

CADENZA

THE MAGAZINE OF THE REAUD HONORS COLLEGE AT LAMAR UNIVERSITY®
VOL. 4 | SUMMER 2020





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.



100 • 60 • 10

LAMAR UNIVERSITY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Plans are under way to commemorate Lamar University's 100th anniversary in 2023.

The birthday celebration will be held during the 2023 calendar year from January to December. All colleges, departments, and organizations on campus are encouraged to participate in programming and projects.

That year also marks the 60th anniversary of Honors education at the university (which makes it the oldest program in the Texas State University System) and the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Reaud Honors College.

Lamar University will celebrate with projects both on and off campus. Projects currently in progress include the **Lamar 100 Project** to collect Lamar memorabilia and a special **Centennial book**, a joint effort from the Center for History & Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast and Special Collections at the Mary and John Gray Library.

The Reaud Honors College is currently developing plans to get in on the fun, so mark your calendars for that fall. Cardinal Pride!

INSIDE THIS *issue*

3 **DISRUPTING EDUCATION**

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN HONORS START AT HOME, AS REAUD HONORS STUDENTS PROMOTE THEIR PROJECTS DURING THE NCHC CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS.

7 **MAN OF MANY HATS**

AN ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT ON DR. DANIEL CHAND, WHO BRINGS A WORLD OF EXPERIENCE TO THE REAUD HONORS ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD.

11 **PORTRAIT OF AN EXCELLENT PROFESSOR**

HONORING DR. ASHWINI KUCKNOOR, THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE DAVID J. BECK TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD.

17 **ADDRESSING 21ST-CENTURY GLOBAL CHALLENGES**

REAUD HONORS STUDENTS HONE DEBATE AND TEAMWORK SKILLS AT MODEL UNITED NATIONS IN TEXAS AND IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

21 **DREAMING THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM**

FROM WORKING WITH DEPORTED U.S. VETERANS TO SYRIAN-JORDANIAN REFUGEES, REAUD HONORS STUDENTS PURSUE THEIR PASSIONS AS BECK FELLOWS.

27 **MUDLOVERS**

INTERPRETING KEITH CARTER'S PHOTO AS A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF LUISA VALENZUELA'S SHORT STORY "I AM YOUR HORSE IN THE NIGHT."

29 **A SPARK TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY GROW**

A BIOLOGY PRE-MED JUNIOR SHARES HER STORY ON HOW THE STEPPING UP INITIATIVE ENLIGHTENS STUDENTS THROUGH NONPROFIT WORK.

33 **HELPING SAVE LIVES DURING COVID-19**

TWO MECHANICAL ENGINEERING REAUD HONORS STUDENTS TAKE ON A REAL WORLD CHALLENGE TO MAKE PPE GEAR FOR HEALTHCARE HEROES.

14 **STRUCTURED MENTORING**

15 **LETTER FROM TSUS STUDENT REGENT**

25 **HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

26 **PARTNERS IN THE PARKS**

35 **HONORS BRIEFS**

37 **ALUMNI NEWS**

39 **REAUD HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATES**

41 **FAREWELL FROM THE DEAN**



COVER PHOTO:

Reaud Honors College students Samira Ahmed, Jackson Dolce, Fizzah Khan, Madeline Hiebert, and Katherine Correa explored New Orleans during the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference.

By Dr. TILISA THIBODEAUX

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: **DR. KEVIN DODSON, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE DEAN**

MANAGING EDITOR AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER: **MS. MEGHAN RAPP, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE COORDINATOR**

FEATURE WRITERS: **MS. KATHERINE CORREA, MR. JACKSON DOLCE, MS. KATEY MCCALL, MS. CHRISTINE OSBORNE, MS. MACKENZIE SAVAGE, MS. ERIN SIMS, MS. MELISSA TORRES, AND MS. LILY YODER, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS**

BY KATHERINE CORREA, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Disrupting Education

Creativity and innovation in Honors start at home, as Reaud Honors students promote their projects during the NCHC conference in New Orleans.



From the beautiful music played on the streets to the giant murals painted carefully by local artists, creativity and innovation can be found around every corner in New Orleans. These interconnected concepts of creativity and innovation come to life through the ingenuity of the people all around, as vendors, restaurant owners, architects, and street performers have found a unique way to bring something extra special to New Orleans' culture.

Taking time to delight in Louisiana's largest city, a group of

Reaud Honors College students were invited to New Orleans to present at the annual conference hosted by the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) in November 2019.

