Welcome to the October issue of News Bytes for Neophytes! Please visit the ACES Honors Portal at http://academics.aces.illinois.edu/honors, our news blog (The ACES Honors Herald, updated weekly) at http://theaceshonorsherald.blogspot.com, and our Twitter feed (@ACESJSHP) to keep up to date on all the latest happenings.

In this month’s newsletter, we have articles for you about the Honors Living Learning Community, undergraduate research experiences, a delicious internship, and much more! If you would like to contribute photos or articles to future issues, please be sure to read the article about the James Scholar Activities and Communications Team!

Please feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions or wonderings about the ACES James Scholar Honors Program and your progress within it. I can be reached at 217-244-1684 and/orrchappel@illinois.edu.

Upcoming Events

Information about these and other upcoming James-Scholarly events is on our Honors Calendar at http://academics.aces.illinois.edu/honors/james-scholars/guide. All of the following events will take place in the Heritage Room of the ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center.

Career Preparedness Program

- Thursday, November 1st, 3:15-4:30 PM
- Presenters: Claire Benjamin, Miranda Buss, Jean Drasgow, Julie Woolsey

Diamond Jubilee Holiday Reception for All ACES Honors Students

- Tuesday, December 11th, 3:15-4:30 PM

Turning the Wheel of the Year: Exploring the Ties That Bind Agriculture, the Calendar, and Astronomy

- Thursday, January 24th, 3:15-4:30 PM
- Presenter: Rob Chappell

Undergraduate Research Extravaganza

- Thursday, April 4th, 3:15-4:30 PM
- Presenters: Rob Chappell, Dr. Elvira Demejia, Dr. Anna Dilger, Dr. Jennifer Hardesty, Dr. Karen Rodriguez’G, Local Alumni

The JS-ACT Wants You!

http://theaceshonorsherald.blogspot.com

Are you interested in writing, photography, and/or social media? Would you like to gain experience in these areas by sharing the stories of ACES James Scholars and alumni like yourself? Then the James Scholar Activities and Communications Team (JS-ACT) is THE club for you!

Founded on February 3, 2006 by the Editor and a dozen enthusiastic students, the JS-ACT has been providing content to newsletters, web pages, and blogs
ever since. Our goal is to tell stories about our ACES James Scholars – their achievements, aspirations, and adventures! If you’d like to learn more or join up, please contact the Editor by writing to rchap-pel@illinois.edu.

Michelle Blaschek (B.S. in ANSC, ACES James Scholar Class of 2007), first President of the JS-ACT (2006), presented her Undergraduate Research project at Explore ACES in March 2006. (Photo Credit: Michelle)

FEATURES FROM THE GROVE OF ACADEME

The Honors Living Learning Community: A Profile
By Kayla Vittore (CPSC Major, ACES James Scholar Class of 2022), JS-ACT Executive-at-Large

Human nature is to seek out others who are in some ways like yourself. Whether that means same interests, shared backgrounds, or similar values, people naturally gravitate towards those they have things in common with. This is especially true when it comes time to choosing with whom you will be living during the school year. Hence, University of Illinois offers the Living Learning Communities. Areas of residence halls that focus on cultivating a specific atmosphere, Living Learning Communities are formed to help students find support and friendship amongst their dorm neighbors. For those students who are seeking a tone of scholarly dedication, the Honors Living Learning Community is an ideal spot to find their birds of a feather.

The Honors Living Learning Community (LLC) is found on floors three and four of Nugent Hall, on the north side of the Ikenberry Commons. Both Nugent and the LLC are highly sought after by students, so getting into the program is no easy feat. To be considered for the Honors LLC, a student must be a part of the James Scholar Honors Program for their college and/or a Chancellor’s Scholar for the University as a whole. These titles come with their own requirements, such as maintaining a certain GPA, and generally symbolize that the student is in the top 10%-15% of their
entering class. Besides being part of one or both programs, Honors LLC hopefuls must also provide a written statement to the Honors LLC staff about why they wish to be a part of the community.

Getting into the Honors LLC isn’t the end of the story, though. Amongst other things, members of the LLC are required to take an honors course called CHP 199: Uncommon Topics. For the fall 2018 semester, the focus is issues of mass incarceration, explored through discussion and various media such as the book *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. “I am super intrigued by what we are learning, because I had very limited prior knowledge of the topic,” says an Honors LLC freshman Eva Cornman. “Looking forward, I am really excited to delve even further into this incredibly pressing issue!”

The honors course is a great addition to any serious scholar’s schedule, but there are other benefits to joining this community. Nugent hall, where the LLC is located, is one of the newer residence halls, meaning the furnishings are still in good condition and AC is included in the dorm rooms. Said dorm rooms are also more spacious – or, at least, as spacious as a college dorm room can be. Additionally, Nugent has the unique situation of being physically connected to a dining hall, meaning that during poor weather, students don’t have to brave the outdoors if they want a meal. As well as excellent facilities, being a part of the Honors LLC ensures that you are living with other students who value the pursuit of knowledge. Study buddies will never be far away, and neighbors are more likely to understand people’s need for quiet at night. While members of the LLC all share a drive to learn and succeed in their classes, there’s still a great variety within the group. In an effort to create an interdisciplinary environment, the types of accepted applicants are split so half of them come from the larger colleges (e.g., Engineering) and the other half from smaller colleges (e.g., Fine and Applied Arts). The different perspectives and experiences this provides help to cultivate an interesting and dynamic relationship amongst those included in the LLC.

The Honors LLC accepts new applications annually, so eligible students who thrive in studious lifestyles can and should consider applying next year. While LLC type dorms aren’t for everyone, many people who participate in them have positive experiences. Elijah Walker, a current junior who lived in the dorm as a freshman, recalls his time in Honors fondly. “Honors LLC put me in a situation where I was surrounded by other driven students whose main goals were to succeed academically and professionally. … The community spurred many friendships for me. Most dorms have this tendency to do that through the sheer proximity of the living spaces, but the Honors LLC provided us with activities and events that further brought us residents together.” Attending a quality school like University of Illinois means we all have a long, challenging academic path ahead of us. By joining an LLC like Honors, you don’t have to make that journey alone.

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**A Taste of the Baker’s Art**

By Meg Dill Koch, R.D. (B.S. in FSHN, ACES James Scholar Class of 2007), JS-ACT Editorial Associate Emerita

Reprinted from *Cursus Honorum VI: 3* (October 2005)

When I was in eighth grade, I interviewed a family friend for a school project on careers. The woman whom I interviewed was a pastry chef at a tea-room, and I was intrigued as she told me about baking various treats and how she was developing new cookie recipes for the Christmas season. Since that time, I have kept the idea in the back of my mind that I want to open a bakery one day. When I came to the U of I to study dietetics, I hoped that I could use what I was learning about nutrition, food science, and restaurant management if I ever opened a bakery. Last spring, when I heard about an internship position at Great Harvest, a local bakery, I saw it as my chance to see if baking is something I could be passionate about for the rest of my life. Another FSHN student and I were

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Meg was the first recipient of the C. A. Haynes Sophomore Achievement Award in fall 2004. (Photo Credit: Dr. Charles Olson, Assistant Dean Emeritus, ACES Academic Programs)
hired at the beginning of the summer to create nutrition labels for all the baked products that Great Harvest sells at the Urbana Farmers’ Market and other local markets.

The internship began before school was out -- and at first, I was overwhelmed with work because we had to have all the labels ready for the first Farmers’ Market, which was the Saturday after Finals Week. Calculating the nutrition facts was a complicated process at first because I didn’t have any nutrition information on any of the ingredients. I had to contact the supplier or look through the USDA foods database to find information on each ingredient, then increase or decrease that information to match the amount of the ingredient in the recipe. Once I had the appropriate information for each ingredient, I still had to add up the amount of each nutrient for all the ingredients in the recipe to get the sum for the batch, which had to be divided into the amount per loaf and slice. To make things easier on myself, I developed a database of nutrition information for each ingredient and an Excel spreadsheet with preprogrammed formulas that converted ingredient measurements, summed the nutrients for each batch, and divided the information for a batch into loaves and slices.

In addition to the internship project, I was hired as a sweets baker -- which means that I get to go into the bakery very early in the morning and bake scones, cookies, muffins, and cinnamon rolls so that they are ready for the professors, businesspeople, and other folk who come in at 7:00 a.m. looking for coffee and breakfast. After the sweets are made, we begin kneading bread, which is the process of shaping pieces of dough into loaves that are ready to proof and bake.

Working at a bakery is an intense job. I have to be always thinking ahead, because we are usually working on making several products at once, and they are usually at various stages of the baking process. Kneading is physically demanding, but it is also a type of creative outlet. Each person’s breads come out a little bit differently, depending on how they knead, what type of designs they cut into the top, and how they shape the dough.

My experience at Great Harvest has convinced me that baking is something that I can be excited about for the rest of my life. I love the satisfaction of making things that look good, taste better, and (best yet) are healthy. The dream that was sparked back in eighth grade grew by leaps and bounds this summer. When it materializes one day, you are all welcome to come by and get a free slice of bread!

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An Introduction to Research

Text & Photo by John Bieber (NRES Major, ACES James Scholar Class of 2020)

John collects data during the winter of 2017-2018.

Finishing off my spring semester of my freshman year, I had walked to class a rather different way, walking into the back of the Animal Sciences Lab rather than the front. An ad posting caught my eye, and it was one that invited me to interview for a research position within Dr. Suski’s lab (under one of his Ph.D. students) to provide assistance with an experiment over the summer. I contacted them and set up a meet-

ing. A few days later, I was invited to the lab and was accepted into the team. Unfortunately, though, I was unable to work on the summer experiment as my housing plans had fallen through. I was disappointed; the research seemed incredibly interesting and applicable to my major in NRES.

Over the summer, I continued the communications, and I had continued to ask questions and stay engaged in the research project, despite the fact I could not be involved. When I was back in the lab the coming fall, I was welcomed with a new project, one that would entail a winter study in the biting cold Illinois temperature out at the lesser known research ponds south of Windsor Road. The project I was a part of would entail weeks of work in the subfreezing temperatures and a challenge of my skills in fish handling, sampling, and other scientific work. Yet it was all worth it, as this research could have a profoundly positive impact on the low impact methods of fish handling for ice anglers.
The question investigated throughout the semester was how varying temperature and air exposure impacts the swimming performance (and mortality) of common ice angled sport fish, like perch and bluegill. On the surface, it was a seemingly well-researched question, which I quickly discovered was not the case, simply because many researchers are unwilling to go out in the cold of winter to collect the data. This was a factor that all involved in this experiment embraced with open and excited arms.

This study entailed many different techniques and tools to be learned and executed. They included fish management, handling, and measuring; swim tunnel set up, performance, and use, as well as setting up oxygen sensors and even gill sampling! Across all of this, I refined the skills I had, learned new ones, and was challenged in an experiential yet also academic environment where questions were invited and encouraged. Within the quick semester, I could confidently set up and execute complex experiments measuring many common and essential variables for all fish studies. It taught me the true work and value of good data, creating a new level of respect for the published studies I read throughout my life and will continue to read.

As the temperature began to warm up, the paper began to be typed up. With that, the statistical analyses were run and assessed. While my prior stats knowledge prepared me for the basics, the application of the concepts in a real-world study helped me to learn the importance of a good knowledge base in stats. I had learned the basics of R, one of the most common tools used in scientific research, and exponentially expanded my abilities in Excel.

As I began to type up the paper, the step of the process I was most nervous about, as I had absolutely no prior scientific writing experience, I was met with great assistance from the lab. While there was a fair share of corrections along the way, I was able to develop something publishable – an experience most often only a graduate student would encounter.

Along the way, I had developed relationships with people from many departments and specialties that will be helpful for me as I continue to my educational and professional career. I can say I have done something very few have done – create a scientifically publishable paper – and have a newfound respect for the very things I learn as a science student.

I invite you to take the jump and seek every opportunity you can find. You never know what awaits around the corner.

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**THE CULTURE VULTURE**

*Photo and Poem by Kayla Vittore (CPSC Major, ACES James Scholar Class of 2022), JS-ACT Executive-at-Large*

The Sun illuminates a lamppost near the McFarland Memorial Bell Tower on the ACES Quadrangle.

Mankind, with machine and memo, with technology and task,

though He has outgrown me.

these egotistical descendants of Icarus, don zinc armor and tinted glass, pretending not to fear my eternal burn.

Gaia’s fleas-- they bustle about constructing endlessly destroying constantly. the planet’s nearly finished so now they turn to the sky.

the insult!
see their creations—
cold stone,
rusted metal,
clouded orbs of glass.
I dared to rest,
and, impatient and greedy,
Dark they displaced
with false sunshine.
grotesque.
that is the color –
a brown, yellow, amber mix
of fake day, of empty glow –
that is the color,
which follows the glory
of my polychrome setting.

who, I ask,
feeds their crops,
warms their waters,
dispels their storms?
who, I ask,
lights their paths,
marks their seasons,
awakens their slumbers?
who, I ask,
stirs their hearts,
inspires their artists,
stokes their spirits?

who? tis I!
not the slanderous pseudo-stars,
the monkeys’ slaves,
the drafted guardsmen
keeping Sleep at bay.
tis I!
I, who have been
stalwart since the first!

reliable, warm, comforting...
yet Mankind
thinks I’m disposable.
replaceable, interchangeable.
with these microscopic bulbs
these modern-day candles.

they dare
hold a match to their Sun?
my ire’s raised,
my fires rage,
ever hotter through the sky.
I’ll see their toys
crumble and crack
tumble and crash,
with Pride buried beneath
these new towers of Babel.

Contact Information

News Bytes for Neophytes is published monthly throughout the academic year for distribution to freshmen
ACES James Scholars and their Departmental Honors Advisors. Comments, questions, and suggestions are always wel-
come and may be directed to the Editor, Rob Chappell (rchappel@illinois.edu).