I clean the metal again. To stay organized, I mark off what I've completed in a day and set things I want to accomplish for the next day. A highlight of my Senior year must be preparing my pieces in time for my student show.

*PHOTO: Testing variations of fire scales. Find more photos on my Instagram @ksh.jwls*



### Jessica Agu - Fashion Textile Technology

#### WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THIS SEMESTER?

I am the USG Treasurer and I have been for the past 2 years. I am a student senator in Buffalo State University's College Senate. I am also a member of College Senate Budget Staff and Allocation Committee (BSAC).

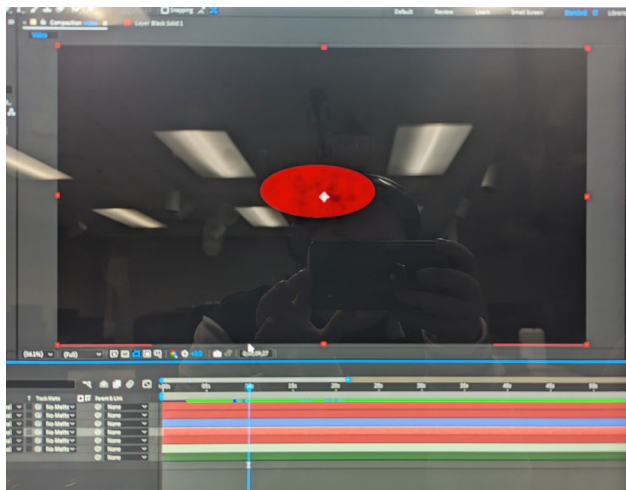
#### DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU.

A typical day in my life would be in and out of the Fashion and Design department building, then meetings concerning my Treasurer duties in USG, helping run USG events, after school I would go to my job as an afterschool teacher, and then homework.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR AT BUFFALO STATE?

Being able to take part in the fascinating process that is my Fashion and Design Senior Project.

*PHOTO: Working on my designs for my Senior Project (RUNWAY 2024).*



### Lisa Czaplá - Media Production

**PHOTO:**  
Working on a form of digital art, my project revolves around human interaction with technology, really just the general study of our deep imbed, near perverse obsession of technology. That is a theme I am presenting in my art this semester. It may just look like a circle on screen but it'll get far more complicated as I move forward.

**WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED IN THIS SEMESTER?**  
I am currently the Secretary of BFT Productions, waiting to hear back from a grant I applied for with a script I wrote, working on my own project on the eyes, and making a documentary for local WNY artists.

**DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU.**  
Wake up, have coffee, and get as much done in between my freetime, get to school, edit some project, get equipment, film, return home, go to bed.

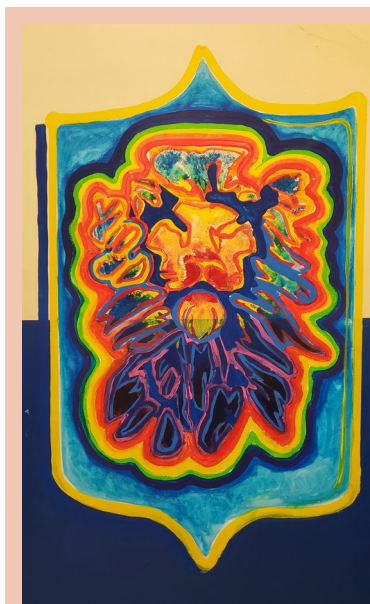
### Jillian Tung - Chemistry

**WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?**  
This semester I am finishing up my Legal Studies minor, playing oboe in the Buffalo State Wind Ensemble, doing research, and attending Chemistry-Forensics Club meetings. I have already fulfilled all the requirements for my chemistry degree.

**HOW DO YOU STAY ORGANIZED?**  
I use a planner where I color-code all of my assignments and classes and write out my tasks for each day. I also keep a note on my phone with my tasks listed in order of importance.



**PHOTO:**  
2023 Chemistry Banquet, I've received several awards for outstanding performance in different specialties of chemistry.



### Robin McCarthy - Psychology

**WHAT ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?**  
I am working on an independent research project with the Chair of Psychology, as well as a poster to present at SRCC with the topic being Prevalence of Depression within the Deaf Community. I am also working as a research assistant for psychology students completing their PSY 499 (independent research), as well as taking my final classes, including Intro to Art Therapy, and my senior psychology seminar class.

**PHOTO:** I work as an afterschool teacher for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade and we had a mural artist come in and work with the kids to create a school mural, and this is part of it.



### Danae Hardy - Childhood Education

**DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY FOR YOU.**  
This semester I am student teaching in a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom at West Buffalo Charter School! I teach Monday-Friday from 7:10am - 3:10pm. My day is filled with exciting activities and student-centered learning. The day begins with the students singing positive affirmations on the rug. This song instills courage and kindness within themselves. As a Resident Teacher, I facilitate small group instruction with students based on their academic performance during math and literacy. Small group instruction allows these students to receive differentiated support to best meet their learning needs. In the afternoon I also teach whole group social studies lessons. Since it is Black History Month, I introduce a new African American individual who has contributed to our society. During my social studies lessons I emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion. These terms are important for students to have knowledge of because they will learn to celebrate each other's differences.

**WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR AT BUFFALO STATE?**  
I was selected to travel to Rwanda this Spring with the Anne Frank Project. I am extremely excited to learn how to incorporate community building, identity exploration, and story-based learning into my future classroom!

**PHOTO:** Posing with my students at West Buffalo Charter School.

# Honors Freshmen Stitch Together A Popular New Campus Org.



First-year Honors students Blair Kephart, Lila Kirsh, and Emily Schirmmacher along with sophomore Isabella Conde have officially formed one of Buffalo State’s newest campus organizations: Crochet Club! “Being a freshman on campus was hard and I couldn’t find a group or club to fit in, so we decided to make our own fun and stress-relieving club,” says Lila, Vice President. “I had only started crocheting in September and with the support of everyone in the club I have learned how to make some amazing projects!”

Blair, Crochet Club’s President, has been crocheting for years and has recently begun selling custom crocheted garments. “Seeing the club take off so fast has been amazing. We just started last semester and we already have 40+ members, yarn donations from a major company, and a super fun ongoing community service project!” writes Blair.

For Emily, Treasurer, the club offers a much-needed space to relax and meet other students. “After starting this club I have been able to connect with so many people ... I think we have created a great environment where everybody is welcome!”

Indeed, Crochet Club is open to all students including those who do not know how to crochet yet (but are open to learning). Members receive free supplies, snacks, and a weekly oasis of creativity and community. Find Crochet Club on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Butler Library every Thursday from 12:30-1:30pm, and follow @buffstatecrochet on Instagram for more.

**“It’s been such an incredible experience to be helping lead a new club. I have been crocheting for many years, and seeing so many people come together to do something you love is such a wonderful experience.”**

**- Isabella Conde, Secretary**



**Crochet Club Meets Thursdays 12:30-1:30pm  
Follow @buffstatecrochet to see  
more student creations!**



# A Semester at Disney


By Jordan Evans



In the Fall of 2023, I took a semester off to participate in the Disney College Program, a paid immersive internship program exclusively for college students. During my time there I worked merchandise at Disney's Polynesian Village Resort, although there are many roles you may receive ranging from food service to custodial. As a Cast Member, I was scheduled between 30-35 hours a week which left me plenty of time to take advantage of the perks I received, such as complimentary park admission and exclusive discounts.

My favorite aspect of this program was being able to meet my roommate Natalie from St. Louis Community College who was able to experience Orlando with me by living alone, exploring Disney property, exploring Universal Studios Orlando property, attending concerts, and more! While working I gained professional and educational experience

through perfecting interpersonal skills, meeting strict expectations, and making connections with people of every gender, race, ethnicity, age, or social class. As a Childhood Education major this program was beneficial as I was able to receive hands-on experience working with diverse children, maintaining their happiness, and satisfying parents' needs as well. As for challenges, I did have to take a leave of absence from Buffalo State and Orlando is a very expensive city to live in. If you are in a comfortable academic and financial situation, I highly recommend the Disney College Program! Disney is a very prestigious company and any employer would love to see that you maintained employment at a company with such high standards for their employees.




*Honoring Honors*

✦ *Navigating Transitions* ✦

Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> | 5:00 - 7:00pm  
Campbell Student Union Social Hall

Sponsored by the Buffalo State University President's Office

RSVP ON BENGAL CONNECT  
BY FRIDAY, MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>



Join us for our annual Honors recognition event! ↗

# Six Word Memoirs

By First-Year Students in HON111 & Seniors in HON444

## FIRST-YEAR MEMOIRS

Don't live a life in 'almost'.  
 Navigating change, stress, and caffeinated chaos.  
 I really, really liked this chapter!  
 A bunch of hippy, dippy bologna.  
 Worry just enough to finish it.  
 Cold, long walks. Loved every second.  
 Went to Buffalo, found my home.  
 Came in fear, left in confidence.  
 My mind determined my hopeful future.  
 Running miles never gets you anywhere.  
 Vehemently beleaguering semester percolates pulchritudinous me.  
 First, scary. Second, fun. Suddenly, exhausted.  
 Big hair, big eyeliner, big dreams.  
 Choose to overcome sadness; life follows.  
 Good afternoon, good evening, and goodnight.

## SENIOR MEMOIRS

Drowning in maturity, gasping for juvenility.  
 Seeking balance between chaos and inactivity.  
 Allow your intuition to guide you.  
 Saved by Philosophy, now teaching self-discovery.  
 Life, one step at a time.  
 Ever adapting to what I've caused.  
 Self-reliance or trust? My ultimate gambit.  
 Leaving the classroom to open mine.  
 Dreamed of where I am now.  
 Seeing the brightness through the dark.  
 It'll be good for the plot.  
 Living in fear brought me nowhere.  
 In the process of learning me.  
 I don't know what I'm doing.  
 Look up! You might miss something.



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Buffalo State Honors Program



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South Wing 330 | Monday - Friday 8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. | (716) 878-3093