

CADENZA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAUD HONORS COLLEGE AT LAMAR UNIVERSITY



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THANK YOU *Mr. Reaud*

The students of the Reaud Honors College would like to extend their gratitude to Mr. Wayne Reaud. Thanks to Mr. Reaud's generosity, the Honors College has the support it needs to develop its future projects and plans. His donation has provided students with significant educational opportunities, enabling the Reaud Honors College to make an even greater impact on students' lives. Thank you for helping to provide a quality education and college experience to hundreds of students every year.

A MESSAGE FROM *The Dean*

This has been another exciting and eventful year for the Reaud Honors College. We began this year under unusual circumstances with Hurricane Harvey.

Reaud Honors College students responded to the needs of those adversely impacted with an outpouring of community service through Lamar's innovative Harvey's Heroes program, the collaborative project developed by Honors Alumna Dr. Alisa Hicklin-Fryar, Ms. Shannon Tanner, and Dr. Brenda Nichols.

Dr. Nichols was awarded a Distinguished Member award by the National Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi for this initiative. Dr. Hicklin-Fryar, who is profiled in a feature article, is the first Chair of the

College's Alumni Advisory Board, which held its inaugural meeting in June. We are planning a number of initiatives for our alumni, including special events and our new program of structured mentoring that will connect our students with our alumni. Finally, in the back of this issue, you will find a new section on alumni news. If you are one of our Honors alumni, please share with us and our readers the exciting developments in your career and life.

-Dr. Kevin Dodson



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CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: *MR. DANIEL PEMBERTON, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*
STAFF WRITERS: *MS. TARA HOCH AND MS. VICTORIA LAFLEUR, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS*
LAYOUT AND DESIGN: *MS. DEANNA PINA, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

COVER PHOTO: Hannah Carlson on her study abroad trip to Wales



STEPPING UP

"...a great way to build the student's professional skills regardless of their major."
-Rebekah Maxwell

HONORS STUDENTS STEP UP FOR NON-PROFITS

Over the last two years the Reaud Honors College, working with the Southeast Texas Nonprofit Development Center, reached out to local nonprofit organizations and connected them with students through the Stepping Up Program. The program gives Honors students the opportunity to serve as non-voting members on the boards of local nonprofit organizations. By participating in the activities of these Boards, students learn about the nonprofit sector, develop networking, leadership, and organizational skills, and are able to contribute to the development of the local community.

Preparation for the program starts in the Spring semester with a Leadership Summit for interested students. The Leadership Summit consists of workshops that prepare students in areas such as résumé building and how to present themselves in a professional manner. Rebekah Maxwell, program director and coordinator at the Reaud Honors College, said the Summit prepares students to "serve on a nonprofit board and on a board of directors. So it is a great way to build the student's professional skills regardless of their major."

As a next step, students participate in a Nonprofit Board Fair where they interact with representatives of participating nonprofit organizations. "Going through the workshop is a

great thing by itself but the goal is to prepare students to go through the Nonprofit Board Fair," Maxwell said. "That is with the Southeast Texas Nonprofit Development Center. They come, talk about what their organizations do, and students are able to talk to each of them to see which organization piques their interest. Students have to show up to the fair with their resume, professionally dressed, and exhibit the skills they learned at the Leadership Summit."

Maxwell said the program is not limited to a certain type of student. "Last year we had individuals from a variety of different colleges – students who were pre-med, pre-law, engineering, business, and fine arts and communications," she said. "Nonprofit boards like a variety of backgrounds and industries represented on their

board."

Maxwell described what taking the next step looks like for students interested in serving on a nonprofit board. "At the end of the workshop we talk about time commitment and expectations," Maxwell said. "If they decide to serve, they are considered a non-voting member on that board. So they are not taking on a huge responsibility, but there is a bit of a time commitment there."

Students are paired with organizations that align with their specific interest. "There are so many nonprofits in Southeast Texas – different ones that address different needs," Maxwell said. "We ask students to check off what they are interested in, and then from that list we work with the SETX Nonprofit Development Center to find a board

or nonprofit who are looking for members. For instance, if someone says they are interested in working with children, we point them toward a nonprofit that does that in some capacity." The list of nonprofits that were available for students to be involved for the 2017-2018 academic year was varied, with examples such as CASA, Community Coalition, Southeast Texas Family Resource, Arc of Greater Beaumont, Shorkey Center, and Beaumont Heritage Society.

Students and nonprofits are connected through a two-way ranking system. "Students rank the top boards they want to work on, while the boards rank what students they want, and we connect them that way," Maxwell said. "There is rarely a situation where different boards are fighting over a student. Last year we had seven students go through the program, and both on the student side and on the board side, everyone got paired with one of their first two choices. I think that is natural to happen because if the student is interested in a particular area, and they are talking to a nonprofit in that area, they are going to be excited about it. When the nonprofit sees that excitement, there is a natural connection."

"We have had a very positive response from the organizations involved. In fact, we had one in particular who said, 'we want a student next year,' they really enjoy having that younger perspective," Maxwell said.

But most importantly, the students' testimony of the program has been "glowing," Maxwell said. "So far the reception from students has been very good, we have several students who are interested in continuation with their nonprofit for another year, which is always a good sign," she said. "We heard from one particular student who talked about the ways it helped him develop his professional networking skills and presentation skills and has helped him feel a lot more confident."

Natalie Sfeir, Speech and Hearing Development sciences junior, said serving on a nonprofit board through



Honors students at the first Leadership Summit.

the Stepping Up program has provided her with many opportunities. "I heard about it (Stepping Up) in an HSA meeting" she said. "I was really interested in serving on a nonprofit board because with my program, speech pathology, you work a lot with those that might be disenfranchised – people with autism, Down syndrome, homeless populations, and so on. There were a lot of opportunities to get involved in helping those types of people more directly through a nonprofit."

Sfeir works with the Shorkey Center, an organization that acts as a rehabilitation center for children with special needs, which is something she is interested in, and for which her studies at Lamar have prepared her. "Spending time working on the board, I have not gotten to meet a lot of the children because our meetings are when the school is not in session, but I have learned about how the board impacts what services these kids are getting," she said.

