

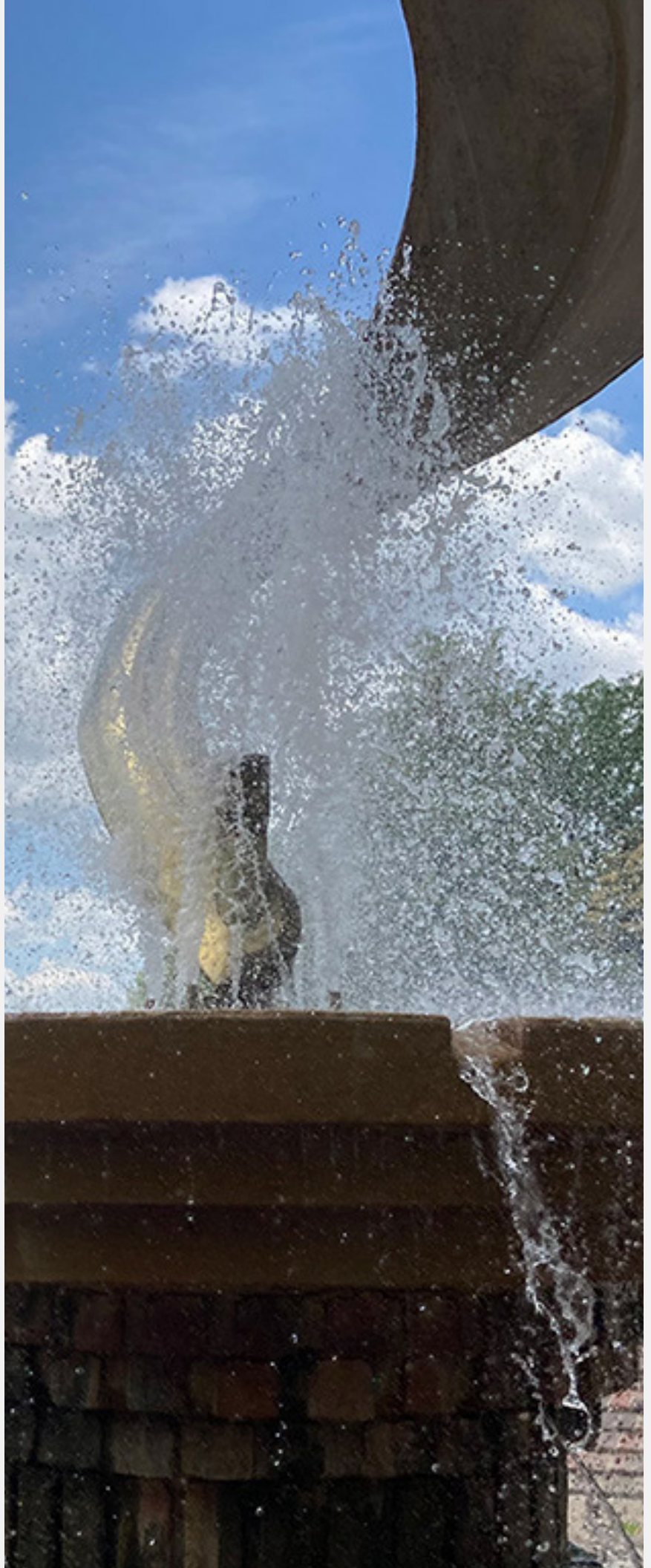


CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

For All Fellow
Seekers of Truth

Spring 2024

***spring
2024
newsletter***





CONTENTS

PAGE 1

From the Director

PAGE 2

From the President

PAGE 4

Alumnus Profile

PAGE 6

A View from Swanson 9

PAGE 8

Do You Remember?

