Students Triumph in Annual Honors Softball Match

Students win 20–18, ending faculty’s nine-year winning streak

In 2005, Honors Director Richard Badenhausen planned the first ever Honors student vs. Honors faculty softball game at Sugarhouse Park, a close contest won by faculty members. Despite students’ best efforts to win the annual game for nine years in a row, professors always emerged victorious. This last spring, however, on the 10th anniversary of the tradition, students narrowly won 20–18 and triumphantly seized the game’s trophy for the first time in Honors history.

The faculty’s nine-year streak was not due to sheer luck; each faculty player has continued to bring a distinct skill and talent to every game. In the 2015 softball game, Richard brought his devastating brushback pitch, provost Lisa Gentile was running like the wind, and Neuroscience/Honors professor Russ Costa brought a big bat to the game. Many students playing for the first time were surprised by the faculty’s softball abilities. Sophomore Alexis Nelson jokingly said, “I didn’t think Russ was coordinated in any way, but he could really hit the ball.”

Although the professors claimed they held no organized practices beforehand, their skills emerged as an obstacle to the student success during the 2015 game. “The professors have a weird strength that doesn’t come from working out as much as it comes from just being fully-fledged adults,” said senior psychology major Doug Getty. Some faculty members possess different strengths than others, however. Robyn Hyde, a chemistry professor, admits that she only owns a mitt and it is the only thing she has “ever brought to a game.”

While each faculty member makes a unique contribution to the team, the new final exam schedule (without the “Dead Day” study period) made it difficult for faculty to form the strongest group possible. Multiple key players were away on May Term trips, which put the team at a severe disadvantage. Because the faculty team did not have all their stars the students utilized this as an advantage to bring a positive energy to the field.

This competitive and positive mindset paid off for the students at the very end of the game when the competition intensified. By dedicating all their energy and effort to the final inning, the students barely won the game by two runs, holding off a late faculty rally. Despite the professors experience, years of practice, and hard work, their valiant playing did not cut it this time.

Richard, who has long boasted of the faculty’s success in the game, said, “My favorite part was when the faculty failed to come back in the final inning and the students won. There have been years when we’ve come close to losing and been able to pull through.” Luckily for students, they were able to hang on and win.

Ending with a Rubio’s picnic and many smiles, the 2015 game was hopefully the first of many student victories. Ian McCracken, a third year veteran on the student team, said it best: “At one point as an Honors student it was enough to excel in the classroom; however, we now demand multifaceted students, both academically and athletically sound.”

While nobody knows who will win future softball games, students and faculty alike look forward to continuing this fun, ongoing tradition for years to come in the Honors program—as long as students do not have another nine-year losing streak.

By Mackenzie Crow
Students, faculty join for end-of-year awards and reminiscing

The Westminster Honors program is distinctive for many reasons: the Humanities sequence, annual softball games, and especially the end-of-year Honors Banquet—which is one of the largest and longest lasting traditions in the program's history—all add a special flavor to the program.

This banquet is unique because it allows time for moments of reflection rather than focusing on the future. During the event, members of the Honors community reflect on their individual growth, the development of the senior class over the last four years, and the expansion of the program; and we are able to engage in a genuine conversation about what we all mean to one another. The 2014–2015 Honors Banquet was no exception, bringing with it all of these traditions and emotions.

The atmosphere at the banquet is different from other Honors settings. After nine months of reading, writing, and working hard, you can see an entire room of stressed students and professors loosen their collars and relax. Historically, students laugh and tease their dignified professors—who they greatly admire—and give them awards like, “Most likely to have a second job as a rodeo clown.”

That particular award went to Dave Goldsmith, assistant director of the Honors program (and secret rodeo clown), at last year’s banquet. On top of these fun awards, attendees at the banquet get the chance to put on their best dresses and suits, mingle with one another at a fun social hour, and eat some delicious food at the Draw. Although the meals change each year, everyone in attendance can always look forward to bacon-wrapped scallops, a special favorite of Honors director Richard Badenhausen’s.

One part of the evening that everyone eagerly anticipates is the Honors writing awards. These awards are meant to recognize excellent written work in Honors seminars across a variety of different categories by giving these writers cash prizes. Goldsmith announced this year’s winners at the banquet and chuckled when announcing the titles of the best papers because they can get ridiculously long. At this year’s banquet, one winner was Selina Foster, who won the Humanities award for best paper titled, “The Problem of Patriarchy: Nietzsche’s Gender Double Bind in The Handmaid’s Tale.” (Believe it or not, this is a short title when compared to previous winners.)