But it is not only Sfeir's academic knowledge that makes her well-suited for the position; as a college student, she brings with her a different set of skills and perspectives to the table.

"A lot of the work we do on the board has to do with how we market different fundraisers and fundraising techniques," Sfeir said. "I am in charge of social media for the Shorkey Center, so I help get the word out and I am well acquainted with social media. It is something of interest to me, but not so much to other board members. I don't think it would have reached certain audiences if I had not had done that."

Even though there exists an age difference as well as a difference in experience, Sfeir says that her presence

is always welcomed by the other board members. "Everyone on the board always tries to include me in the discussion. Even though I am a non-voting member, they always ask my opinion and are very accommodating" she said.

Sfeir's time on the board has led her to feel closer to her passion and is something that she feels every Lamar student should experience. "The experience has made me realize how much I love working in this field and how important it is to me to make a difference in the lives of children," Sfeir said. "Anybody that is interested in getting involved in the community should definitely go for it. It is not just for a certain type of student, but for anyone that is interested in serving their community."

Maxwell said students should not be intimidated to take the leap and get involved with a nonprofit organization. "It can be intimidating because you go into that first meeting and you don't really know anybody," she said. "It's all of these business professionals who are more mature and further in their career than these students going into a nonprofit board, so it can be a little intimidating. But most board members I have come into contact with are welcoming and interested in helping a young professional mature, develop, and grow their skills." ■



Front Row (from left to right): Natalie Sfeir, Serene Kaggal, Savannah Agee, Casey Smith, Kaily Garcia, Emmalee Calvert, and Edward Doan. Back Row (left to right): Jared Richards, Carlos Caballero, Nasim Abedelwahab, Patricia Correa, Justin Dupuis, Kayla Painter, and Dr. Dodson

"Even though I am a non-voting member, they always ask my opinion and are very accommodating."

-Natalie Sfeir



Alumni Advisory Board Members

FRONT (LEFT TO RIGHT): ALISA HICKLIN FRYAR, BETHANY AIENA, KRISTEEN REYNOLDS, VALERIE JUAREZ, BRITTANY CAMMACK, STEPHANIE GLOVER, DANNY CHAND

BACK (LEFT TO RIGHT): LINDSEY MINTER, JENNY ACHILLES, DANIEL GROOMS, BRANDAN STILL, KEVIN DODSON
NOT SHOWN: JOSH DASPIT, CHRISTINE HERNDON

Alumna Focus | **DR. ALISA HICKLIN-FRYAR**

BIG RED RETURNS

Throughout her studies, travels, and research, Lamar Honors Alumna Dr. Alisa Hicklin-Fryar has become the nation's foremost expert on comprehensive regional universities, such as Lamar. But when she returns to Southeast Texas, Hicklin-Fryar is still remembered as Big Red, the LU Cardinal mascot. Dr. Hicklin Fryar graduated from Lamar University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and later earned a Doctorate in Political Science from Texas A&M University. She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, where she conducts research on public policy, the non-profit sector, and higher education.

Hicklin Fryar recently returned to Lamar's campus to talk to the Honors Student Association about the benefits of interning at and working for nonprofit organizations as well as to act as keynote speaker at the fourth annual Undergraduate Research Conference on Humanities, Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences and Business and Education, sponsored by Lamar's Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity. As the nation's foremost expert on comprehensive regional universities, Hicklin-Fryar is now the newly-appointed Chair of the Alumni Advisory Board for the Reaud Honors College.

"As a student, you would always hear from people coming back about how the campus doesn't look the same and how all the buildings have changed and you just think 'whatever,' but I think I have been gone long enough to get it now," Hicklin-Fryar said as she admired the new

Honors College's wing of the new Wayne A. Reaud Administration Building. "There seems to be more of a center of gravity to the program," she said. It has been more than a decade since Dr. Hicklin-Fryar was an undergraduate at Lamar, and she noted how much things have changed since then. "When I was here, the Honors Program was really great," she said. "We had a terrific faculty and opportunities, but it wasn't nearly as structured – it was smaller, there weren't quite as many course options available, and there were not near as many undergraduate research opportunities available."

In fact, when Hicklin-Fryar was enrolled at Lamar, the program did not even have a building to call its own. "When I first started in Honors, I don't think there was even an Honors office really, it was just the director's office," she said. "At that time, Dr. Donna Birdwell was the director and had an office, and then Dr. Dodson came in as Assistant Director. The faculty that were involved were so great and so generous with their time that we still had a great experience."

Hicklin-Fryar said she wishes she had the number of opportunities available to current Honors students. "You are all doing Honors work in so many spaces it seems like there is just more," she said. "I love hearing about everything Lamar's Honors College is doing now."

Although Hicklin-Fryar loves her work at the University of Oklahoma, she did not always know that she wanted to be a political scientist. "I definitely did not see myself pursuing political science when I first came

to Lamar. I came from a family of teachers, so I knew I wanted to teach." Eventually, she narrowed it down to two options, "I found myself choosing between communications and political science for my major, and I just picked."

Hicklin-Fryar said when she made her decision she did not even think she was going to be staying at Lamar. "I had this idea of starting here and transferring eventually, but I came to love Lamar so much so that my friends still tease me about it." When asked why she chose to stay, her

"It is the kind of place that if the campus did not exist the region would be fundamentally different."

eyes lit up as she described her alma mater. "It is the kind of place that if the campus did not exist the region would be fundamentally different," she said. "It is a school that has a lot going on. So the real interesting thing is not why I went to Lamar, but why I stayed at Lamar. I stayed because of the opportunities I would not have had at larger universities. I loved being at a school that was small enough that I could try everything."

Hicklin-Fryar wasted no time in taking full advantage of the opportunities at her disposal while enrolled at Lamar, including some that were a little unconventional. "I came to Lamar and even though I was from



the area it took me a little while to find a place to make friends. People said ‘hey try out for a student organization,’ so I settled on being Big Red. I did it all four years, and I can say, it was the best job I ever had.”