As they crafted their proposals in an atmosphere of free expression and collaboration, Honors students Samira Ahmed, Katherine Correa, Jackson Dolce, Madeline Hiebert, Fizzah Khan, and Mackenzie Savage met earlier in the year to talk about the conference theme, "Disrupting Education: Creativity and Innovation in Honors."

Like many, Elaine Torda, NCHC19 conference chair from Orange County Community College in the State University of New York System, believes that creativity and innovation are essential to our nation's growth. However, these qualities are disintegrating in education, as they are categorized and confined to certain fields.

"Many assume creativity is found only in the arts and innovation is confined to tech and industry—thinking connotatively rather than denotatively," Torda said.

Exploring New Orleans

Reaud Honors students explored the sites in New Orleans during their visit for the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference. (From left) Jackson Dolce, Fizzah Khan, Madeline Hiebert, Samira Ahmed, and Katherine Correa.

ALL STUDENT PHOTOS BY DR. TILISA THIBODEAUX

A simple Internet search of the word “creativity” conjures images containing vibrant colors, often depicted as paint splashing or flowing out of our cerebrum, to represent the spontaneous and lively free flow of ideas.

In contrast to creativity, innovation is often seen as more mechanical. Pictures show gears and straight lines coming from the brain, to symbolize linear thinking. Many of these images are confined to the color blue, reflecting electricity or technology.

To help educators move away from categorizing creativity as reserved for the Fine Arts and innovation for the Sciences, the NCHC 2019 conference tasked Honors students with presenting ideas that disrupt this way of thinking.

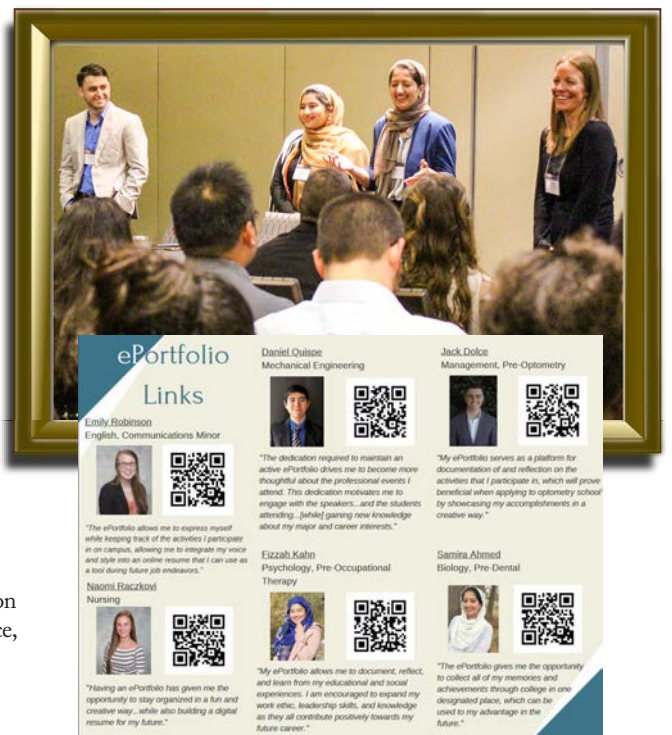
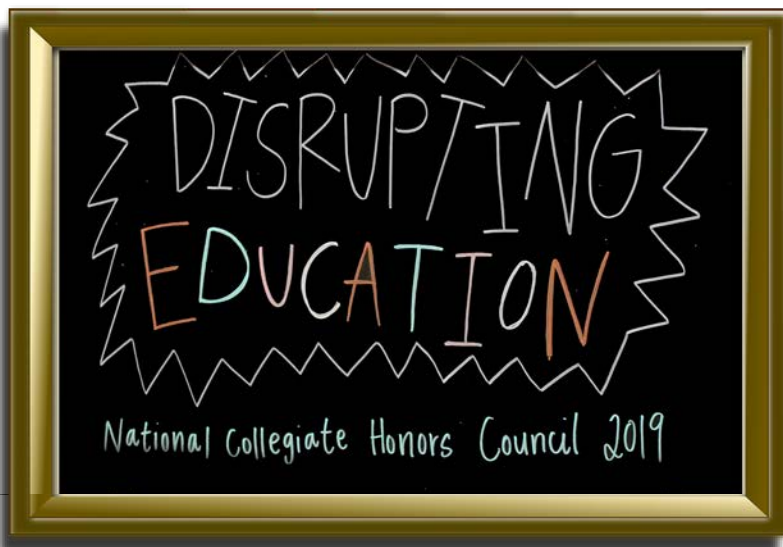
Students from the Reaud Honors College contributed to the conversation through a panel discussion over the use of ePortfolios and an Idea Exchange session about the Honors Topics class “Poetry of Perception.”

ePORTFOLIOS

Honors students Samira Ahmed, Jackson Dolce, and Fizzah Khan led the discussion of the ePortfolio as a “Digital Tool for Personal and Professional Creativity and Innovation.” (Though she helped cowrite the proposal for the discussion panel, Mackenzie Savage was unable to attend the conference due to her participation in National Model United Nations in Washington, D.C.)

“The implementation of the ePortfolio into Lamar University’s Reaud Honors College gives students agency over their learning experience, allowing for student reflection,





The Reaud Honors College contributed to the (1) “Disrupting Education” conversation at NCHC19 through an ePortfolio panel discussion, led by (2, from left) Jackson Dolce, Fizzah Khan, Samira Ahmed, and Dr. Tilisa Thibodeaux, and by showcasing their (3) books from the Reaud Honors Topics course “Poetry of Perception” at the Idea Exchange, led by (4, from left) Madeline Hiebert and Katherine Correa.

development, and expression of ideas,” the students stated in their proposal.

Introduced by Dr. Tilisa Thibodeaux, Director of Digital Literacy at the Reaud Honors College, and then continued by students Ahmed, Dolce, and Khan, the ePortfolios panel discussion shed light on how the ePortfolio has become more than another electronic resume, as the students gave accounts of their own experience working on ePortfolios and the importance of this tool.

“I, for one, am not a creative person at all,” Ahmed said. “However, while I constructed my ePortfolio, it allowed me to tap into areas that I had never thought of before.”

For instance, in addition to listing all her academic accomplishments, Ahmed added tabs to her ePortfolio so she could discuss her experiences shadowing a dentist, as well as share her henna drawings.

“The whole concept of an ePortfolio is to allow the students to have individuality without barricading them in a certain format,” she said. “This way, the students can be as creative as they would like, while still meeting the basic [graduation] requirements we have [at the Reaud Honors College].”

Creativity and innovation were not only found in the subject of the ePortfolio itself, but also in the presentation, as the students distributed interactive pamphlets showcasing outstanding ePortfolios that one could access by scanning QR codes.

The ePortfolio pamphlets were created by Reaud Honors students in the ePortfolio initiative led by Dr.



These students provide testament that creativity and innovation can transcend the boundary between Fine Arts and Science which a compartmentalized education tends to impose on them.

Thibodeaux. A part of this initiative for more than a year, Ahmed, Dolce, Khan, and Savage have shared ideas, feedback, and assistance to help figure out the best way for Reaud Honors students to benefit from ePortfolios.

These Reaud Honors student leaders made such a powerful impact showing how ePortfolios can disrupt education in a positive way that NCHC advertised its 2020 conference with a photo of them leading the panel discussion to encourage other Honors students to share their ideas.

POETRY OF PERCEPTION

A Drawing and Biology Pre-Optometry senior, I presented in the conference’s Idea Exchange with Madeline Hiebert, an American Sign Language junior and recent recipient of the David J. Beck fellowship award, to showcase the Reaud Honors Topics course “Poetry of Perception” that we participated in during Fall 2018.

“Poetry of Perception” was a class that explored not only poetry, but also how different our perceptions were given the various ways each student interpreted poetry and life.

Taught by nationally-recognized photographer and Lamar professor



Keith Carter, the course was designed to explore one's perception of the world through the interaction of photography and poetry. Students were tasked with interpreting poems and producing photographic images that best expressed their interpretations of the poems. These photographs served as the materialization of one's perception that the viewer could use to ponder about further. For their final piece of work, students published a photography book, arranged with their favorite poetry lines and photographs.

During the class, Professor Carter challenged students to answer questions that had no clear answers, such as, "What makes a meaningful career?" Sir Ken Robinson's TEDTalk "Do Schools Kill Creativity" inspired class discussions about society.

The class structure allowed students freedom of expression and encouraged them to think critically on what it means to be a person.

It was through this class that I was reminded of how unique each person is; that each person's experiences, background, and culture all come together to form their perception of the world in which they live.

Those special perceptions that bring uniqueness to the world could be seen in the Idea Exchange presentation, as Hiebert and I talked with session visitors about final project books, including *The Wonders of the Mind*, by Alexis Nieto, *Conquering Creativity*, by Meaghan Bloodworth, and my book *In the Beginning*.

INSPIRED FOR THE FUTURE

In November 2019, six Reaud Honors students were ready to contribute to the conversation happening at the annual National Collegiate Honors Council conference in New Orleans: Ahmed, Correa, Dolce, Hiebert, Khan, and Savage.

Coming from different fields, cultural backgrounds, and future goals, these students provide testament that creativity and innovation can transcend the boundary between Fine Arts and Science which a compartmentalized education tends to impose on them. The ePortfolios and the Honors Topics class "Poetry of Perception" encouraged the students to explore who they were as people, gave opportunity of creative freedom in presentations orally and graphically, and allowed for innovation in executing said presentations.

Just as the students were permitted to bring in their unique takes on disrupting education through creativity and innovation, they also took away inspiration from both the many presentations at the NCHC19 conference and the beautiful city of New Orleans.

"The NCHC conference was very interesting and experimental to attend as an Honors student at Lamar University," Khan said. "It impacted my view on ideas, research, and opportunities, and showed me the importance of connecting with others in order to have creative and successful projects.

"New Orleans was a very fascinating city to explore as it was my first time there. I loved the culturally enriched environment, people, and places it had, along with the endless talent on the street. The food was also delicious, and the beignets were the best I've ever had!"

While Reaud Honors students made an important impact on conference attendees in New Orleans, the entire New Orleans experience made a bigger impact on the students and allowed them to take away inspiration for their future.





BY ERIN SIMS, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Alumnus Focus | **DR. DANIEL CHAND**

Man of Many Hats

Chand brings a world of experience to Reaud Honors Alumni Advisory Board.

"I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, but I was 100 percent sure I wanted to save the world," said Lamar University Alumnus Daniel Chand.

Chand's professional and academic journey has included a colorful array of experiences, both in the United States and abroad, as well as discoveries that allowed him to learn more about himself, his family's unique history, and the workings of our nation. Chand's decisions to share his unique experiences and research have helped him to make an impact on his students, colleagues, and community.

In 2002, Chand earned his Bachelor of Science in Communication as an Honors Program Graduate from Lamar University. He later received his Master of Science in Political Science from Illinois State University in 2005 and his Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Arkansas in 2013. Chand is currently an associate professor at Kent State University in Ohio.

"Honors opened up a lot of doors for me and introduced me to opportunities I may not have had if I didn't participate in the Honors college," Chand said.

One of those opportunities occurred during Chand's senior year at Lamar. "I, along with another Honors grad, who's also a professor now, applied to participate in this internship program called 'The Washington Center.' At the time, Dr. Terri Davis was the Interim Director of the Honors program. Dr.



Davis was able to get us funding to go to this week-long seminar on media and contemporary politics. It was a fabulous opportunity for both of us. I met Ted Koppel and Sam Donaldson. I even got to ask Sam Donaldson a kind of probing question there at the end of this talk. I got to talk to people, not just big-name journalists like him, but other people in the field. It was just a great experience."

While sitting in Dean Kevin Dodson's office at the Reaud Honors College, Chand reflected on his time in Honors and how he could help the college grow. Chand serves on the Reaud Honors College Alumni Advisory Board, which allows Honors alumni to offer advice on new developments and changes within the Honors college.

"I'm interested in seeing the direction that the Honors college keeps moving," Chand said. "I mean, this is just fabulous; this building is amazing. If you could hop in Marty McFly's DeLorean and take me back to my time as a student, I would have never predicted this. I don't think we were even the Honors college back then. We were just a department on campus. That's what I look forward to—seeing what's in store."