After announcing the winners of the writing awards, Goldsmith then revealed the two students who had received the program’s summer research grants. These recipients, seniors Amanda Howa and Emma DeLougherty, were able to spend the summer investigating a topic they found interesting and gained valuable hands-on research experience.

Recipients of the summer research grant consistently produce excellent work. Two years ago, Nicole Bedera, an Honors alumna who is currently a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, received the Honors grant and had her research on sexual assault published in an academic journal, work that was also recently publicized in The Daily Beast. Howa and DeLougherty will do great things with the final products of their research and each plans on publishing her work in an academic journal.

At the event, anyone can see that the Honors program is a small and close-knit family, with the Banquet functioning as a giant family reunion. In between bites, everyone excitedly shares his or her accomplishments from the past year and catches up on recent events both in and outside of school. Students and professors talk with one another and participate in great conversations about future plans and life in general. Just like you would expect from a close family, everyone is happy about each other’s successes; if you’re feeling stressed out about your future at the banquet, you’re sure to

Continued on next page
Summer Research in Sex Trafficking, Blood Clotting

Seniors Emma DeLoughery and Amanda Howa receive grants for summer research

Every year the Westminster Honors program offers two summer grants to students with interesting research ideas. These competitive research grants allow students to focus exclusively on their topic of interest and get applicable experience instead of flipping burgers over the summer to cover their living expenses. This past summer two exemplary Honors students, Emma DeLoughery and Amanda Howa, received this award and worked on two exciting, yet vastly different, research projects.

Emma DeLoughery, a biology pre-med and senior Honors student, has been interested in conducting research on blood clotting since her sophomore year of high school. Although the study she conducted with the help of the Honors grant had a larger scope, Emma was able to employ the same retrospective research design she used in her high school study. This past summer, she successfully built on her past research—which was published in two academic journals and presented at a conference—to inform her overarching research question.

Emma’s study aimed to determine if doctors’ use of clotting drugs in the event of heavy bleeding actually improved patients’ outcomes. She gathered data from the Oregon Health & Science University in Portland and ultimately analyzed 300 patient charts for relevant information. She looked at three widely prescribed drugs in order to determine their efficacy, particularly when doctors used these drugs on patients with bleeding in the brain. She gathered results by comparing mortality rates, length of stay in the hospital, plasma use, and the number of clotting complications as a result of overmedication. Although Emma did run into problems finding a control group, she continues to work on her research project. She ultimately hopes to present her findings at a conference and write another paper for publication in the near future.

Amanda Howa is a public health major on the pre-med track, a senior Honors student, and Vice President of the Student Honors Council. Amanda’s research interest was inspired by a movie on prostitution shown at a Profs Pick the Flick event held in Nunemaker. Amanda discovered that there was no data regarding prostitution in Utah or the greater Salt Lake area and decided that needed to change. She designed her study to focus on online forums dealing with various aspects of prostitution in Salt Lake and coded various comments on these forums with 37 variables. Due to the meticulousness of the coding and the serious (oftentimes disturbing) nature of the topic, Amanda said she occasionally took a break from coding to catch her breath. All her work could very well be worth it, however, as some preliminary results of this study could be used to help the Human Trafficking Task Force in Salt Lake. Amanda thinks she has some ideas for circumventing tests that individuals involved with prostitution use to tell if either member is a police officer—information that could allow the task force to help hundreds of individuals involved in Salt Lake's human trafficking epidemic. With the amount of data she collected over the summer, Amanda hopes to publish or present two different papers on the topic.

By Riley Hodgson

Emma DeLoughery (left) and Amanda Howa (right) were recipients of last year’s Honors Summer Research Grant. DeLoughery conducted research on blood clotting while Howa investigated human trafficking in Salt Lake City.

Photo Courtesy of Aamina Khaleel.

Continued from page 2

find a supportive friend to help calm you down.

