

The University Honors Program



Annual Report
2021 - 2022

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of UNH Honors,

The last academic year was largely a story of stepping back into a world where the COVID pandemic was less of a force against community life. Honors students, many of whom had stepped up to a new role as Zoom discussion assistants during the height of the pandemic, were able to direct their energies into new domains.

Donors to the Honors Program, including many who have embraced a generous tradition of annual giving during the “603 Challenge,” made conference travel and other beyond-the-classroom activities a real possibility for Honors students again. We are so fortunate, and so grateful for your support.

Our Honors faculty continue to be unwavering supporters of our students. Thanks to the way they welcome Honors students into their labs, mentor them on research and creative projects, involve them in off-site trips and presentations, and many other investments, Honors students have been able to experience the reality of being fellow scholars with their professors, and have made real impacts here at UNH and beyond.

Next year, I hope to be following up on some of the information in these pages, and imparting news about important developments in the history of Honors at UNH, including the fruits of our community’s labors with respect to a space on campus and expanding scholarship opportunities, to name two of the most exciting projects we’re working on.

Until then, the University Honors Program wishes you all a healthy and engaging 2023!



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Catherine M. Peebles".

Dr. Catherine M. Peebles

Thank You

The Honors Program does a lot with a small budget. Donations large and small help us to provide an enriched experience for our students, funding field trips, guest speakers, student research, and more. We are very grateful to this year's donors:

Dr. Allison R. Blodgett
Mr. Brett T. Branscombe
Ms. Megan M. Brunelle
Lu Ferrell and Ms. Kristen R. Butterfield
Ms. Laura E. Clancy
Dr. Matthew R. Henn and Ms. Birgit Claus Henn
Mr. Troy A. Finn and Mr. Keith W. Doucet
Ms. Kathryn E. Early
Dr. Julie A. Fuller and Mr. Jason Moore
Mr. Dana A. Hamel and Mrs. Karol Hamel
Mr. Micah Johnson and Mrs. Amity B. Johnson
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Mrs. Alice K. Reiniger and Mr. Timothy S. Reiniger
Mrs. Elizabeth S. Saltonstall
Mrs. Meg Scarpetta and Mr. Paul Scarpetta
Mrs. Karen P. Simas and Mr. John F. Simas
Dr. George T. Wildman
Mr. John Wilkins
and several anonymous donors

COVER: Emily Soule '22 discusses her research on New Hampshire's opioid crisis at the 2022 Undergraduate Research Conference.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

A commitment to justice inspires Honors students inside and outside the classroom. From seminar discussions and original research to internships and service, Honors students are intellectually and socially engaged in the world, asking big questions and putting answers into practice in their communities and careers.



NEW: Honors DEI Fellows

Launching in 2023, the Honors Program's DEI Fellowship will bring together a group of passionate, curious Honors students committed to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within our program. Part-think tank, part leadership team, the DEI Fellows will guide the Honors Program as it continues to evolve and grow.

In the Classroom

Honors Discovery Seminars encourage students to think critically about diverse aspects of identity and belonging. 2021-2022 offerings included:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Racial Justice
- US Latinx Cities
- Theatre and Social Justice
- Race Matters
- Music and Social Change
- What Is a Criminal?
- Living & Doing with Technology
- Global Citizenship

Deep Dives

Honors students frequently choose topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion as topics for thesis research. Some highlights from 2021-2022:

- **"Knowledge and Confidence Related to LGBTQ+ Health Topics Among University Educators,"** Chloe Kilkelley (Nursing)
- **"Civil Rights and Feminism in Captain America Comics from 1968-1989,"** Julianne Edwards (History)
- **"Mental Health and Social Media: A Case Study of the Facebook Whistleblower,"** Megan Switzgable (Communication)

Sustainability

At UNH, sustainability—defined as "the collective commitment to human dignity for all people and ecological integrity in all places"—is a core value. The Honors Program strives to keep this value at the center of our practices, from the theoretical, conceptual, and imaginative realms of the field and classroom to the nuts and bolts of office management. In partnership with the UNH Sustainability Institute, we launched a Sustainability Fellows program in 2022. Four student Fellows are leading the creation of a Sustainability Pathway for Honors students.

In the Classroom

In 2021-2022, Honors Program courses focused on sustainability from various angles--from biological to cultural to economic. Offerings included:

- **Business for People, Planet, and Profits**
- **Evolution, Biodiversity, and Ecology**
- **Controversial Issues in Biology**
- **There Is No Planet B**
- **Humanities and Science**
- **Human Nature and Evolution**
- **Contemporary Conservation Issues**

Supporting Innovators

The Honors Program encourages students to leverage UNH's many resources to support their innovative ideas. One example: Honors students helped to create Hydro-Phos, an approach to wastewater treatment that captures phosphorus to be used in fertilizer. The team won recognition at UNH's Social Venture Innovation Challenges as well as at prestigious national competitions. They are continuing to develop their business plan—stay tuned!