“My whole family has been touched by Lamar in a meaningful way and that’s amazing.”

Hicklin-Fryar looks back on her time as the beloved mascot with endearment, not only in what she was able to do on the field, but in the relationships she built with the Cardinals fans throughout the years. “You have these season ticket holders, whom I came to know like family. And some of them still remember me, which is insane because I was in a costume the whole time.”

Hicklin Fryar also took advantage of some of the internship opportunities offered to her through the Honors College, such as visiting the Democratic National Convention with The Washington Center in 2000. “It was a good year and a fun experience,” she said. “I worked for a company helping with press releases. There was so much going on. The Texas delegation had a party. There was an entire city block they shut down as a reception for journalists.” Hicklin-Fryar said she enjoyed it so much she returned as a faculty mentor in 2008 to lead the course, working with Lamar Honors student Caitlin Krueger. “I tried it and made some great friends with other faculty leaders there.”

Hicklin-Fryar said her favorite undergraduate experience was her time serving as the President of Lamar’s Student Government Association, and noted how much change she witnessed during her tenure as SGA President.

“In the four years I was here, we got President Simmons, a new provost, and all of the deans were new. I learned quickly that a good academic leader could do a lot of good for a university,” she said.

SGA taught Hicklin-Fryar a host of lessons she still uses today. “I learned a lot from Student Government; I definitely learned to manage my expectations – that there is only so much you can do. The idea of enduring change is almost impossible at a university because it is so dynamic.” Nonetheless, while in her position, the Lamar Student Government was able to pass resolutions on campus security that still affect Lamar’s campus today, fifteen years later. “We were lucky to be a part of something that is bigger than us and important,” she said.

What Hicklin-Fryar experienced in Student Government directly impacted what she would go on to study in her career as a political scientist. “I was on the Student Advisory Board for the Southeast Texas State Regents, so I got to go to those meetings,” she said. “They are both the most boring things ever and also the most interesting things in the world. I loved having the opportunity to see behind the curtain to see what people are arguing about and talking about. You get to listen to how policy makers are talking to presidents. I just was so

interested and I wanted to go read about it, but there just was not much out there – still isn’t much out there. I love it, and all of that came from student government.”

In 2002 Hicklin-Fryar graduated from Lamar University without much of an idea of where she wanted to go. “I knew I wanted to work at a university and I was wondering if I wanted to pursue administration,” she said. “I was advised I would be better off long term if I got my PhD.” Hicklin-Fryar applied to graduate programs at Texas A&M University and Texas Tech and was accepted into both. “I went straight from Lamar to A&M and finished in 4 years. I did not always plan on graduate school, and to be honest, I didn’t really know what I was getting myself into. But I knew I wanted to be part of higher education.”

A problem that Hicklin-Fryar quickly ran into once she entered her graduate program was her lack of research experience as an undergraduate. If you had asked her then if she was experienced in research, “I probably would have said no,” she said. “We did not have as much of a structure around undergraduate research at Lamar when I was coming through, so I didn’t have the language of research. So my first semester at A&M was really tough. I just was not familiar with the language or research – I wasn’t socialized. One of my professors didn’t think I was going to

make it.”

But through a lot of hard work, Hicklin-Fryar eventually built the skills necessary to succeed in her field. “The word that comes to mind when I think of my first year of graduate school is ‘inefficient,’” she said. “It took me so long to do everything my first year. I got better and faster, but I still didn’t feel like I got it. To be honest, I think I was three or four years on faculty before I felt like ‘I think I know what I am doing, mostly.’”

Hicklin-Fryar said the most rewarding aspect of her work, and of conducting research in general, is that she is able to call herself one of the experts in her field. “It kind of sneaks up on me sometimes. I will get a call to talk to a reporter or speak at a conference and I will think, ‘surely there must be better equipped people.’”

Although Hicklin-Fryar has not been a student at Lamar for a long while, she still finds ways to stay involved with the university. After Hurricane Harvey left many Southeast Texas communities in shambles and without access to food, running water, and many other basic necessities, Hicklin-Fryar coordinated with Shannon Tanner of the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast and Brenda Nichols, Vice Provost for Digital Learning, to put together the Harvey’s Heroes program. “If I had 900 students with nothing to do I would probably find a way to get them out there and

start helping with response efforts. You always want to help places that helped you.”

Hicklin-Fryar does not intend to stop there with her involvement at Lamar. She said she will continue to provide a positive influence for the university, specifically for the Honors College, in her new position as Chair of the Reaud Honor College’s new Alumni Advisory Board. “I think we will set up a board that can really be there for the college,” she said. “My goal is to do what Dodson (and the board) think is best, I really have no agenda.”

Hicklin-Fryar’s passion for the university runs deep. It is because of this love for the university that she does not plan on ceasing her involvement anytime soon. “My whole family has been touched by Lamar in a meaningful way and that’s amazing, and it is cool to be a part of that,” she said. “I wish I could do more, but if I can do a little bit, I would like to try. It has been nice to maintain these relationships, come back to campus to see people and know them and care about them – and know they care about me – that is a blessing. I believe in Lamar. For better or for worse, Lamar has me on their team.”

Clearly, it is for the better. ■



“You always want to help places that helped you.”

The inaugural meeting of the new Alumni Advisory Board. From Left: Jenny Achilles, Bethany Aiena, Valerie Juarez, Kristeen Reynolds, Kevin Dodson, Alisa Hicklin Fryar, Stephanie Glover, and Daniel Grooms.

Dr. Vicki Michalski: A Passion for the Popular

Honors professor Dr. Nicki Michalski loves popular culture. It takes only a few moments in her office in the Department of Communications to see that her geek credentials are in proper order. A bookshelf situated in the back of the cramped office overflows with titles along the lines of Archetypal Analysis and volume after volume of pop culture journals. A Wonder Woman poster hangs on the wall behind her, looking over her as she works at her computer. “It was a Christmas gift from my husband years ago,” Michalski said. “He likes to say that he sees me as a wonder woman. What I like about her is that she is strong, smart, ethical and guided by a strong sense of who she is, but she is also willing to stand and fight when she needs to. She is very much an ideal.”