The evening culminates with a special tradition: Senior Moments. This time allows seniors in the program to reflect on the entirety of their Honors experience and choose one moment to share with the group at the banquet. Some moments that last year’s graduating class shared included grateful “Thank yous” to Richard or Nick More for a proper kick in the pants after receiving a prompt with a portion circled “No.” Another student last year described an experience in the Arts and Performance seminar where a student struggling to connect with others was able to find an intimacy and closeness with his classmates that was previously not possible. All of these stories recount a common theme: how seniors found a community and family in Honors. The 2015 Banquet ended with the graduating cohort comfortably laughing and crying while reminiscing on the impact Honors has had on them during their college experience and overall growth as individuals.

Ultimately, the end-of-year banquet honors the bond that students and professors have developed as a community over the years. Students and teachers alike laugh, cry, persevere, and look toward their future and larger place within the Honors family.

By Adia Thornton
Aptitude Academic Services: 
Getting to know each other

“Learning is about relationships,” agreed DJ and Julie Glusker, the founders of Aptitude Academics. And for seven years now, Aptitude has practiced this philosophy by cultivating a relationship with Westminster’s Honors program. Based out of Park City, Utah, Aptitude prides itself on creating a comfortable learning environment for high school students—a space where students can be open with their questions and build a rapport with their instructors. To create such a space the Gluskers rely heavily on personalized, one-on-one instruction.

Initially, the two of them managed all of the tutoring for their clients—DJ tutored students in the sciences and Julie covered the humanities. Eventually, however, they needed to hire an additional employee. So in 2008 they reached out to Westminster’s community at large, and David Luhr, an Honors student at the time, answered the call.

David was “intellectually distinctive,” explained DJ. “There was a difference in how he treated academics.” Thrilled with Luhr, the Gluskers have made it a point to primarily hire their employees from the Honors program. Today, Aptitude notifies Richard Badenhausen—director of the Honors program and the Gluskers’ longtime friend—each time a job opens up, and Richard passes on details about the job to students in Honors.

As a result of this longstanding relationship, Aptitude has come to count on the skills that its tutors develop in Honors because it consistently hires from the program. “We know that Honors students know how to read and write,” said DJ. “We know they aren’t afraid of hard work.” Past employees of Aptitude credit the Honors program with developing important skills that helped their own tutoring practices. “Honors taught me how to critique a piece of writing in a constructive way,” said Nicole Bedera, an Honors program alumna and current doctoral student at the University of Maryland. Bedera said she used those abilities while tutoring SAT and ACT prep at Aptitude. Chris Roundy, another Honors alumnus who is working on his Ph.D. in Human Pathophysiology and Translational Medicine, says, “Honors gave me the skills to work with my students through discussion-based learning.”

“Learning is about relationships.”

DJ and Julie Glusker

While Aptitude benefits from Honors, Honors students also draw meaningful skills from their tutoring experiences. Bedera, for example, noted that Aptitude prepared her for teaching in graduate school. Although the majority of her peers are nervously anticipating their potential mistakes as TAs, Bedera feels confident from her previous tutoring experiences that she can turn her “mistakes” into teachable moments for her students. Andre Biscaye, another former Aptitude employee and Honors student currently enrolled at the University of Rochester’s medical school, said that Aptitude improved his ability to communicate effectively with others—a skill that gave him an upper hand in medical school. “We [medical students] learn a lot by teaching each other,” said Biscaye.

A common thread in the philosophies of both Honors and Aptitude is simple yet effective: collaborative learning. Just as the Honors program pushes students to learn together by participating in constant group discussion, so does Aptitude. Seeing another transferrable skill from Honors, Bedera said she “knew how to learn with someone, which proved very valuable.” And for Roundy—since both Honors and Aptitude challenged him to know an idea “well enough to be able to teach it”—he said, “tutoring, ironically, was always a great way for me to learn.”

Although creating a schedule that works for busy Honors students is not always an easy task (and figuring out how to transport Honors employees to Park City during a snowstorm can be a challenge), the Gluskers think their connection with Westminster Honors is worth the work—and Honors students agree. Building multi-year relationships with individual high school students and the Gluskers is, in Roundy’s words, “very enjoyable.” Similarly, Biscaye notes: “My favorite part about working at Aptitude were the people I got to know, although I realize that sounds cheesy.” The Honors community looks forward to many years of ongoing partnership with Aptitude that will allow students to apply their classroom knowledge and skills to future tutoring experiences.