Student Research

The University of New Hampshire has long been a leader in supporting undergraduate research, and Honors Program students, as usual, made excellent use of those opportunities in 2021-2022.

30 Grants from the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research. Most of these funded summer research, allowing students to make research their summer job. Other grants offered funding for projects undertaken during the school year.

159 Honors theses and projects. The Honors curriculum culminates in an independent research project, in which students contribute to their fields with one-on-one support from a research faculty member. Theses are made available to the public at scholars.unh.edu/honors.

9 Publications in *Inquiry*, UNH's undergraduate research journal.

224 Presentations at the Undergraduate Research Conference.

On the Thesis Train

Regular commuters know that the Amtrak Downeaster is a great place to work. So this year, the Honors Program used donated funds to send Seniors completing their theses on the train to Freeport, Maine. In town, students took a break for shopping, dinner, and camaraderie before getting back to work on the return trip to Durham.





"Robot Guided Exercise Training: The Role of the Human Model."

Selena Richards '22, Prof. Momotaz Begum (Honors Thesis).



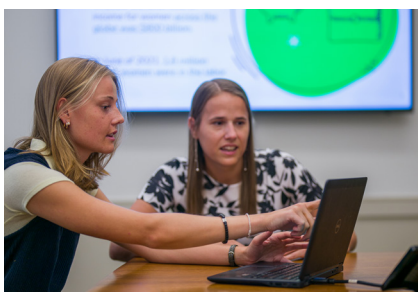
"Photocatalytic Conversion of Methane to Syngas over Gold Catalysts."

Samuel Mercer '23, Prof. Nan Yi (Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship).



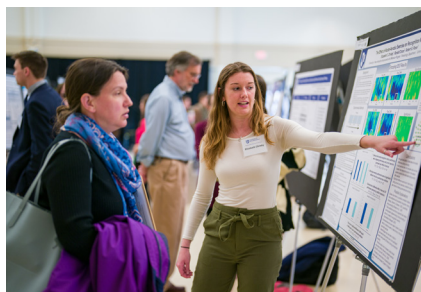
"Promoting Positive Youth Development through Sport."

Paige O'Neil '23, Prof. Tarkington Newman (Research Experience Apprenticeship Program).



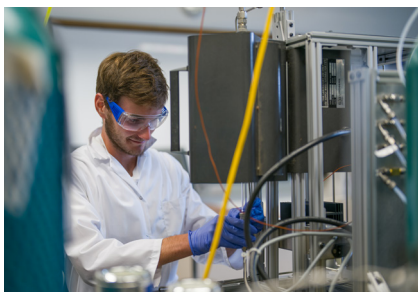
"COVID-19's Effect on Women."

Johanne Nichols '23, Prof. Nina Windgaetter (Research Experience Apprenticeship Program).



"Effects of Acute Aerobic Exercise on Recognition Memory."

Elizabeth Christy '22, Prof. Leslie Curren (Honors Thesis).



"Bimetallic Catalysts for the Renaissance of the Sabatier Reaction."

Jaxon Boudreau '23, Prof. Nan Yi (Research Experience Apprenticeship Program).

Honors Faculty Award



Jo Koroma '24 (left) and Madeline Myers '25 (right) present the 2022 Honors Faculty Award to Dr. Leslie Curren (center).

Dr. Leslie Curren

Each year, the Honors Program solicits student nominations in order to recognize one of our exceptional instructors with the Honors Faculty Award. For 2022, the award went to Zoology professor Leslie Curren, who teaches an Honors Discovery course called "Evolution of Human Behavior."

The award was presented during an April ceremony by two of Dr. Curren's nominators. Members of her classes noted that she is very supportive and caring toward students. They appreciated that she helped all students feel comfortable in discussions, with an emphasis on the importance of varied perspectives. They wrote about being challenged to think more deeply and question previous beliefs. "This class has changed my outlook on college in general, for the better," one student wrote. "It is truly everything I hoped for in joining the Honors Program," wrote another.

In addition to being a wonderful professor, Dr. Curren has served as Honors Liaison for her department, shepherding many students through Departmental Honors. We look forward to sending many more students to learn from Dr. Curren in the future.

Honors Alumni Award

Ann Marie Britton '13

In the fall of 2012, marketing major Ann Marie Britton submitted an Honors thesis titled "The Beauty Industry's Effects on Women in Society." The paper focused on women's use of and feelings about cosmetics, and included data from a survey Britton conducted with a population of college students.