Michalski’s interest in pop culture is more than just a part of her profession, it is a passion. This is evident not only in the way that she talks about fictional characters like Wonder Woman, but also in something as seemingly basic as her observations of the way people speak to one another. To Michalski, these topics are similarly weighted in seriousness and importance. “Popular culture is all about who we are as a society and the messages that we choose to spend our time with and value,” she said. “I see the two as inherently connected. Many of the ‘classic’ texts that people look at and reference (Shakespeare, for instance) were popular culture in their time.” Michalski wants to know what popular culture says about us, the people who consume it. Why are certain things popular? Why do we identify with certain characters? Where does culture come from? These are the questions that have occupied Michalski’s mind throughout her professional life as an academic.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and History from Eastern Michigan University, Michalski went on to earn her Masters from the same institution and her PhD from Wayne State University. Michalski currently serves as Associate Professor of Communication at Lamar University.

As a student of rhetoric, ethics and ideals are both very close



to Michalski’s academic work. “Rhetorical theory is the study of how messages are constructed and how they work – how we get across what we are trying to say, and what those messages convey about us as a people and society,” she said. “As an undergraduate at Eastern Michigan, I was a double major—communications and history. I feel like rhetoric is a perfect blending of the two. It allows me to historically ground, and situate, the development of communication and its theories as a discipline. It brings in the philosophical element that I find so compelling.”

During her first year teaching at Lamar University, Michalski knew she wanted to be involved in the then Lamar University Honors program, prior to the establishment of the Reaud Honors College. “It meant I would get to hang out with the cool professors,” she said jokingly. She got her chance to teach an Honors course when a colleague retired and Michalski became the instructor for the Honors section of Public Speaking, a course she has taught for Honors since that time and that opened the door to many years of involvement with the college. Michalski served for two years as the Assistant Director of the Honors Program and was voted the 2012-2013 Honors Professor of the Year by the Honors Student Association. Michalski is also a fixture on the University Honors Council, having served on it for well over a decade. “I always toss my hat in the ring because I love working with honors students,” Michalski said.

Some of her favorite moments have involved getting the opportunity to travel with Honors students. “I chaperoned two students [Stephanie Kemmerling and Ali Walls] to a Women as Global Leaders conference in the United Arab Emirates,” Michalski said. “The trip allowed me to gain a lot of insight into a different culture that I would not have been exposed to otherwise.”

As a faculty member, Michalski also enjoys her involvement with the Honors College because it affords her the opportunity to teach new courses, in the form of Honors Seminars and Topics courses, which require outside-of-the-box thinking. “It’s a way of pursuing research interests that are fun but may not necessarily fit in the main department,” she said.

In fall 2017, Michalski spearheaded an Honors Topics course titled “The Death Class.” The idea came from a book by the same name from author Erika Hayasaki, which Michalski had previously covered during an Honors Summer Reading Club. “In our discussion group for the book, one of the students, Kara Timberlake, was really excited about the idea and she started going to people and saying ‘I really want to do this class, I want this class here at Lamar,’” Michalski said. Now a Lamar University alumna, Timberlake, of Beaumont, earned BAs in English and Modern Languages and Communications with an emphasis in journalism in 2016.

Getting the project off the ground was not as simple as Timberlake and Michalski initially thought. “We sat down and talked about how a class like this would work at Lamar, Michalski said. “I did not feel that I could do the class all by myself because I am a communications professor.

“In the book, the class is taught from a nursing standpoint. So I knew that our version would be different. This is how we came up with the idea of the course being team-taught.”

The two began reaching out to professors who could bring varied perspectives on the subject matter. “We worked on it sporadically, and were building momentum for the project,” Michalski said. “Then, Kara graduated.” Michalski knew that she wanted to stay true to the original plan of the class being team-taught, which meant that she would need a roster of Lamar educators who could give a varied but substantive perspective

on death. After rounds of emails, Michalski eventually got a team together. The course would be taught by Jess Doiron, instructor of English and Modern Languages, Gina Hale, assistant professor of nursing, Carolyn Clanahan instructor of Anthropology in the department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice, as well as Michalski, associate professor of Communications.

Once she had her roster finalized, it came time for the group to flesh out what the class itself would look like. “We started a little chain email – brainstorming ideas for what we needed to focus on,” Michalski said.

Eventually, the course began to take shape. “When we sat down and did the math, we would each have approximately 3 weeks,” Michalski said. “We wanted the class to be coherent, so we made the decision to divide the class into four ‘mini-sessions. We were also concerned with making sure the class followed a logical progression. It just seemed inherently logical to start with the physiological, Dr. Hale’s section. Because everything else hinges on the physiological. We don’t need the cultural systems and artifacts if there is no physiological process. Culture comes out of dealing with these physiological and biological issues.” The class then examined the cultural implications of death, the rituals of indigenous populations from around the world, the forensic anthropological perspectives of what happens to the body, and finally the esoteric relationship between death and art along with pop cultural representations of death.

After the semester was finished, Michalski received feedback from students who had taken the course – it had been a tremendous success. “It is an experience that goes beyond just education. It is about your outlook and who you are as a person. Everyone agreed that it was a very powerful experience. Every section had a student who thought it was the most

important, most meaningful, part of the class – I think that means we were successful.”

Michalski has also been busy with her book, *Martian Pictures Analyzing the Cinema of the Red Planet*, co-written by fellow Lamar professor of Communication, O’Brien Stanley, and two former Lamar professors Steve Zani, former chair of English and Modern Languages, and Lane Roth, associate professor of Communication. The project was recently released by McFarland and Company Publishers. Michalski’s partnership with Stanley and Roth comes from the benefit of proximity, as their offices are adjoining. But the connection with Zani is one that grew out of an unexpected bond – a shared interest in *Trixie Belden Mysteries*, something they found they had in common after a chance encounter at a local used bookstore, Read B4 Books, where Zani was doing research on the “girl detective” subgenre. The four each contributed chapters to the book, all of which cover the depiction of our celestial neighbor, Mars, in our culture’s

cinema.