By Warren Cook
Students in the Honors program are typically high-achieving, studious individuals who dedicate large amounts of their time to studying and finishing classwork. Although such students have extremely demanding schedules and challenging coursework, they often engage in a variety of different activities outside the classroom. Honors students continue to demonstrate their commitment to specific goals and causes in a broader context by engaging in different activities on the campus, community, and global level.

One person who is actively involved on Westminster’s campus is sophomore Honors student and public health major Leah Weisgal. Leah’s passion for reproductive rights motivated her last spring to restart the long inactive Students 4 Choice club, an affiliate of Planned Parenthood designed to provide sex education and health resources on Westminster’s campus. She currently serves as the president of Students 4 Choice and has expanded the club’s presence dramatically on campus. Since her presidency, students’ desire to participate in the club and passion for topics related to Planned Parenthood has been overwhelmingly positive, which further inspires Leah to continue her own work. In conjunction with her work on campus, Leah is a representative of Planned Parenthood off campus and acts as a public affairs intern by working on community outreach programs. Most recently, she helped plan and execute the “Stand with Planned Parenthood” rally on Capitol Hill, protesting Utah Governor Gary Herbert’s decision to cut the organization’s state funding. Leah was an integral part of the rally at every stage of the process. She helped shape it into an enormous success and even gave a powerful speech at the event.

One of the most important aspects of her involvement with Planned Parenthood is the people she meets. “I meet with amazing, impassioned people every day. That is why I am in this work,” Leah said. She plans to continue working for organizations such as Planned Parenthood in the future and is grateful for the connections and support she has received from Honors that have helped her cultivate the skills to pursue her passions.

Honors student Gano Hasanbegovic is a sophomore and second-year member of Westminster’s Ethics Bowl team. When he joined the team as a first-year student, Gano began studying ethical theories in order to frame his understanding of Ethics Bowl cases. Luckily, these ideas complimented the themes and texts that he studied in his Humanities seminars. To continue
preparing for the regional tournament, Gano practiced with other members of the team by doing mock presentations and discussing ethical frameworks. The team’s hard work and dedication paid off, as they all advanced past the regional level and competed at the National Ethics Bowl tournament. Though the team did not win at Nationals, Gano said he enjoyed every aspect of the process and hopes to help the team continue its success and advance to Nationals again this year.

Gano feels that his participation in Ethics Bowl has expanded his sense of right and wrong. He said, “understanding ethics is very important. By applying ethics, you can take almost any problem and find a good solution for it.” On top of expanding his own understanding of ethics, the Ethics Bowl competitions have influenced his chosen fields of study. Gano is double majoring in psychology and philosophy and plans to attend law school after graduation.

While engaging in these various activities on campus, Leah and Gano continue to enrich the Westminster community by bringing their passions and viewpoints to valuable campus projects. However, Honors involvement extends beyond our college’s campus. Like the program itself, Honors students also reach out to the wider community to find opportunities that enrich their academic experiences.

From Westminster’s campus to programs all over the world, there are many opportunities for students to apply the skills learned in the Honors classroom into whatever they are passionate about.

Tyler Palo, a theatre major and junior, performed in five separate shows and spent no more than two weeks preparing for each performance. These two weeks of intense practice were spent learning lines, rehearsing, and building sets, which included international offices. “You get to network with people from across the world, and for me that’s really exciting!” said Mackenzie. The diversity of people she networked with made for a great learning environment. “Everyone I worked with was high-caliber, intelligent, and driven, but also kind and willing to help. And I really admired that.” Mackenzie was happy to find that she was well suited to be among these high-caliber workers. She noticed, however, that the keys to success in her position included the ability to think analytically and critically, ask good questions, and look at a problem from many different angles—three core skills she developed in Honors. She is excited to have accepted Goldman Sachs’ offer for a full-time position this July, and she sees her position as a stepping-stone toward her ultimate career goal as a Foreign Service Officer and US diplomatic representative overseas.

These various opportunities to work within the larger community opened up new and exciting opportunities for these two students. Tyler and Mackenzie will continue to thrive due to the skills they have developed as a result of the Honors program.

Tyler Palo (’17), Starlight Mountain Theater actor. Photo Courtesy of Aamina Khaleel.

Mackenzie Crow, Honors Senior (’16) and future Goldman Sachs full-time employee. Photo Courtesy of Mackenzie Crow.