PAGE 9

The Honor Roll

PAGE 13

The Consider! Talks

From The Director

Every seven years, the various units of Creighton are subject to external review. The last year was the Honors Program's turn. Two leaders in honors from other Jesuit institutions, plus one internal Creighton faculty member, served as reviewers, looking into our faculty competence, student outcomes, budgetary policy, programming, ethos, and more. After a long self-study and two days of interaction with the review team, we waited anxiously for their report.

When it arrived, we got the confirmation we had wanted that we were moving the program in a good direction. As they noted, "The Honors program seems to be in a Golden Age, evinced by growth, student satisfaction, retention and completion rates, and student outcomes." Now we start preparing for the review to come in another seven years. First step: revising the Honors Foundational Sequence courses to include some new and more global perspectives.

Our faculty continue to create the most innovating courses in the Creighton curriculum. Last semester, our Postdoctoral Fellow Trish Ross taught a course entitled "The Book Bandit: Investigating and Exhibiting History, Passion, and Theft," a partnership with the Library focusing on Stephen Blumberg, the most successful book thief in US history. (How many other courses feature guest lectures from the FBI?!) You can read all about the strange history of Blumberg's thievery and how Creighton ended up with many of his stolen books here. In spring of 2024, Dr. Ross will partner with Dr. Gintaras Duda to develop a course on science and religion and will further partner with the new Kiewit Luminarium Science Museum to create an exhibit! And, in addition, Dr. Fletcher will teach his popular Chemistry of Brewing course.

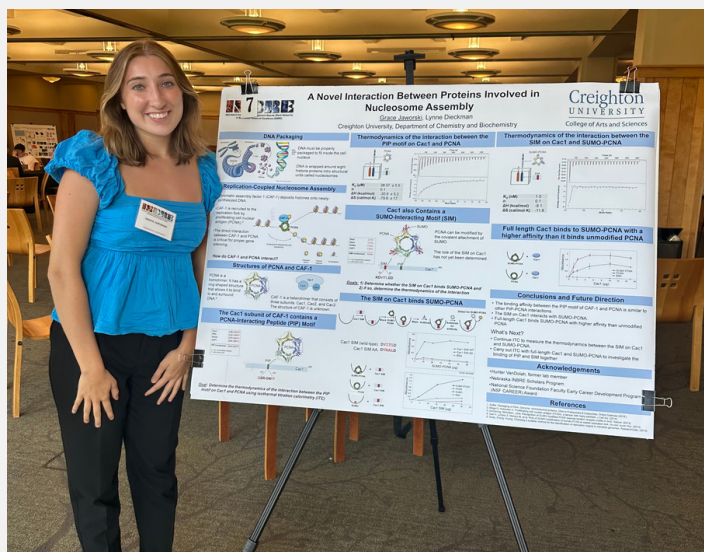
As always, please let me know if you are ever on campus. It would be lovely to catch up with each and every one of you.

-Jeffrey Hause, PhD

From The President

Grace Jaworski, Honors Program President

Honors students had an incredibly vibrant and involved year. The The Honors Student Advisory Board facilitated numerous social events and attendance was consistently high. One of our biggest social highlights of the year was our first ever Honors Winter Formal! This event was held in late November on campus. This Black-Tie event was comprised of desserts bars, a dance floor, and a DJ that welcomed over 220 honors students and their guests. It was a huge success, and we look forward to establishing this formal as an ongoing tradition. On a personal note, I thoroughly enjoyed organizing a celebration for all the wonderful people in this program. I'm a firm believer that all honors students need a night to dress up and just have fun.



Our most successful event in the spring semester was the Consider! talks, where selected Honors students gave a 10 to 15-minute public intellectual talk on a subject they have expertise in. We had four different talks that were remarkably informative and impressive. In addition to this spring event, we held a mini Consider! event in the fall. Three alumni recorded talks and spoke with us live over zoom to answer questions on their subject matter. It was so fun to meet some of our alumni and build connections between past and present Honors students.





Grace and Olivia at Brewchem! An Honors-exclusive course.