The concept for *Martian Pictures* began as a conversation between Stanley and Michalski as they stood outside of their offices. “O’Brien and I talk a lot about movies, and we were standing in the hall one day and just thinking, ‘Wow, there’s a lot going on with Mars and movies. Why is that? I think we can look at that and do a paper about that,’” Michalski said.

The only problem was the extent of Michalski’s *Martian* movie experience – she was only really familiar with the film *Total Recall*. That meant she would have to do some research.

“Once you start digging into it, you realize how many movies are about Mars,” she said.

Michalski described the process as a lot of watching movies and taking notes. “But we also needed to develop a theoretical framework to wrap our thinking around,” she said. “That would allow us to better develop our ideas into a format that would make the work valid.” According to the publisher, the authors characterize

depictions of Mars in science fiction as a sort of “future history,” in which representations of Mars express society’s changing aspirations and anxieties, including attitudes about women, government, and environmental issues.

Eventually the papers were written, and after a few years of visiting conferences with different papers, all of which dealt in some way with the theme of Mars, Michalski and Stanley saw that they were on to something. “We realized we were beginning to develop a body of research here,” Michalski said. “We reached out to McFarland and they liked the idea, so they ran with it.”

For her next Honors course, Dr. Michalski will be bringing her insights from her research into *Martian* cinema to Reaud Honors College students with an Honors seminar on “Mars in Cinema” she will co-teach with Stanley.

For Michalski, it is the joy of educating the students that make up the Honors College that keeps her eager to stay involved. “I love that

the honors students actually value learning,” she said. “Yes, they are very focused on success, but they also see that there is benefit in learning and thinking. The discussions tend to be a bit more in-depth; the students are used to being challenged to think critically. In addition, I find that a lot of the honors students are more aware of what is going on in the world, and I think that is very important.”

Regardless of their discipline, Michalski wants all students that she teaches to leave her class with something that goes beyond just another grade on their transcript, she wants them to leave as better



A session of the Death Class

“I want my students to realize that the world and knowledge are much bigger than they thought.”

communicators and global citizens. “I want my students to realize that the world and knowledge are much bigger than they thought,” she said. “I want them to understand that there are complexities that need to be considered, and that although there is much difference, there is also much

similarity among people. When we meet each other with that in mind, we can make great progress together. Yes, I teach a lot of communication theory, but the real goal of it all is to bring people together for positive change and growth.”

At a time when communication

on all levels of our society is strained and confrontational – from mass media to social media, from political discourse to “polite” dinner conversation – Michalski’s message seems not only timely, but essential. ■



The Death Class on a site visit to a local medical facility

*“The real **GOAL** of it all is to bring people together for positive change AND GROWTH.”*



"I went to the park in search of adventure and peace. What I felt and saw was more than I could have ever imagined."



Mount Rainier National Park

Lamar University Honors students reflect on **NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCES**

STUDENTS IN THE REAUD HONORS COLLEGE OF LAMAR UNIVERSITY TRAVELED TO FOUR NATIONAL PARKS OVER THE SUMMER OF 2017 AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE PARTNERS IN THE PARKS PROGRAM,

an experiential learning program affiliated with the National Collegiate Honors Council and the National Park Service. The Partners in the Parks projects at national parks across the country offer unique opportunities for collegiate honors students and faculty to visit areas of the American landscape noted for their beauty, significance and lasting value.

During weeklong trips spanning May through August, Emmalee Calvert sophomore dietetics major of Dripping Springs; Tara Hoch, senior political science major of Beaumont Kender Myers, junior accounting major of Mauriceville; Louisa Liu, senior chemical engineering major of Beaumont; and Kimanh Tsan, junior chemical engineering major of Orange, took part in educational and exploratory activities with other NCHC honors students, as well as with "partners" – leaders affiliated with regional honors colleges, field experts, researchers, park rangers, park leadership, and more. These trips were made possible through McMaster Grants-in-Aid.

"Participation in the program fulfills students' requirement for a 'High Impact Educational Practice' in the Reaud Honors College, the involvement in at least one such practice being mandatory for students to attain the distinction of Honors College Graduate upon graduation," said Reaud Honors College Dean Kevin Dodson.

Emmalee Calvert traveled to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee



Mount Rainier National Park

"Beyond the beauty of the park itself, I met so many beautiful people with whom I feel I'll share a bond forever."

in May. She and a group of students from honors colleges nationwide braved a week of rain while participating in activities including backpacking and whitewater rafting.

"My favorite parts of the trip were really the little spontaneous things. Seeing an elk by the side of the road. Cramming five people in a four-person tent. Giving up sleeping in a tent the next few nights and enjoying sleeping in our van. Driving the Blue Ridge Parkway and enjoying the gorgeous views. Making giant s'mores. Getting to hike on an off-limits trail with a park ranger to explore the damage of a recent fire. Just being outside the whole week set the trip up to be an amazing experience."

Hoch and Myers tested the limits of their endurance during their week in Mount Rainier National Park in Washington. The trip fell during the park's peak wildflower season in late July, which gave them

unprecedented opportunity to see the normally snow-covered mountains ablaze with color.

“We capped our week off with a backpacking trip through a valley absolutely covered in flowers—it was one of the most beautiful things I’ve ever seen; it moved me to tears,” Hoch said. “But beyond the beauty of the park itself, I met so many beautiful people with whom I feel I’ll share a bond forever. From sharing scribbled prose and personal reflections by the campfire, to waiting when someone fell behind the group during hikes, to following our partners

“We all grew in ways that far surpassed our expectations. It was a life-changing experience.”

on wild adventures and pushing the limits of our bodies. We were encouraged to take time for introspection and I think we all grew in ways that far surpassed our expectations. It was a life-changing experience.”

Myers said her biggest takeaway was a renewed sense of selflessness.

“Every part of the park needs more care than you could ever imagine and we are all part of that preservation process. I learned about a culture of care—caring more for those around me and more for the scenery around me,” she said. “Appearance, ability, and expectation were left at home. Authenticity is what resulted. It was refreshing and beautiful to be in community with people not trying to impress one another or pretending to be someone they weren’t. It was real and it was rare.”