Although Honors promotes active involvement on a community level, it also promotes engagement on a global scale as well. In the summer of 2013, Honors sophomore Seamus Branch attended the Iraqi Young Leaders exchange program, an experience which broadened his global perspective and...
allowed him to make connections with people of many different backgrounds.

The Iraqi Young Leaders exchange program fosters conversations about important social issues that are sometimes difficult to talk about. With its discussion and activity-based approach, the program deals with issues like racism and xenophobia by bringing people from all over the world together to share their experiences with others. Seamus says, “It’s important to stay attentive to what’s going on in the world. Ultimately, you’re never going to understand these issues unless you’ve talked to people who are experiencing them.”

“Higher education entails great privileges. With those privileges comes the responsibility to facilitate knowledge exchange multilaterally throughout the local and global community.”

-Tim Lindgren

Seamus says that the program introduced him to important, meaningful dialogue and allowed him to converse with people who hold vastly different points of view. He has incorporated these skills into his Honors seminars and his studies. Seamus is majoring in English, and he is specifically interested in intersectionality. The Iraqi Young Leaders exchange program broadened his perspective on social issues and allowed him to see the broader applications of English. In the future, Seamus hopes to visit the friends that he made while he was at the program.

What started as a term project for the common core seminar, Political Economy of Conflict, became much more for Honors juniors Elhom Gosink, a political science major, and Tim Lindgren, a global studies custom major. In April of 2015, they began setting out plans for Westminster to host the Global Crises and Global Change Undergraduate Conference in the spring of 2016. The ultimate goal of this conference is uniting undergrad students across fields of study in talking about the major global issues facing us today: energy scarcity, food and water depletion, various fields of ecological crisis, and economic strains throughout the world are a few of the many topics covered at the conference. “Higher education entails great privileges,” noted Tim. “With those privileges comes the responsibility to facilitate knowledge exchange multilaterally throughout the local and global community. A central aspect of this conference is to do just that. Let the community and the academic sector come together and exchange knowledge.” Having learned the importance of interdisciplinary learning through their time in the Honors program, Elhom and Tim aim to create a well-balanced and diverse community of students, professors, and professionals. “We created the structure [of the conference] and hope that other people will fill it in,” added Elhom.

While the project itself is still in the planning stages, the Global Crises and Global Change Conference is on its way to becoming a beneficial program for undergraduate students across campus and across the country.

From Westminster’s campus to programs all over the world, there are many opportunities for students to apply the skills learned in the Honors classroom into whatever they are passionate about. Projects like these require truly dedicated students who take full advantage of the opportunities in front of them and make the projects their own. Ultimately, the Honors atmosphere and classroom will continue to produce thoughtful, passionate, and intelligent students in every cohort by cultivating skills that prepare them for projects they wish to pursue.

By Claire Prasad and Elaine Sheehan
Student Profile: Ariane Drake

Ariane Drake—a senior Honors student from Pocatello, Idaho—is always striving to get the most out of her education. Currently a public health major, she has recently completed an internship at the Utah Public Health Laboratory testing mosquitoes for the presence of West Nile Virus.

Beyond pushing herself academically, Ariane makes a point of helping others get the most out of their educational experience as well. As an Honors peer mentor, Ariane helps incoming Honors students adjust to college life, a different academic environment, and the distinctive nature of the Honors program. However, she does not limit her passion and enthusiasm for helping others solely to the Honors community.

When she was 16, Ariane started her own non-profit organization called Hands 4 Uganda (H4U) that helps children in Mbiiko, Uganda, receive an education. The organization, run entirely by volunteers, raised funds to build a new school in Mbiiko and has a sponsorship program that has helped fund the education of up to 200 students. The intent behind the program is to develop a self-sustaining school that will ultimately help solve the major issues of prostitution and poverty in Mbiiko. H4U also provides a feeding program that gives free meals to children who are not getting enough food, funds healthcare, and connects kids to sponsors while ensuring that the locals of the village are comfortable with the program’s efforts.

Ariane says that her ability to maintain such a busy lifestyle stems from an excellent support system. The Honors program, one of those pivotal support systems, has not only provided her with many networking relationships but also with invaluable personal relationships with both students and professors. She appreciates the support she has received from Westminster and the Honors program over the years and especially enjoys the sense of community throughout her college experience.