The Honors Student Advisory Board had another big initiative outside of our social event planning. We established an Honors Community Service Program with Holy Family Community Center. This volunteering opportunity is located just north of campus, making it a walkable engagement every third Sunday morning this spring. We wanted to create a program that was unique from all the incredible opportunities offered through the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice. Catering to the limited availability of our busy student body, we wanted a commitment that was not every week but was still meaningful. We had over 15 students attend each volunteer date, and we look forward to continuing this program both over the summer and next school year.

The largest responsibility of the Honors Student Advisory Board is coordinating student involvement in Special Programs Day "season", as I like to call it. With two online dates followed by the on-campus event, Special Programs Day is a season of prospective student interviews, Q&A sessions, and the ultimate time to convey what it means to be a Creighton Honors student. This is my absolute favorite time of year! My biggest goal this season was to show, not just tell, what it meant to be a Creighton Honors student. To do this, we had a record number of student volunteers individually paired with prospective students. Although things on campus have returned to normal, we had more than half of our prospective students chose to interview virtually. Now that everyone is familiar and comfortable with Zoom, this has become an increasingly popular option. We worked hard to give these virtual interviewees a sense of Creighton. We are learning how to adjust with this new normal, and I am confident that we are succeeding in navigating these changes and making our virtual interviewees feel connected.

In all, I am beyond grateful for all the hard work that was done on the Honors Student Advisory Board to maintain the flourishing Honors community at Creighton. I look forward to continuing my role as President next school year, and I believe we will have another year of great success.

Grace Jaworski

Alumnus Profile Dr. Michael Grzelak



From a silly fellow who always wore shorts, even in the winter, to a dedicated surgeon, Dr. Michael Grzelak remembers his days at Creighton fondly. Participating in the Honors Scholars Community inspired Michael to be curious. Michael conducted research with his favorite professor at Creighton, Dr. Parsons which included physical chemistry, machining, and lasers. Michael found a passion in Chemistry, his major, but also in the field of medicine. He was inspired by the sense of trust expressed by patients and the ability to help heal them. Through his time at Creighton, he came to understand the real possibility of caring for others through medicine. Some of his favorite memories at Creighton include summers with Dr. Parsons, along with movie nights in the Highline, a Greek history course, and pick up soccer.

After graduation in 2013, Michael attended Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. There he continued his love of research. Michael worked with Dr. Seydoux and contributed to CRISPR/Cas by designing templates for optimizing editing in human cells. He, along with Dr. Brandacher, studied VCA, vascularized composite allotransplantation, by analyzing hand, face, and uterine transplants along with the accompanying immunology and immunosuppression. Michael admits medical school was more work and required more time than undergrad. Although his time for studying was reduced by participating in research, Michael believes he was well-prepared for the work requirement by his Chemistry degree at Creighton. He found his favorite aspect of medical school was that it seemed as if a new world opened up to him. He was able to discover new facts about both the human body and of himself. Michael took advantage of his idea of the down-to-earth character of Baltimore by walking along the harbor and eating buffalo wings.

Medical school was over in the blink of an eye and Michael once again based himself in a new city. Matching at Georgetown for Plastic/Reconstructive Surgery Residency was a dream for Michael. His love of critical thinking led him to focus on reconstructing what had been and making someone whole again, rather than removing a diseased part of the body, such as burn victims and others born with a cleft palate. Michael enjoys his time at the operating table, but he also appreciates his time away from it, time to explore the food scene in Washington D.C. As a nature lover, he also enjoys the greenery of the city. When Michael is not in the operating room or walking around the city, he goes on vacation to read all day on a balcony overlooking the ocean.

