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.

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

THANK YOU
Mr. Reaud

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

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Reaud Honors College Graduates
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 resume 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.”

The Leadership Summit prepares students for interested in serving on a nonprofit board. “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.

“This 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 have I have come into contact with are welcoming and interested in helping a young professional mature, develop, and grow their skills.”
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 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...
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 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 wasn’t 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 Reasal 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.

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

“You always want to help places that helped you.”
Dr. Nicki 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 identify 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, and 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—theoretically 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 wanted to be involved in the then Lamar University Honors program. “I 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.

One of the questions that Michalski gets asked the most is “What is your favorite pop culture reference?” While a professed fan of Shakespeare, the works of Jane Austen and J.R.R. Tolkien, Michalski’s interest in pop culture goes well beyond the classics. “As a faculty member, Michalski also enjoys her involvement with the Honors College because it allows 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 development of the course,’” 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. The course was taught in small groups of 25, so the class would be divided up into these groups. And with the group being team-taught. We would get to hang out with the cool professors, 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 email chain — brainstorming ideas for what we needed to focus on,” Michalski said. Eventually, the course took shape. “When we sat down and did the math, we each have approximately three weeks,” Michalski said. “We wanted the class to be cohesive, 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. Hall’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 was then examined the cultural implications of death, the rituals of indigenous populations from around the world, the forensic anthropological perspective of what happens to the body, and finally the esoteric relationship between death and art among 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 communicators and global citizens.

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

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

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.
Honors students reflect on

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 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

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

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,
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 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.
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 McColl, 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:


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 Stifer 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: Hara Alanis, Patricia Correa, Edward Doan, Jack Dolce, Madison Hamby, Afshana Islam, Govin Kaggal, Kayte McColl, and Thanh Nguyen.

LAMAR UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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

GREAT PLAINS HONORS COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Gregg Chalena, Sakurah Fisher, Kaitly Garcia, Brody McIlveen, Chelena Savoy, Aziz Shaaban, and David Yarnkey all presented at the 2018 Conference of the Great Plains Honors Council at Oklahoma State University, March 23-25. English major Kaitly Garcia won the Best Paper 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, Pragya 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) Turner. The project, which is a study on how Hurricane Harvey affected the students at Lamar, is funded by the National Science Foundation.

Daniel Chano 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 Pumps and Turbines Machinery Conference in Houston, December 2017.

Brandan Stil 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 Rwzdkids 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 master's 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 Schudy 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

Hannah Carlson

Croeso a helo! Roodid fy amser yng Nghymru! ‘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 Facetiming 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 wasn’t 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 tough trying to keep up with everything. But I cannot stress the fact enough that it is so worth it. 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.

DOLCH A HWYL FAWR! THANK YOU AND GOODBYE!

Hannah Carlson

Dear Fellow Students,

Cadenza Autumn 2018 | Starman 2018
2017 - 2018 HSA Officers
Front Row: Casey Smith, Serene Kaggal, Natalie Stier, Victor Vuong,
Back Row: Bra’ah Hamdan, Emmalee Calvert, Govin Kaggal, Omar Hamza,
Nasim Abdelewahab, Thanh Tuan, John Ellis

2017 - Fall Graduates
Tara Hoch, Kennedy Vandevender, Jeremy Fam
Not Shown: Caitlin McAllister and Katherine Stampley

2018 - 2019 HSA Officers
Front Row: Makenzie Sattler, Naomi Raczkov, Casey Smith, Serene Kaggal,
Natalie Stier, Thanh Nguyen, Yen Vu
Back Row: Jack Dolce, Raegan Minardi, Emmalee Calvert, Govin Kaggal, Omar
Hamza, Luke Nguyen, Kayla Painter

2018 - Spring & Summer Graduates
Front Row: Carlos Caballero, Ryan Sherer, Shelby Whitehead, Louisa Liu, Laura
Fiedler, Rebekah Gonzales, Kirby Clayton, Katherine Deaton, Pegga 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, Mahabaeen Javed, Alexander Sholl,
Alexandria Toledo, Christopher York