In the end, Ariane says that her experience in Honors has helped her become a more effective communicator by teaching her to evaluate her thoughts entirely before speaking. This realization that she did not always think before she spoke hints at the larger impact Honors has had on her as a person. “I learned as much about myself as I did the subjects I was taught,” Ariane said. Thankfully, she learned a lot about the subjects in her classes as well. While nobody knows exactly what Ariane’s future entails, she plans to study optometry and believes her experience in Honors has made her all the more prepared.

By Maggie Fischer

Professor Profile: Christine Seifert

Christine “Christy” Seifert is a communication professor who has been at Westminster for 11 years and is teaching the infamous Honors seminar History & Philosophy of Science with Dave Goldsmith this fall. While Christy taught in Honors years ago, the program is happy to welcome her back after a long hiatus.

Christy received her bachelor’s degree in political science from North Dakota State University in her hometown Fargo and planned on pursuing a career in law. However, she changed her mind at the last minute and decided on a different path, becoming a teaching assistant in literature and starting to teach at 21. She then moved to Oklahoma to obtain her Ph.D., and it was here that she taught herself how to suppress her “Fargo” accent. Fret not, she can “turn it on” whenever she wants, and she said when she speaks to her parents the accent inevitably comes back.

Christy’s academic emphases are rhetorical theory and feminism in pop culture. Some of her specific works include Predicteds (a young adult novel), Whoppers: History’s Most Outrageous Lies and Liars (a young adult educational book), and academic articles such as, “Bite Me! (Or Don’t?) Stephenie Meyer’s vampire-infested Twilight series has created a new YA genre: abstinence porn.” This latter work is one of Christy’s most widely-known pieces, and she was even interviewed by USA Today for her thorough analysis of Twilight.

Christy’s experience in Honors this year has been a special and rewarding experience for her. One of her favorite parts about Honors classes is the seminar format and willingness of the students to approach complex issues with an analytical eye. Christy also appreciates the interdisciplinary focus of the Honors program, since she attended larger schools for her education where disciplines were often segmented. Ultimately, Christy thinks Honors is worthwhile because “the program is cool! It is interesting to see Honors in action because liberal arts becomes the basis for what you do in any career.”

In her personal time, Christy loves to walk, listen to podcasts and—most importantly—read. Some of her favorite authors are Ian McEwan, Anne Tyler, and Lionel Shriver. On top of all these interests, Christine enjoys writing. She enjoys writing so much that she tries to teach any and all classes that involve the subject, which demonstrates her passion for the craft in both her personal and professional life.

Christy’s advice to Honors students is simple: “Read as much as you can—read widely, read everything, research anything you have questions on. College is a unique moment when you have the time and space to explore all your ideas.” The Honors community looks forward to Christy’s wisdom about life and teaching for many years to come, and we thank her for choosing to be a part of our community.

By Calen Smith
Describe an unexpected friendship you developed through Honors

Kristjane Nordmeyer
Professor of Sociology

I love Lesa Ellis (pictured right), and anyone who knows me knows this. We’ve been co-teaching the Human Culture and Behavior seminar together since 2009, when we were paired together without knowing much about each other. In our first meeting together we discussed teaching a class about aging, but we decided on sexuality instead. My world has not been the same since; I’ve learned so much from Lesa and grown immensely from our shared classroom experiences.

So, what makes this an unexpected friendship? Surely plenty of faculty enjoy teaching together and are what I call “friends in real life.” But our friendship is unexpected because we come from such different, if not opposing, disciplines. Neuroscience and sociology are seemingly incompatible disciplines—one looks at the brain, the other at society. And within our disciplines, there is probably no greater area of tension and disconnect than around topics related to gender and sexuality. Our Honors pairing was set up for disaster but instead ended in collaboration.

There was probably quite a bit of caution and apprehension going into our first class. I am sure we each cringed a bit when listening to research or theory presented from such a contrasting perspective. But we were respectful, and we listened, and something amazing happened. We asked each other questions—not in a defensive way, but in a curious, inquisitive, and open-minded kind of way. Questions like, “What do you mean by theory?” This was the beginning of our back-and-forth style of teaching and learning. In the process we were able to work through some of the assumptions made by both of our disciplines and figure out where our understanding of each other’s disciplines were oversimplified or distorted. I’ve come to realize that sociology and neuroscience are not incompatible—we are just asking different questions, often at different levels of analysis.