Dr. Michael Grzelak describes medicine as a motivating and fulfilling career for someone with a strong desire to care for people, especially the ones usually forgotten in society. This desire was fueled for him by attending Creighton and learning in the Honors Program. He recounts the atmosphere of Creighton to be supportive, encouraging, and free- thinking, and loves that his two younger sisters decided to attend Creighton and study in the Honors Program as well. During his time at Creighton and beyond, Dr. Michael Grzelak has made this world a better place, and, as his youngest sister, I am incredibly proud and inspired by him.



View From Swanson 9

Maria Christofferson, Class of 2026



On the eight-hour drive from my home in Golden, Colorado to Omaha the day before moving into my new home in Swanson 920, I wanted nothing more than to run backwards, back to comfort, back to my childhood bedroom, back to the high school friends I was leaving behind. But the moment I stepped on campus and met my RSP group, I could exhale. I felt an immediate sense of ease and acceptance with the smile of my Peer Leader (shoutout to Greer Porter) and the laughs of my new peers. I did not know it then, but coming to Creighton and being part of the Honors Program is inarguably the best decision I have ever made for myself. This program gave me a family I did not know I needed.

College is truly a bizarre stage in life, and freshman year is especially transformative. In a time where so many of us are learning who we are away from everything we know, it was so lovely to be able to come into myself in the supportive and warm environment that the Honors Program provides. Between living a 30 second walk from all my best friends to learning from professors who took the time to know me and who I could tell had such genuine passion for their work, this year was simply beautiful. I felt wholly supported in being myself and exploring what it means to be alive, making friends who I hope will be in my wedding someday, growing intellectually alongside my impressive and ardent classmates, and becoming indescribably more content in who I am. I owe so much of that growth to this program. With all my best friends on the same two floors, I was always surrounded with love. I never knew how beautiful it would be to know my people so well that I could identify them by their knock on my Swanson 9th floor door.

This program and the people it gifted me have instilled a sense of belonging in my heart that I have yearned for my entire life. Until now, I failed to recognize the raw human connection that comes with intellectual power and shared ambition. Honestly, I have never felt more myself than during late night study sessions, bouncing ideas off my friends the night before a big test and gushing about how cool immunology is. The sheer depth of community that this program fosters is unlike anything I have ever experienced. There is so much power that comes from living and learning as one, and I feel that Creighton's Honors Program cultivates this family uniquely well. I can already picture myself in twenty, thirty, even forty years looking back on the memories I created this year with nothing but warmth and love in my heart. From the movie nights spent wrapped in blankets on my friends' futons to studying in empty classrooms until the 4am delirium was too much to bear, I already look back on all of it fondly. It was not easy, as this is a rigorous school and Honors is a rigorous program, but being surrounded by driven and good-hearted people going through the exact same struggles allowed me to never feel alone.

It is impossible to express how much I have learned this year, yes about chemistry and biology, but more importantly about myself. I grew up accustomed to hiding behind familiarity and feeling the world cave in on me in new environments, but now, I stand proudly and assert my presence in every room.

I learned how to be a good friend and to appreciate the comfort of silent company, spending innumerable nights sitting next to my best friends with brown noise blasting in our respective earbuds. I learned that I can thrive in difficult conditions, for with the help of university faculty and my fellow students, my peers and I have overcome every obstacle that this year has thrown at us, and there have been many. The world no longer caves in on me in new situations. This confidence stemmed from the independence of college life but also from the intellectual discourse I had the honor of participating with my classmates, both inside and outside the classroom. I will forever cherish the burn of excitement in my veins while bouncing ideas off one another in small classes, dissecting the philosophical intricacies of a work. I am incredibly lucky to be surrounded by such gifted minds. In essence, this year was a whirlwind of self-discovery and growth, and I will always carry immense gratitude towards this program for continuing to change my life.



Do You Remember...



...these spots on campus?



HONOR ROLL

2023



Dr. S. Hoff

(B.A. Psychology, 2009) left her post as psychologist to take a position as Deputy Warden in a correctional center. She was given the Special Teams Award by the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

Jacob Moore

(B.S. Math, 2010) was named Educator of the Year (secondary schools category) for the Archdiocese of Omaha. A short video on Jake can be found [here](#).