Previously, students had been required to submit a bound copy of their thesis for permanent storage in the library's archives. But that changed in 2012. Instead of handing over a bound copy, Britton uploaded her thesis to UNH's digital Scholars' Repository, scholars.unh.edu/honors.

The next semester, she graduated (University Honors, Summa Cum Laude) and started her career at Epsilon, a large marketing firm. She rose through the ranks there and in subsequent jobs at Celerity Information Services and Liberty Mutual. This spring, she became Vice President of Marketing Operations for Marcus by Goldman Sachs.

In the meantime, Britton's Honors thesis was getting noticed. The Scholars' Repository is available publicly online, and the public was interested in her paper. Over the next decade, Britton's thesis became the most downloaded of any paper in UNH's repository—with nearly 350,000 downloads to date, from all around the world. In 2015, her research was cited in an *Atlantic* magazine article, "The Makeup Tax," which discussed the cost in money and time associated with wearing makeup.

In a speech last April to the Honors class of 2022, Britton offered advice for college and beyond. She described the unexpected turns of her own journey, as she took on new positions and gained new skills. She told students, "I encourage you to have faith in the process, to embrace the unexpected changes, and the plans that fail or go sideways. They may bring you to places better than you imagined."



Ann Marie Britton receives the 2022 Honors Alumni Award from her thesis advisor, Professor Bruce Pfeiffer, at an event celebrating the Honors class of 2022.

The Hamel Scholars Program

2021-22 was an energizing year for the Hamel Scholars Program, which helps students grow as leaders. COVID restrictions had loosened, and the Scholars enthusiastically engaged with a wide variety of in-person offerings and self-directed projects.



Community-building opportunities included apple picking, hiking, happy hours (alcohol-free, of course), and the annual luncheon celebration with the Hamel Family (above).



Hamel Scholars attended Leadership Luncheons with NH radio legend Laura Knoy (above) and state Senator Erin Hennessey.



A student-run "Women in STEM Day" brought middle-school students to campus. Other Scholars chose to design service opportunities with local organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Durham Land Conservation, Partners for World Health, and the Out of the Darkness Suicide Awareness Walk.

National Fellowship Winners

In 2021-22, 15 Honors students and alumni worked with UNH's Office of National Fellowships to win prestigious awards, against tough competition from applicants around the country.

Three Honors Program participants won Fulbright Scholarships, which fund teaching, study, or research abroad. Valerie Pascetta '22 will be doing research in Belgium, Kelsey Mercurio '22 will be researching in Senegal, and Elli Hult '23 will be studying genetics in Canada.

Another four Honors students won Gilman scholarships to support education abroad, sending Kate Stariknok '23 and Bailey Prasad '23 to Spain, Kindyl Alfonso '23 to the Netherlands, and Amanda Marsden '23 to Ireland.

UNH Honors students were also represented among the winners of Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internships (SULI), Federal Student Internships, Barry Goldwater Scholarships, DAAD-RISE, and NOAA Hollings Scholarship awards.

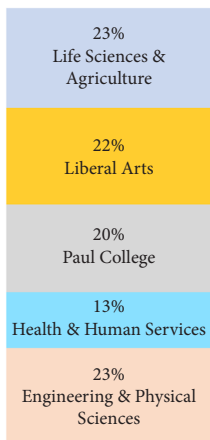


Lauren McDowell '24 is the first UNH student to win a NOAA Hollings Scholarship since 2019. The award will support her degrees in marine biology and sustainability.



Fulbright award winner Valerie Pascetta '22 will spend 9 months in Belgium studying archival DNA in order to gain understanding of how diseases transfer from other animals to humans.

The Honors Class of 2022



82 **University Honors in Major Graduates**
Completed enriched work in Discovery and their majors

27 **Interdisciplinary Honors Graduates**
Completed enriched work in Discovery and student-selected High-Impact Experiences

40 **Departmental Honors Graduates**
Completed enriched work in their majors



AND THEY'RE OFF!

A sampling of the organizations that attracted 2022 Honors graduates

ALBANY LAW SCHOOL * AMERICAN UNIVERSITY * BNY MELLON
BROWN UNIVERSITY * COHNREZNICK * CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ERNST & YOUNG * FDIC * FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY * IBM
JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL * LONZA * MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL
HOSPITAL * MASSACHUSETTS EPA * NASA * RAYTHEON * SYRACUSE
UNIVERSITY * TUFTS UNIVERSITY * UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE * UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
UPPSALA UNIVERSITY * VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY