Welcome to the December 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 (@ACESJSHIP) to keep up to date on all the latest happenings.

In this month’s newsletter, we have articles about ACES 399: Honors Seminar, the start of our year-long Diamond Jubilee; undergraduate research; summer internships; and the world’s first polymath. If you would like to contribute photos or articles to future issues, please contact me at the phone number and/or email address below.

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/or rchapel@illinois.edu.

“The Night Before Finals”
By Rob Chappell (2005)

’Twas the night before finals, and all through the dorm,
Not a student was sleeping, for that was the norm.
When on the South Quad there arose such a clatter,
Students rose from their books to see what was the matter.
And there on the face of the new-fallen snow
A message was written in letters aglow.
A scribe unbeknownst on the snowfield did write:
“A kewl Yule to you all, and to all a good night!”

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.

Your sophomore year will be here before you know it. We encourage all of you to attend as many of the undergraduate research programs that we are offering during spring 2019 so you can start planning ahead for your capstone experience in the Honors Program.

Upcoming Events

Undergraduate Research Workshop #2
- Friday, February 1st, 3:00-4:00 PM
- Presenter: Dr. Karen Rodriguez’G

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

Undergraduate Research Workshop #3
- Friday, April 5th, 3:00-4:00 PM
- Presenter: Dr. Karen Rodriguez’G

ACES Undergraduate Research Day
- Tuesday, April 16th, 9:30 AM-1:30 PM
Back to the Future: ACES 399 – Reflecting on the Past and Looking Toward the Future
By Nicole Yaklich (B.S. in HDFS, ACES James Scholar Class of 2017), JS-ACT Correspondent
Adapted & Condensed from The ACES Honors Messenger I: 4 (November 2016)

Editor’s Note: ACES 399, taught by Dr. Jason Emmert, a longtime friend and supporter of the ACES James Scholar Honors Program, will be offered in spring 2019 on Wednesday afternoons from 3:00-3:50 PM in W-203 Turner Hall. For more information, please contact Dr. Emmert at jemmer@illinois.edu.

The year 2050 still seems too far away to even think about, right? However, 35 years are all that separate us from 2050, which when looking at the world today and where we need to be in 2050, is not enough time. Many of us have heard of the numerous challenges our world is facing today: overpopulation, water and food shortages, global warming, and the list goes on and on. How are we going to address these challenges in an effective and timely way? Ask any ACES 399 student from the spring of 2015, and they will be able to offer insight to all of these topics and many others.

ACES 399: Honors Seminar explores many of the major crises the world is facing today through faculty presentations and also group work. Students are able to hear in person how professionals in their respective fields are in fact addressing any number of challenges we are currently facing or will be facing by 2050. The University of Illinois is such a large and diverse institution that it is often impossible to know of all the fantastic work that is being done by faculty. ACES 399 invites several professionals of different departments across campus to offer their insight as to how we can improve the current world we live in and also prepare it for future generations. Additionally, not only will students grow their knowledge by taking ACES 399, but also by completing this course with a grade of at least a B, students earn one credit hour and also can substitute this class for one of their Honors Credit Learning Agreements.

Before enrolling in ACES 399 last spring, I can honestly say I had no idea what state our world is currently in. It may seem like an intimidating idea, but our generation must be the one to bring stability and also answers to the challenges we are facing. I have a whole new perspective on my role in the world moving forward and am excited to bring fresh ideas and insight to the future. ACES 399 is a fantastic class and broadened my knowledge far beyond what I thought possible. Prepare for the future, and start by enrolling in ACES 399 today!

Celebrating Sixty Sparkling Years: Kicking off the ACES James Scholar Diamond Jubilee
By Magister Rob Chappell, Assistant to the Honors Dean

On January 20, 1959, the University of Illinois’ Board of Trustees created the James Scholar Honors Programs to challenge and reward exceptional undergraduate students on the Urbana-Champaign campus. Named after Dr. Edmund J. James (1855-1925), the fourth President of the University of Illinois (1904-1920), the James Scholar Honors Programs are celebrating their Diamond Jubilee Year (sixtieth anniversary) in 2019. The Editor and his student worker, freshman ACES James Scholar and JS-ACT Executive-at-Large Megan Finfrock, have been conducting research into the life and times of President James, along with exploring the early years of the James Scholar Honors Programs.

The ACES James Scholar Honors Program kicked off its celebration of the Diamond Jubilee Year on Tuesday, December 11, with its first-ever Holiday Reception in the Heritage Room of the ACES Library. Faculty, staff, and students in attendance were treated to a special Diamond Jubilee cake and sparkling punch provided by University Catering. ACES James Scholars were able to
connect with each other and with special guests: Dr. Jason Emmert (Professor in Animal Sciences); Magistra Elizabeth Rockman (Associate Director of the Campus Honors Program); Dr. Jennifer Hardesty (Honors Advisor in Human Development & Family Studies); Dr. David Schug (Director of the National & International Scholarship Program); and Dr. Wayne Pitard (Director Emeritus of the Spurlock Museum).

Dr. Anna Dilger, Interim Associate Dean of Academic Programs and the sixth ACES Honors Dean, presented five graduating senior James Scholars with their certificates of achievement, honor cords, and bronze medallions: Cassidy Donnelly, Madeline Schaffel, Krti Tallam, Delaney Walsh, and Luke Zimmerman. Dr. Dilger and the Editor also presented the 15th annual Carol A. Haynes Sophomore Achievement Award to Monisha Roychoudhury (HDFS), which includes a certificate of achievement, a book prize, and a scholarship prize.

The Editor and Megan gave a PowerPoint presentation about their ongoing historical research to round out the reception. Through archival photos, the audience learned about the accomplishments of President James and the founding of the James Scholar Honors Programs under the directorship of Dr. Robert E. Johnson in 1959. It was also revealed that the Campus Honors House used to be known as the Edmund J. James Center, and photos of student life at the James Center from the 1960s were shared during the presentation. More historical research is underway and will continue throughout the spring semester so that a summary narrative of the ACES James Scholar Honors Program’s history can be produced during the Diamond Jubilee Year.

We hope that you will join us for more special Diamond Jubilee programming throughout 2019, accompanied by additional historical articles in future issues of this newsletter. If you have any ideas or suggestions for future presentations or celebrations, please contact the Editor by writing to rchappel@illinois.edu.

FEATURES FROM THE GROVE OF ACADEmE

Undergraduate Research Assistants
Text & Photo by Maria Pauls (B.S. in FSHN with Bronze Tablet Honors, ACES James Scholar Class of 2014), JS-ACT President Emerita
Reprinted from Cursus Honorum XI: 2 (Winter 2012)

This semester, I wanted to expand my experiences and explore the options at the University of Illinois with undergraduate research. I have heard great comments from my peers about working with the successful professors on their research at the U of I, so this past fall semester, I wanted to commit myself to working as an undergraduate research assistant.

As a Human Nutrition major in the College of ACES, I wanted to stick with research inside of my major. So with help from my advisor, I had compiled a list of professors in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition and started investigating what type of research each professor was focused on. I was interested in many of these professors’ work, but one in particular, Dr. Karen Chapman-Novakofski, caught my eye, and I was very intrigued to conduct my undergraduate research experience with her lab. Her research focuses on nutritional education and behavioral research, as opposed to the chemistry and laboratory science of research. Her research targets diabetes and osteoporosis prevention and treatment specifically. So many of the studies directly work with people, which is why her research in particular interested me so much. I am a very social person, so by putting together a research experience alongside actually communicating with people made me sure this is the type of research I wanted to be involved in.
I have enjoyed all my time working in Dr. Chapman-Novakofski’s lab this semester. I have helped out with nutritional analysis on diabetes recipes and computer work with research data. My favorite project I worked on this semester was helping one of her graduate students with her project. I was able to go to a local middle school with her as she talked with students in a focus group about the nutrition educational intervention she completed with them a year ago.

I would highly encourage other undergraduates to explore different undergraduate research opportunities available here at the University of Illinois. There are so many different options of research that everyone could find something that interests them. I am continuing my research again this semester and look forward to the new projects I will be exposed to. Expand yourself professionally, and discover the exceptional research being conducted on our campus!

Dedicated in 1957, historic Bevier Hall houses several labs operated by the Department of FSHN, including the ever-popular Bevier Café.

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**A Summer Well Spent at the Zoo**

**Text & Photo by Dr. Kimberly Wangen (B.S. in ANSC, ACES James Scholar Class of 2009; D.V.M., College of Veterinary Medicine, Class of 2013)), JS-ACT President Emerita**

Reprinted from *Cursus Honorum IX: 1* (August 2008)

https://vcahospitals.com/sequoia-valley/team/kimberly-wangen

Summer has come to a close, and ACES students are finishing up their internships, jobs, traveling, classes, and everything else that has kept them afloat during these past three months. As for me, I was able to take classes, do various volunteer projects throughout the community, and do an internship while still having time to spare. It was a very busy summer, but it was quite a learning experience that I can bring along to my professional life.

My internship was at Cosley Zoo, which is located in Wheaton among the Chicagoland suburbs. Most of you reading this probably know that it is a small zoo, or else you have never heard of it at all. I chose to work there precisely because it was small. At much larger zoos, interns are often required to “specialize” in one area, which will actually limit their experience to a certain species or region. At Cosley, however, I was able to rotate throughout the zoo, and I worked with exotics, wildlife, and large domestic animals. I had maximum exposure and handling experience, including everything from tiny Vietnamese walking sticks to a Guernsey dairy cow. I also had really useful one-on-one experience with the staff members, and the program was very well organized.

One of the main parts of the job was helping the zookeepers with their daily routines. About 80% of it involved cleaning and diet preparation, but it definitely helped me become familiarized with a zookeeper’s job!

We went down to the smallest detail to make sure that the zoo was clean for opening, including dusting the barn every day and raking leaves and debris from walkways. On my first day, I questioned the zookeepers about why this was necessary, and they pointed out that the zoo’s cleanliness is probably the number one comment that they get from visitors!