HONOR ROLL

2023

Maeve Cardwell

(BA 2016) has started a position as a clinical psychology doctoral intern with UC Davis Children's Hospital (they call us residents, but this is distinct from a medical residency). She is also preparing to present her doctoral research this summer!



Kristal Kuo

(BS 2022) is currently working as an environmental scientist for the California State Water Resources Control Board. During her sojourn in California, she's been exploring the state before applying to medical school. Here you can see her in front of the California Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters building.

Dr. Timothy Foster

(B.A. Spanish and Music, 2012 has been participating in the inaugural cohort of National Book Foundation Teacher Fellows—run by the organization that gives out the National Book Award. Fellows work to form students into people who read for pleasure. You can see TV news coverage of his award [here](#) and [here](#).

HONOR ROLL

2023

Dr. Eric Hansen

Congratulations to the newly tenured and promoted Dr. Eric Hansen (BA 2012). Eric, who was Honors President in 2011-2012, is now an associate professor at Loyola Chicago.



Mary Cronkleton

A third-year law student at the University of San Diego, Mary Cronkleton (BA 2020) is also President of the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association. Here she is with attorney and 2020 presidential candidate Andrew Yang!



HONOR ROLL

2023

Dominic Dongilli

A doctoral student at the University of Iowa, Dominic Dongilli (BS 2015) has been awarded a 2023/2024 Smithsonian Research Fellowship to complete the dissertation "Interspecies Nation: Animal Bodies and Cultural Lives at the American Zoo." Dominic will be in residence at the Smithsonian for the yearlong award!

Kelsey Jones

(BS 2020) became Dr. Kelsey Jones last May when she graduated with her Doctorate of Occupational Therapy!



THE CONSIDER! TALKS

If you click [here](#) (go ahead and do it—I'll wait) you will see the newly revamped website of the Honors Program's Consideration Public Conversation Initiative. We now have a library of 15 short, sharp, engaging, and all-around splendid videos on issues of importance for you to watch, all presented by Honors students and alumni.

In 2022-23, we sponsored 7 new talks. You should binge them all (unless you think the surfeit of ensuing joy would be too much for you to bear all at once).



THE CONSIDER! TALKS



**DR. LINDSAY
DURAND, DPT (BS
2018)**

Stabbing Back Pain:
What's Missing in
Your Treatment?



**SOFIA PAZ, MA (BA
2017)**

Let's Talk about
Your
(Philosophical)
Assumptions on
Addiction



**HAYLEY JOHNSON,
CLASS OF 2023**

"The Dark Corners of
China's One-Child
Policy: How I Learned
the Truth about my
Adoption"



**DR. ERIN
TRIPLET,
MD/PHD (BS
2014)**

A Tale of Two
Tests

THE CONSIDER! TALKS



ABIGAIL ROBINSON, PHD
CANDIDATE IN BIOLOGY, ECOLOGY,
BEHAVIOR, AND EVOLUTION,
BOSTON UNIVERSITY (BS 2020)

“Beautiful Bugs: How Methods
Shape Science”



ALYSSA LARSON,
CLASS OF 2023

“Milton Matters:
Learning from a
Paradoxical Poet of
the Past”



BENJAMIN BUDESHEIM AND IAN METTELMANN, CLASS OF 2024

“A Handheld Superpower”

STAY IN TOUCH!

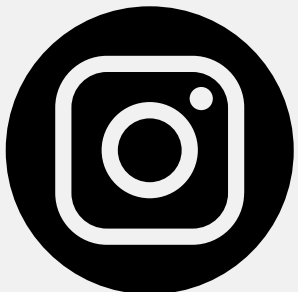
To stay up to date with the Honors Program, make sure to follow us on social media!



@creightonhonorsprogram



@CreightonHonors



@creightonhonors