Though the terrain was challenging, Hoch and Myers said the rewards vastly outweighed the risks.

“I promised myself at the beginning of this trip that I would participate in everything, whether or not I felt scared or uncomfortable,” Myers said, “And I did. I climbed the Nisqually Glacier, scaled a steep rocky hill, woke up at 5 a.m. to hike up a cliff to watch the sunrise, and shared more of my personal life than I thought possible with strangers. I went to the park in search of adventure and peace. What I felt and saw was more than I could have ever imagined.”

From August 8-13, Tsan and Liu traversed tree-dotted Sequoia National Park in California’s southern Sierra Nevada Range.

“I decided to participate in Partners in the Parks ultimately because it transported me out of my comfort zone,” Tsan said. “I learned a great deal about myself, and meeting and getting to know the other participants was amazing. The connection was instant with our group –

many of us didn’t know what to expect, and so in a way, we were all on the same level. There is something particularly special about getting to know people without a roof over our heads. We always wanted to set our tents up next to one another.”

Hikes were difficult and plans didn’t always pan out, but Tsan and Liu said the tenor of perseverance among the group overpowered any negativity.

“We hiked Sawtooth Pass. It was a difficult terrain – there was even a forewarning from a sign that read, ‘Trail Not Maintained.’ We had planned to camp on the downside of the mountain, but due to ice coverage, this wasn’t possible,” Tsan said. “Some things just don’t go as planned, but it’s okay. People slipped and fell on those trails, but you just get back up and keep hiking. You don’t give up.”

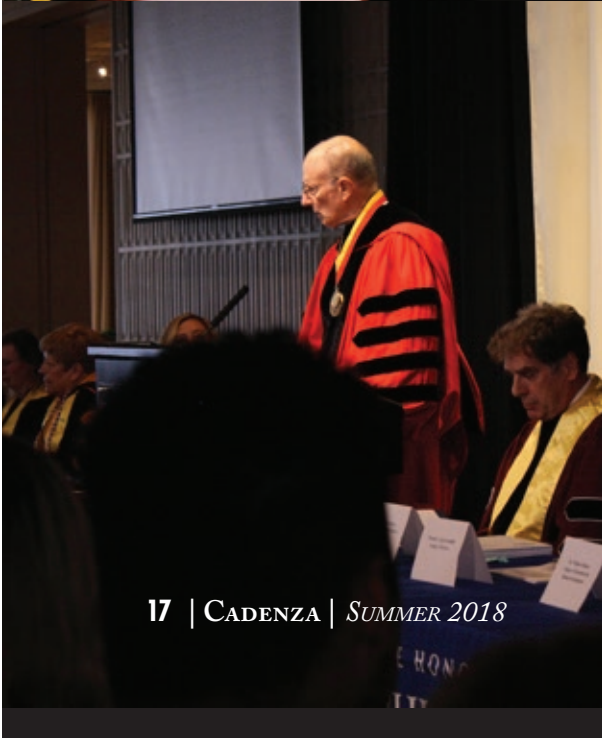
As Myers said, “It was, hands down, the most incredible experience of my life. I am still reaping the benefits from all that I learned—from little things like spending less time on my cell phone to major life changes, like being authentic, active, and intentional in the relationships I have,” she said. “I would encourage any honors student, irrespective of their major, to take part in Partners. It’s not just a trip—it’s an investment you can make into your personal growth and view on life.”

As one of the original participants in the program, Honors at Lamar continues to play a major role in the program. In Summer 2018, five more Reaud Honors College students will also embark for such experiences in the National Parks, and Honors Coordinator Rebekah Maxwell will also participate in this summer’s alumni program. Both Maxwell and Calvert are now serving on the National Collegiate Honors Council’s Partners in the Parks Committee and will serve as mentors to freshman learning community devoted to the National Parks. As Calvert puts it, “Partners in the Park has given me the chance to see new parts of our country, connect with other honors students from all over the United States, and learn more about the National Parks Service. I’ve gotten to learn not just from the individual people and places I met and saw on the trip, but also learn more about the nature of our country and the people within it.”

Finally, this winter the Reaud Honors College will co-sponsor along with Tyler Junior College its own Partners in the Park Program in Big Bend National Park. This will be the first time the Program has come to a National Park in Texas. ■

Great Smoky
Mountains
National Park





PHI BETA DELTA



The Reaud Honors College has always had a strong relationship with Lamar's Beta Xi Chapter of Phi Beta Delta and now serves as its new home on Lamar's campus. Phi Beta Delta is the first honor society dedicated to recognizing scholarly achievement in international education across all disciplines, seeking to recognize the efforts of international students and scholars, to advance international programming in higher education, and to establish a network of faculty, students, and staff working on international projects.

Honors Coordinator Rebekah Maxwell will continue to serve as Beta Xi Chapter President for the 2018-2019 year, and six Reaud Honors College students – Laura Fiedler, Victoria (Sage) Granger, Emily McCall, Ryan Nunez, Linda Pham, and Casey Smith – were all honored for their international scholarship by being inducted into the Society. Since its founding at California State University in 1986, Phi Beta Delta has grown to over 180 chapters. Lamar University's Beta Xi Chapter was chartered in 1991 and now boasts 52 members.

PHI KAPPA PHI



The Lamar University Chapter 95 of the national honors society Phi Kappa Phi inducted 23 honors students into membership in December 2017. Admission is exclusively by invitation, with only the top 10 percent of seniors and the top 7.5 percent of juniors eligible for membership in this prestigious organization.

Founded in 1897 at the University of Maine, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and largest collegiate honors society with chapters on over 300 campuses.

With membership drawn from all university disciplines, its mission is "to recognize and promote academic excellence in all fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others." To advance these goals, Phi Kappa Phi makes a variety of awards supporting graduate study, study abroad, career development, and literacy programs. Lamar honors students have been recipients of these awards in the past.

