Welcome to the March/April issue of *News Bytes for Neophytes*. Please visit the ACES Honors Portal at [http://academics.aces.illinois.edu/honors](http://academics.aces.illinois.edu/honors), our news blog ([The ACES Honors Herald](http://theaceshonors herald.blogspot.com)) at [http://theaceshonors herald.blogspot.com](http://theaceshonors herald.blogspot.com), and our Twitter feed ([@ACESJSHP](https://twitter.com/ACESJSHP)) to keep up to date on all the latest happenings.

In this edition of our newsletter, we have information about some upcoming special events that you will want to attend; the Humanities Book Prize competition; and some feature articles about studying overseas, our Honors Program's Diamond Jubilee Year, and an outstanding scientist from ancient Greece. 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 about the ACES James Scholar Honors Program and your progress within it. I can be reached at [rchappel@illinois.edu](mailto:rchappel@illinois.edu) and/or 217-244-1684.

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**Upcoming Events**

We encourage all of you to attend the special programming that we are offering during spring 2019 so you can start planning ahead for your capstone experience in the Honors Program: Undergraduate Research! All of the following events will take place in the Heritage Room of the ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center.

### Undergraduate Research Extravaganza

- **Thursday, April 4th, 3:15-4:30 PM**
- **Presenters:** Rob Chappell, Dr. Elvira De Mejia, Dr. Anna Dilger, Dr. Jennifer Hardesty, Dr. Karen Rodriguez’G, and Juliette Nye

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### Scientists Behaving Badly?
**The Responsible Conduct of Research**

- **Friday, April 5th, 3:00-4:00 PM**
- **Presenter:** Dr. Karen Rodriguez’G
First Annual ACES Undergraduate Research Day: Tuesday, April 16th, 9:30 AM-1:30 PM
Heritage Room, ACES Library

Senior James Scholar and JS-ACT President Juliette Nye (double-majoring in Animal Sciences and French) presented her Undergrad Research poster in spring 2017.

Please join us as we celebrate the accomplishments of sophomore, junior, and senior ACES James Scholars who have completed their capstone experience – an ACES Undergraduate Research project during the current academic year. Our first annual ACES Undergraduate Research Day will feature poster displays by ACES James Scholars just like you, along with an oral presentation of research by John Bieber (a junior ACES James Scholar in NRES and the first Campbell Scholarship recipient) starting at 12:00 noon. You won’t want to miss this exceptional opportunity to get a glimpse of your future, network with your peers, and learn about all the exciting discoveries being made by our intrepid Undergraduate Researchers in ACES. Please watch our social media outlets and your U of I email account for additional updates as they become available.

FEATURES FROM THE GROVE OF ACADEME

The ACES James Scholar Honors Program: Six Decades of Cultivating Opportunity and Achievement
By Magister Rob Chappell, Editor

The calendar year 2019 marks the sixtieth anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) of the establishment of the James Scholar Honors Programs at the University of Illinois. The James Scholar Honors Programs run by the various Colleges on the Urbana campus are named after Dr. Edmund J. James, President of the University of Illinois from 1904 to 1920. Among many other accomplishments, President James commissioned the construction of Lincoln Hall in 1909 (the centennial year of Abraham Lincoln’s birth) to house the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He is also remembered for his visionary challenge to the Board of Trustees in 1912, urging that the University build a research library to house a projected collection of at least one million volumes.

The first freshman class of James Scholars arrived in the College of Agriculture during September 1959. These young scholars, born in the early 1940s, had already witnessed some amazing events taking place in their world: the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War; the advent of television and the transistor radio; the launching of the Space Race between the United States and the Soviet Union; and the birth of rock-and-roll music, to name only a few. These first James Scholars graduated in 1963, and throughout the
1960s and 1970s, the Honors Program continued to provide challenging and rewarding experiences to the best and brightest students in the College of Agriculture.

In 1982, Dr. Orville G. Bentley, Dean of the College of Agriculture, announced the creation of the Jonathan Baldwin Turner (JBT) Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program. This innovative program has been providing research funding and concurrent merit scholarships to James Scholars and other outstanding students within our College ever since. (Its name was changed to the ACES Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program in 2005.) The opportunity to conduct an undergraduate research project under the supervision of a distinguished faculty member, receiving the same level of guidance given to graduate students, remains a key component of the College’s James Scholar Honors Program.

In 1995, the College of Agriculture changed its name to the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES), and four years later, in 1999, the ACES James Scholar Honors Program was reorganized and revitalized by Dr. Wayne Banwart, Dr. Kirby Barrick, and Dr. Bryan White. During its fifth and sixth decades, the Honors Program has been enriched through the publication of electronic periodicals; the launching of its website in fall 2004; the creation of two annual writing competitions; and the formation of the James Scholar Activities and Communications Team (JS-ACT) in February 2006.

As the Honors Program celebrates its Diamond Jubilee this year, we look forward to its next six decades with anticipation. We know that many changes lie ahead for our global civilization in the coming decades, but we also know that our students of today are up to the challenge of improving our world in manifold ways that we cannot yet imagine. Looking back to Abraham Lincoln, one of the “Founding Fathers” of the University of Illinois, we are confident that our inheritors will continue to be inspired by the principles that he set forth in his Address to the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, given at Milwaukee on September 30, 1859. His concluding remarks about the value of agricultural education and research are well worth quoting and remembering:

“This leads to the further reflection, that no other human occupation opens so wide a field for the profitable and agreeable combination of labor with cultivated thought, as agriculture. I know of nothing so pleasant to the mind, as the discovery of anything which is at once new and valuable -- nothing which so lightens and sweetens toil, as the hopeful pursuit of such discovery. And how vast, and how varied a field is agriculture, for such discovery. The mind, already trained to thought, in the country school, or higher school, cannot fail to find there an exhaustless source of profitable enjoyment. Every blade of grass is a study; and to produce two, where there was but one, is both a profit and a pleasure.”

The ACES James Scholar Honors Program extends its congratulations and gratitude to all its alumni, students, and supporters as they strive to fulfill the educational vision of Abraham Lincoln, Jonathan Baldwin Turner, Edmund J. James, and all the other Illinoisan leaders who have made the James Scholar experience possible.

This picture, which hangs in the University Archives, shows Dr. Edmund J. James, President of the University of Illinois (1904-1920), sitting at his desk in 1906. (Photo Credit: Megan Finfrock, ACES James Scholar Class of 2022.)
When you think about it objectively, four months doesn’t seem like very much time. A four-month-old tree is little more than a twig, and four months of dating is hardly an achievement anymore. In reality, it’s hardly more than a change of seasons. Yet, my four months’ time in Granada, Spain encompassed some of the best experiences of my still-young life. When I boarded the plane from Chicago O’Hare on January 14, 2009, I had only the faintest idea of the caliber of adventure I was beginning. Armed with my Lonely Planet guidebook, seventy pounds of luggage, and the good advice from Granada returnees, I stepped on the plane and put my faith in my own abilities and common sense.

After a long layover and consequent delay in Madrid’s Barajas Airport, I realized just how isolated I was. I only understood enough Spanish to fumble through a conversation and, even more unsettling, I had nobody to converse with. I finally made it to Granada late that night and was so excited by my new surroundings that I chattered in broken Spanish with the cab driver, trying to glean as much native wisdom as I could before orientation officially started. When I left the States, I was generally a very shy person. However, through learning about the cultures Ivisited, I learned that there’s no harm in trying to talk to someone. The worst that happens is you get a little embarrassed. Talking with the cab driver, regardless of how little I actually understood, was the critical first step in my transition from a self-conscious young adult to a culture-savvy traveler.

My first few weeks in Granada are a blur, due mostly to the difficult adjustment to the new time zone and way of life. I remember being so upset with myself that I slept through the Alhambra tour because I didn’t fall asleep the night before until well after 6:00 AM. Classes started much the same as classes at Illinois start, with handing out syllabi and discussing course expectations, but the most apparent difference was class size. My collegiate experience has been large lecture halls and impersonal relations with classmates and professors, but at the Academia Cegri, class sizes were small. Most of my classes were ten or twelve people, and the professors made every effort to get to know our names and our distinguishing attributes. While it seems superfluous to mention how many seats were in my courses, I found it to be a refreshing change, and I owe much of my technical language improvement to this setting. We were able to focus on our individual needs and concerns, and it facilitated making friends with the other students. Regrettably, classes were not held in conjunction with the University of Granada, so it was all American students. I found this to be comforting at first, but as the semester wore on, I found myself craving intellectual conversation with Spaniards my own age. Oh well; next time. I surely can’t complain about how much I learned from those classes.