Beyond our collaborative classroom style, I think shared background experiences have shaped our friendship. Lesa and I don’t fit the typical stereotype of Honors professors—the one that outlines a path of early academic success, followed by more success, followed by a clear and upward career trajectory. Lesa and I completed our PhDs along very non-traditional paths. We also share a very strong commitment to gender and LGBTQ equality. Although we are coming from different perspectives, we have similar goals in mind. Who would have guessed a sociologist and neuroscientist could be such good friends?

Erin Cavendar
Senior Honors Student

“I am sure you are all just bubbling with things to say about James,” said Russ Costa as the class collectively uncapped its pens, ready for another lively Humanities discussion. All but James Steur, who had just walked into the room with a copy of his prompt in hand.

“But I was only a couple minutes late!” James pleaded.

The room exploded into laughter.

It only took a moment for Russ to explain that he was actually talking about the William James reading we had been assigned; though I, for one, could easily have spent two hours discussing what I like about James Steur. When we met freshman year, I never could have guessed what an incredible impact knowing James would have on my life. But looking back on my Honors experience, I realize that I would not be where I am today if it had not been for him.

As a freshman, James’ enthusiasm for the ideas we were throwing around in Humanities inspired me to engage with the texts and with other students on a deeper level. As a result, we often ended up in the Bassis Center after class, drinking coffee (black, of course) and continuing where class had left off. In fact, quite a few of my favorite college memories are sitting in the orange seats around the Bassis fireplace, coffee in hand, talking through convoluted philosophical ideas with James and a few others.

Of course, our conversations never stayed on philosophy for long. They tended to dissolve into what each of us was doing, how classes were, and how we were coping with college life in general. Talking with James helped me get through more than one difficult situation. Nothing seems quite so bad once a fully-cafeinated James has had some time to talk it through!

Since freshman year, James and I have presented (and finger painted) at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference, survived four Honors seminars together, and drunk our weight in coffee. He is everything I could have asked for in a friend and so much more. If there is one thing I have learned about him in all that time, it is that he has the brains to take over the world and the heart to make that a good thing. Getting to know him has been one of the greatest highlights of my time at Westminster—thank you, James!

—Kristjane with Lesa Ellis

—Erin with James Steur

“He has the brains to take over the world and the heart to make that a good thing. Getting to know him has been one of the greatest highlights of my time at Westminster.”
McKay Holland (’09)—now a 4th-year in the philosophy PhD program at Georgetown—is serving as Managing Editor of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal. He also just started his dissertation on social-environmental scaffolds of personal identity and agency and is teaching his first two solo courses: Moral Relativism and Ethics & the Environment.

Jillian Hill (’10) is pursuing her Master’s in Social Work at Utah State and also works part-time as Director of Operations at the Inclusion Center for Community and Justice.

Caitlyn Stringham (’11) earned her Master’s of Clinical Psychology from the University of Hartford this past spring and graduated summa cum laude.

Tess Graham (’12) has started studying law at New York University.

Andy Larsen (’12) is a sports writer at Deseret Digital Media.

Abby Speicher (’13) graduated magna cum laude from Babson College with her MBA and received the Entrepreneurship Award, one of the top two awards given at graduation.

Doug Bergquist (’14) is now an analyst at ChemTech Ford Laboratories.

Andre Biscaye (’14) and Jeff Collins (’14) started medical school at the University of Rochester.

Nicole Bedera’s (’14) research on prevention of sexual violence against women—started with an Honors summer research grant and eventually published with Honors/Sociology Prof. Kristjane Nordmeyer—was recently featured in a long article for The Daily Beast.

Chris Cunningham (’15) has accepted a position with Partnership for Responsible Growth in Washington, D.C.

Katie Mullin (’15) won QUARC’s “Best Use of Statistics” award at Westminster’s 2015 Undergraduate Research Fair for her work on anxiety and canine companions.

Sean Groathouse (’15) achieved the highest score ever recorded by a Westminster math student on the 2014 William Lowell Putnam competition sponsored by the Mathematical Association of America. This is a notoriously difficult test; the median score on this year’s exam was 0.

Pratik Raghu (’15) recently had his third scholarly article, “From Retribution to Restoration: Fambul Tok’s Drive to Heal Post-Civil War Sierra Leonean Communities,” published in Student Pulse.