When I was not cleaning in my area for the day, I would usually help out with training sessions or enrichment programs. It was entertaining to watch a coyote grab a ball, a raccoon raise its paw in unison with its trainer, or a fox lean close enough for the keeper to touch him on command. However, there are reasons for these types of responses other than pure amusement, and I did not realize this until later, when these “tricks” were sensibly applied. During the veterinary walkthrough, the vet had to give a rabies vaccination to one of the deer. Normally, of course, deer will not cooperate, which leads to stress and possible injury to the handlers and the animal. But in this case, the zookeepers were able to use the training to keep the deer still while the injection was given! After witnessing this, I was astounded at the deer’s good behavior, as most animals that I have worked with in the past, both domestic and wild, do not particularly take well to getting poked. It was a new side of veterinary medicine that I was not used to.
Besides the normal daily procedures, the interns conducted a field project on Blanding's turtles. As they are a threatened species, we carried out population counts of aquatic turtles in a local marsh. In essence, this involved getting into a neoprene wetsuit with a pail of slimy fish, climbing into swampy water, and checking traps every day. While an encounter with Blanding's turtles was unsuccessful, we did come across plenty of snapping turtles (one of which took a chunk off my rubber boot after being released!). Due to the Blanding's turtle's status, the zoo has been breeding them in captivity for eventual release into the wild. The project itself was enough evidence that these turtles are endangered in the environment, and I really did feel involved in these conservation efforts.

Overall, I felt that my internship not only helped me understand how the zookeeper fits into the big picture of animal-related fields, but also to learn a bit more about myself. After working with these people and animals, I learned to look at animals from a different perspective and to pay attention to their movements and behavior. I learned about my own developing fascination with large animals as well as fieldwork. But most of all, I learned professional skills that will be helpful in any type of career. If any students are looking for an internship or job for the future, I recommend looking into Cosley Zoo. Since the zoo is small, students will get personalized as well as varied experiences that may be difficult to find at other organizations. It is definitely a great starting point for people interested in any sort of animal-related career.

The future Dr. Kimberley Wangen posed with a burro named Jenny at the Cosley Zoo during summer 2008.

**THE CULTURE VULTURE**

**Meet Dr. Imhotep: History's First Polymath**

By Magister Rob Chappell, Assistant to the Honors Dean

Adapted & Condensed from *Cursus Honorum* VIII: 9 (May/June 2008)

According to Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, a polymath is a person of encyclopedic learning, and the first polymath in recorded history is Imhotep (fl. 27th century BCE), an Egyptian scientist who was greatly revered both during and after his lifetime. Born a commoner, he rose through the ranks of Egyptian society through his profound learning in many fields of study until he was appointed Grand Vizier (prime minister) to Pharaoh Djoser, the best-known king of Egypt's Third Dynasty. Djoser commissioned Imhotep to build a splendid royal tomb, and what resulted was the first Egyptian pyramid – the Step Pyramid at Saqqara. It was the largest building on Earth at that time and served as a prototype for all subsequent pyramid construction throughout Egypt's long history.

Imhotep was not only an innovative architect; he also served as High Priest of Heliopolis, a chief city of the realm. A major aspect of his priestly occupation was the practice of medicine, which included herbal remedies as well as highly advanced surgical techniques. Imhotep recorded his vast knowledge of the surgical arts in a treatise contained on the Edwin Smith Papyrus, thus preserving his knowledge for future generations.

Imhotep's dedication to the healing arts led to a profound reverence for his memory among the Egyptian populace. He became the first mortal added to the Egyptian pantheon within a few centuries of his death, and he served as the prototype for the Greek demigod Asclepius – who, like Imhotep, was regarded as a divine patron of medical science. As Asclepius, Imhotep also appeared in the Hermetic literature of late antiquity, which preserved Egyptian esoteric traditions about the origin of the cosmos and humankind's place within it. In these treatises, Imhotep is a dialogue partner of Hermes Trismegistus (the Greek version of the Egyptian deity Thoth), a legendary alchemist, physician, and astronomer who transmitted his knowledge to Asclepius/Imhotep for the benefit of human beings.
The constellation Ophiuchus is actually a representation of Asclepius/Imhotep. It is popularly known as the “13th Sign of the Zodiac,” because the Sun passes through this constellation after traversing Scorpius but before entering Sagittarius. (Image Credit: Urania’s Mirror, 1825)

Imhotep, history’s first known polymath, is a superb role model for today’s budding young scientists. Unwilling to lock himself up in an ivory tower or to hoard knowledge solely for its own sake, he freely shared his wisdom with others so that their lives could be enriched through architecture, education, government, medicine, and science. Imhotep’s example also serves to remind us that no matter what field of study we may choose to specialize in, it is important to acquire a good working knowledge of several subjects so that we can wear many hats throughout our lifetime and be as useful as possible to our society. As long as we read his books and follow his example, Imhotep will live on in human memory as our history continues to unfold – even though his tomb remains undiscovered to this very day.

**Recommended Reading**

  - *The Wisdom of the Egyptians* by Brian Brown (1923) provides an introductory overview of Egyptian history, mythology, philosophy, and science.

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**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 welcome and may be directed to the Editor, Rob Chappell (rchappel@illinois.edu).