My classroom experience was complemented with a home stay, and I don’t think anyone was as lucky as I was with their host family assignment. My señora, Cristina Ladiere, was a French woman who moved to Spain forty years ago to raise her family. She has traveled all over the world and speaks three languages fluently, as well as snippets of others. One of the most inspiring and mind-boggling moments was a night when she had two friends over for dinner. The man was a burly Englishman, and the woman was petite, probably in her late sixties, and of Dutch origin. I didn’t eat dinner with them, but as I listened from the other room, I heard conversation happening simultaneously in three different lan-
The British can head to France or Germany or up to Scandinavia with the same efforts. There is a much broader sense of the world in Europe, one that we as Americans miss out on because of the vastness of our homeland. Within the four months that I was overseas, I managed to visit eight separate countries relatively easily – I still find that hard to believe.

Admittedly, during my first few weeks in Granada while I was fighting sleep deprivation and the consequent emotional instability, I didn’t think I was going to fall in love with the city. Through my skewed, exhausted eyes, all I could see was the lack of grass, the deficiency of central heating, and the seven-hour time difference from home. However, as I adjusted, I realized how wonderful the city and the people of Granada, and all of Andalucía, really are. Being an honors student in college is admittedly exhausting, and so I was first to welcome the more relaxed, tranquil lifestyle of southern Spain. While many think of this as laziness, I found the calmer scene to be more closely related to an ability to stop and appreciate life’s little blessings. Every day around 2:00 PM, all the school kids rush home, and every shop gets closed up, so that families can eat lunch together and rest a bit before continuing on with their day. As it got hotter, I realized the motivation of getting out of the midday sun, but still more important is the value of the family to the Spaniards. Lunch together and a brief siesta is a custom I wish I could instill in my family at home, but it sadly does not fit with the daily grind of life in the States. Similarly, on mornings when I was running a few minutes late, I didn’t feel the need to arrive in class panting and heaving from running. People there are more understanding and more often than not arrive late themselves. By the end of the semester, my 1:20 classes were starting closer to 1:30 or 1:35, and nobody made a big fuss.

Four months really isn’t that long of a time; really it’s just a little more than a change of seasons. And yet, even though it’s not enough time to master a skill or to completely rectify bad habits, it’s the perfect amount of time to spend overseas. It’s enough time to feel the pain of the cultural adjustment and also experience the benefits before preparing to go home. It’s the right amount of time to meet some incredible people and learn that the world that you know is very, very different from the world that they know. It’s sufficient to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of a different way of life and to look objectively at the things that you could improve on. And most of all, it’s the perfect amount of time to fall in love with the clichéd “home away from home,” the city that has revealed to you so much history, culture, and other surprises that you can never hope to be the same person when you step off the airplane back home as when you stepped on four months earlier.

THE CULTURE VULTURE

“Aristotle: The Master of Those Who Know”
By Magister Rob Chappell, Editor
Adapted & Condensed from Cursus Honorum VI: 9 (April 2006)

Before the rise of modern science, what is known today as the scientific enterprise was called “natural philosophy”—that is, “the study of Nature’s wisdom.” One of the foremost “natural philosophers” of Classical antiquity was Aristotle (384-322 BCE), whose writings encompass such diverse subjects as physics, astronomy, geosciences, ethics, politics, logic, psychology, biology, rhetoric, and metaphysics. Hailed as the “Master of Those Who Know” when his writings were rediscovered and Latinized in 11th-century Spain, he came to be regarded as “THE Phi-
losopher” by his Scholastic admirers at Europe’s medieval universities.

Aristotle was a keen observer of the natural world. Some of his theories have not stood the test of time – such as his geocentric conception of the Universe and his belief in the spontaneous generation of living organisms. Nonetheless, he made meticulous observations of both living and nonliving things, and based on his observations, he devised a logically consistent system of animal, vegetable, and mineral classifications that endured for two millennia.

Aristotle was also interested in what we would call the “humanities.” His writings on ethics and political science display his deep insights into human nature and the social order. He is often regarded as the first Western literary critic because of his books on the aesthetics of poetry and rhetoric. Aristotle also ventured into the realm of metaphysics: his reasoned speculations about the nature of reality have exercised a profound influence on Western philosophy ever since.

“Mine is the first step and therefore a small one, though worked out with much thought and hard labor. You, my readers or hearers of my lectures, if you think I have done as much as can fairly be expected of an initial start, will acknowledge what I have achieved and will pardon what I have left for others to accomplish.” – Aristotle

Contact Information

*News Bytes for Neophytes* is published 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](mailto:rchappel@illinois.edu)).