Sierra Kane (’16) is studying abroad in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Adia Thornton (’16) interned as a Marketing Coordinator for Horizon Display this summer and was subsequently hired as their Marketing Coordinator.

Chris Kimler (’16), James Steur (’16), Hannah Williams (’16), and Carissa Uresk (’18) are serving on ASWC’s Student Board.

John Okal (’16) and Mackenzie Crow (’16) have accepted full time positions with Goldman Sachs.

Selina Foster (’17) spent the summer in Alaska training to teach glacier travel, ski mountaineering, rock climbing, and ice climbing.

Sylvie Henry (’17) is having an adventure czeching out Prague at Charles University this fall semester.

Selina Foster’s (’17) poem, “The Shapeshifter,” will be featured in an upcoming edition of HEArt Online, a literary journal that focuses on human equity and social justice.

Taylor Stevens (’18) and Leah Weisgal (’18) traveled to Washington, D.C. this summer to lobby on Capitol Hill for reproductive rights, representing Westminster’s Students for Choice chapter on campus.

Carissa Christensen (’18) organized and directed a “Take Back the Night” event in Grand Junction, Colorado. The event was featured on three news stations and had 50 participants.

Taylor Stevens (’18) designed and launched a new website for The Forum, Westminster’s student-led newspaper, as its Online and Social Media Manager.

Did you do something notable? We want to know! Email your news and notes to Richard at rjb@westminstercollege.edu.
Meet the Student Honors Council

Aamina Khaleel, President *(Far Left)* Q: If you could be any fairy tale character, which one would you be? I would probably have to be Maleficent because she acts so differently than I do in my day-to-day life. While most people choose to be the protagonist of the fairy tale, it would be interesting to play the cruel villain for once and understand what goes on in a villain's head. Plus, who hasn’t felt a little vindictive at some point or another.

Zoey Gray, Historian *(Left)* Q: If you could have a meal with any three people, who would you choose? My first choice would be Adolf Hitler. I think it would be interesting to understand his tactics and comprehend the reasoning that justified his atrocious crimes. Neil Armstrong would be my second choice because he’s a great icon for science and technology. Jane Goodall is my last choice because she has done so many incredible things as a female scientist.

Jackson Shaver, Secretary *(Center)* Q: If you could travel anywhere in a time machine, where would you go? It would have to be the American Wild West during the 1800s. I think it would be interesting to visit the boomtowns that sprung up after rumors spread across the country about mining for riches; and then revisit these boomtowns years later as ghost towns. It would be cool to compare the once thriving town with the desolate one after the mines were depleted and everyone left to seek riches elsewhere.

Selina Foster, Treasurer *(Right)* Q: What makes your heart sing? A few things that make my heart sing are math, musical theatre, and really good literature. Some of my personal favorites are *Harry Potter*—I really want to be Professor McGonagall—and *The Lord of the Rings*. Some other things that make my heart sing are my dog and being in the Wasatch Mountains, especially when I’m mountain climbing. My current goal is being able to climb anything and everything like a mountain goat, but I haven’t gotten to that level of expertise yet; I’m getting there, though.

Amanda Howa, Vice-President *(Far Right)* Q: What has surprised you the most about your time at Westminster? What has surprised me the most are the interactions that I have had with my professors. I’ve been pleasantly surprised by their willingness to be open and their friendly, approachable demeanor—I never expected to be on a first-name basis with them. While I knew they would get to know me as a student, I never thought they would also get to know me as a person.

By Sophie Schreiber
“How do we define privilege?” Russ Costa asked the class. What a loaded question. In the words of Peggy McIntosh, privilege is like an invisible knapsack—it provides unseen, special provisions for some, but not for others. Since taking Science, Power, & Diversity my perspective on privilege has shifted. I recognize that items I once took for granted, such as having Band-Aids that match the color of my skin, are part of a larger system of power. I’m grateful to Honors for teaching me about privilege and countless other sensitive topics that we rarely talk about in our day-to-day lives. By Hannah Williams

“I don’t remember a specific conversation that stands out more than others, but in History & Philosophy of Science every day seemed to serve a mind-blowing purpose in one way or another. It was a class with the craziest arguments, none of which I think I’ll ever be able to replicate if questioned. From distorting time and space to fostering artificial intelligence, that class continually kept me captivated.”

By Nathan Guyer

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