In 2017, the Lamar Phi Kappa Phi Chapter honored Reaud Honors College Dean Kevin Dodson when it endowed a new scholarship in recognition of his service to the university. The Dr. Kevin Dodson/Phi Kappa Phi Endowment was established in the Lamar University Foundation with a gift of \$22,000. Distributions from the endowed fund will be used to further the mission of the organization through annual awards supporting LU students or faculty members of Phi Kappa Phi based on the merits and purpose of the national organization.

Inductees:

JOSHUA BONNETTE, BAILEY BREVIL, EMILY BROWN, TIFFANY CHARLESTON, STEPHANIE DEMEYER, SAKURAH FISHER, TARA HOCH, SERENE KAGGAL, VICTORIA LAFLEUR, MADISON MARINO, CHARISSA MATHEW, EMILY MCCALL, TRENT MCGEE, KATELYN MEAUX, JOSHUA ORTEGO, DANIEL PEMBERTON, LUKE PLACETTE, DAVID QUISPE, HANNAH ROUSSELL, KINNEDY VANDEVENDER, CARLO VANZ, JOHN VINCENT, JENNIFER WATTERS

HONORS BRIEFS

RECOGNITIONS:

David Quispe (Electrical Engineering/Mathematics) earned an Honorable Mention from the 2018 Barry Goldwater Scholarship Program. The Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program confers the most prestigious undergraduate award given in the sciences. The United States Congress established the scholarship in 1986 in honor of former United States Senator and 1964 presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.

Sakurah Fisher (Psychology, Port Arthur) and David Quispe (Electrical Engineering and Mathematics, La Porte) were recipients of the 2018 Beck Fellowships, a full-ride scholarship that includes a stipend for a summer research project. Ms. Fisher will join a team of researchers at the renowned Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research. She will assist the team as they continue studies of non-invasive brain stimulation on sensory-based cognitive impairment in patients with schizophrenia. Mr. Quispe's research will take him to Arizona State University to work in the area of material science in solar energy. Working alongside top ASU researchers, he will help explore the relative advantages and disadvantages of two promising types of oxide coatings used in solar cells.

Natalie Sfeir and Laura Soto attended the NEW Leadership Texas 2018 Summer Institute in Austin, with support from a McMaster Grant-in-Aid. NEW Leadership™ Texas is a six-day non-partisan intensive residential program that brings together college women from across the political spectrum to discuss the roles of women in leadership and politics. The program exposes participants to new ideas and opportunities as they consider their future careers.

Aziz Shaaban and Tran Nguyen were accepted into the Joint Admission Medical Program of Texas. JAMP is a partnership between 9 medical schools and 67 public and private four-year undergraduate institutions in Texas.

Melissa Torres was awarded a Critical Language Scholarship from the United States State Department. Melissa will be studying Hindi in Jaipur, India this summer.

The following Honors students were recipients of SURF Grants from Lamar's Office of Undergraduate Research: Ashley Borel and Hayden Henslee, Biology; Katelin Catching, Biology; Madison Demel, Chemical Engineering; Frederick Donahey, Pre-Medical and Chemical Engineering; and Mackenzie Hudson, Psychology. Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships include a stipend and housing allowance for summer residence in the dorms.

Communication major Daniel Pemberton received the Liebling Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research at the TwinStar Conference on the Humanities and Philosophy at Lone Star College CyFair, February 16-17, for his paper "The Meditative Realism of Yasujiro Ozu."

LAMAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

For the second year in a row, the Executive Committee of the SGA consists entirely of Honors students. During 2018-2019 term, Madison Marino will serve as President, Natalie Sfeir will serve as Vice President, and Edward Doan will serve as Secretary-Treasurer.

LU AMBASSADORS

The Office of Alumni Affairs has announced the new Lamar Ambassadors for 2018-19, and the Honors students are well represented among their ranks. The following Honors students were named Ambassadors: Haya Alani, Patricia Correa, Edward Doan, Jack Dolce, Madison Hamby, Afsana Islam, Govin Kaggal, Katey McCall, and Thanh Nguyen.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Jack Dolce, Brody McBee, Daniel Pemberton, Emily Robinson, Natalie Sfeir, and Aziz Shabaan will all make presentations at the 2018 Annual Conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council in Boston this November.

GREAT PLAINS HONORS COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Progga Chirontoni, Sakurah Fisher, Kaily Garcia, Brody McBee, Chelsea Savoy, Aziz Shaaban, and David Yeakey all presented at the 2018 Conference of the Great Plains Honors Council at Oklahoma State University, March 23-25. English major Kaily Garcia won the Boe Award for the Best Paper in the Humanities by a student with less than 60 credit hours for her paper "From Troy to Gotham: The Portrayal and Symbolism of Heroes in Western Media."

TOAST TO LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Of the 20 Seniors of Significance recognized, 11 were Honors students, including: Carlos A. Caballero, Progga Chirontoni, Kirby Clayton, Katherine Deaton, John Ellis, Sakurah Fisher, G. Dillon Nicholson, Ryan Sherer, Margaret “Kay-Alana” Turner, Shelby Whitehead, and Christopher York.

THE ANN SHAW AWARD FOR STUDENT LEADERSHIP, which recognizes a junior or senior student for fostering a spirit of teamwork, excellence in leadership, and exhibiting exemplary personal ethics and integrity while making significant contributions to the Lamar University community, was given to Cade Johnson. Cade Johnson is a dual major in biology and exercise science who is a Lamar Ambassador, has previously served as President for Alpha Tau Omega, and a 2016 recipient of the David J. Beck Fellowships award.

THE BESS GENTRY AWARD, which recognizes a senior woman who has demonstrated outstanding character, leadership, service, contribution and scholarship as a student of Lamar University, was given to Sakurah Fisher. Sakurah Fisher is a psychology major who is a McNair Scholar, a Lamar Ambassador, and a 2018 recipient of the David J. Beck Fellowships award.

THE C. ROBERT KEMBLE AWARD, which recognizes a senior man for leadership, scholarship, exemplary character, and for his contributions and service to Lamar University, was given to Carlos A. Caballero. Carlos A. Caballero is a dual major in mechanical engineering and physics who is a McNair Scholar and a Lamar Ambassador.

REAUD HONORS COLLEGE SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Biology major Jordan Curl has been named the first Reaud Honors College Summer Research Fellow. Jordan will spend his summer at the University of California – San Diego researching cancer pathways with MacArthur Fellow, Dr. Kun-Liang Guan. Consideration for the new RHC Summer Research Fellowship is based on the student’s application for the Beck Fellowship.

Alumni News

ALISA HICKLIN FRYAR 2002

Working on a new project with Brenda Nichols and Shannon (Tait) Tanner. The project, which is a study on how Hurricane Harvey affected the students at Lamar, is funded by the National Science Foundation.

DANIEL CHAND 2002

Got married in 2016. Now an assistant professor at Kent State University (since 2016).

DANIEL GROOMS 2003

Had a son in October 2016. Co-authored a paper that was presented at the Pump and Turbo Machinery Conference in Houston, December 2017.

BRANDAN STILL 2006

Promoted to Counsel at Simpson Thacher, and Bartlett, L.L.P.

LINDSEY MINTER 2007

Son, Andrew (Drew) Timothy Minter, was born January 16, 2017.

BETHANY AIENA 2011

Graduated with a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Mississippi in August 2017 and will complete a fellowship in Primary Care Mental Health Integration at the Southeast Louisiana Veterans’ Health Care System in August 2018.

BRITTANY CAMMACK (ROSS) 2011

Got married on March 25, 2018 and started new job with Riverkids Pediatric Home Health as Physical Therapist as of January 2018.

VALERIE JUAREZ 2011

Married Danika Lilith (DJ) Johnston (’12) on August 26, 2017.

ELISABETH MAXWELL 2013

Received two master’s degrees in the fall of 2017, one masters in Marine Biology and one in Marine Policy from the School of Marine Sciences at the University of Maine.

PAUL RIZK 2014

Received his M.D. May 2018 from UT Southwestern and will be starting his Orthopaedic Surgery training at the University of Florida.

LAUREN SCHULDT WILSON 2015

Received her master’s degree in English with a specialty in Victorian Literature from the University of South Carolina in May 2018.

Letter from Abroad | STUDY IN WALES



DEAR FELLOW STUDENTS,

Croeso a helo! Roedd fy amser yng Nghymru yn anhygoel. ‘Welcome and hello! My time in Wales was incredible.

I’ll begin with a little background, my name is Hannah Carlson and I have been studying abroad in Swansea, Wales for the past seven months. When I listened to people talk about their own study abroad experiences, they would always talk about the amazing food they got to eat, and all the different cities and countries they were able to visit. Which is totally cool, and I definitely have a lot of those stories as well, but the most impactful thing that has happened to me during my time abroad, has been experiencing the different people.

The people I met while in Wales changed my life. That may sound a bit dramatic, but I absolutely mean it. From my older Welsh neighbor who invited me over for tea, to the girl who gave me. Texas shaped Welsh cake! From the two individuals who showed me how to go ‘worming’ on the beach, to the 110 people I organized a Thanksgiving for. From the two families who hosted me over the holidays, to the whole of the Christian Union on campus at Swansea.

These people are like family to me now and if you see me on campus next year looking like a weirdo and talking to my phone, I’m probably sending them videos from Lamar or Facetimeing them (feel free to say hi, they would love that).

I specifically chose to do a longer than normal study abroad, mostly because I really wanted to immerse myself into the culture of where I was staying for ten months. I was not worried about going to all of the countries in Europe and seeing everything because 1.) I chose to spend that time building lasting relationships with the people of Wales and students of Swansea University, and 2) the cost of living there for ten months, going to school and travelling everywhere adds up quick!

We will not ignore the ‘study’ part of studying abroad; I have been taking classes here in Swansea as well as online through Lamar these past two semesters. And I won’t lie to you, it was pretty rough trying to keep up with everything. But I cannot stress the fact enough that it is so worth it. I even had thoughts at some points of whether or not I could transfer over there to graduate! Of course I am not (Go Cards!), but that shows how much I love this experience. I had a love-hate relationship with how they did homework and exams here, but I have been doing well and got used to the fact that one essay could be 100% of my final grade. Also, a 70 here is top notch and a 40 is failing...weird.

DIOLCH A HWYL FAWR! ‘THANK YOU AND GOODBYE!

Hannah Carlson



Study Abroad students at Swansea University.



Hannah Carlson on the Welsh coast.



2017 - 2018 HSA OFFICERS

Front Row: Casey Smith, Serene Kaggal, Natalie Sfeir, Victor Vuong,
Back Row: Bra'ah Hamdan, Emmalee Calvert, Govin Kaggal, Omar Hamza,
Nasim Abedelewahab, Thanh Tsan, John Ellis



2017 - FALL GRADUATES

Tara Hoch, Kennedy Vandevender, Jeremy Fam
Not Shown: Caitlin McAlister and Katherine Stampley



2018 - 2019 HSA OFFICERS

Front Row: Makenzie Sattler, Naomi Raczkovi, Casey Smith, Serene Kaggal,
Natalie Sfeir, Thanh Ngyuen, Yen Vu
Back Row: Jack Dolce, Raegan Minaldi, Emmalee Calvert, Govin Kaggal, Omar
Hamza, Luke Ngyuen, Kayla Painter



2018- SPRING & SUMMER GRADUATES

Front Row: Carlos Caballero, Ryan Sherer, Shelby Whitehead, Louisa Liu, Laura
Fiedler, Rebekah Gonzales, Kirby Clayton, Katherine Deaton, Progga Chirontoni,
Laura Soto, Ryan Nunez
Back Row: Nic Nikoloutsos, Paul Gebbert, Tyler Mackey, Gregory Dillon
Nicholson, Marly Smith, Drew Anderson, Bailey Brevell, Mollianne Eckart, John
Ellis, Reagan Ficken
Not Shown: Apol Bodiongan, April Gray, Mahjabeen Javed, Alexander Sholl,
Alexandria Toledo, Christopher York

CONGRATS
GRADS



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