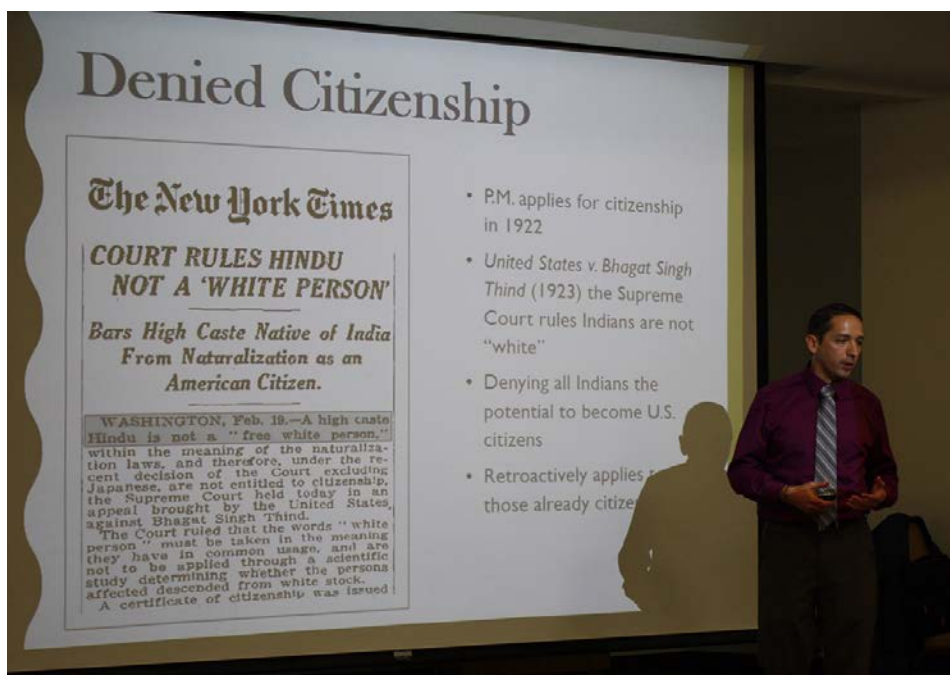
Though his interests and passions expanded after his time at Lamar, Chand said he still benefits from the knowledge he gained while studying here: "I never ended up really becoming a journalist, but I feel like I used my journalism background. I still use it today. But I think there's also a good journalist

intuition—being able to sort of see a story or know when there's something there to dig into. And that certainly has helped me in my scholarly research as a social scientist. It's not the easiest thing in the world knowing where to take a story, or knowing what is a story, how to pursue it, and how to find the answers. It's a skill—it's very much a skill to be honed like any other skill."

Between academic endeavors, Chand spent time with nonprofits. "While I was working on my master's, I worked for an environmental nonprofit in Montgomery, Alabama, for about two and a half years," he said. "Immediately after graduating from here, I worked for a political nonprofit based in D.C. that put me on a campaign all around Alabama."

"I've been involved with various nonprofits. I currently serve on the board for one in Ohio. I've served on boards for other ones, but mostly they tend to be more political nonprofits. I'm familiar with social services, but most of my background is working with advocacy-based nonprofits."

In 2006, Chand began serving in the United States Peace Corps. He found his time working with the organization in Zambia to be personally impactful, he says, adding, "The Peace Corps was a wonderful experience. I would highly encourage Lamar grads to take that



opportunity. It's going to change you; it's going to change you in ways that you probably didn't anticipate."

Observing life in other countries has helped Chand better appreciate life as an American: "I know it certainly had the effect of mellowing me out a lot...seeing conditions and other places in the world and other challenges."

In Zambia, his service involved animal husbandry and education: "I did a lot with fish farms, and then I did a lot with HIV-AIDS education, and then I built a basketball court."

Dr. Dodson, who inspired Chand to study philosophy while at Lamar, supported the construction of that basketball court, in an Ipafu village in Zambia, one of Chand's proudest achievements. When requesting grants for the project failed, Chand turned to friends and family back home, including Dr. Dodson, and their generosity helped him complete the basketball court.

"The only time I was the best player on the court was when I was surrounded by people who had never touched a basketball," said Chand, during his keynote speech at Lamar's 2019 HASBSEB Research Conference.

Events he witnessed in Zambia played a part in Chand's decision to study public policy. Efforts by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Coffee Board of Zambia, a small governmental board, led to the construction of a coffee pulping station meant to help locals with agricultural activities. The facility's placement on a hill, however, created a strenuous journey for those wishing to use it. The facility went largely unused and eventually burned down. Events like this led Chand to question the decisions behind building the facility. He decided to return to school to study public policy, as well as bureaucratic behavior.

Chand has published several pieces of academic research on topics related to immigration: "One of the areas of research I have published a couple articles on, and I'm going to continue with, is looking at immigration hearings and immigration court. It's a highly fascinating and complicated structure."

Chand is also involved in research concerning nonprofits and legal aid in regard to immigration: "My current project has been looking at the effect of legal aid, nonprofit legal aid provided to low-income immigrants with

"I'm interested in seeing the direction that the Honors college keeps moving.... If you could hop in Marty McFly's DeLorean and take me back to my time as a student, I would have never predicted this."

hearings before immigration court or immigration authorities.”

Chand’s visit to Lamar in Fall 2019 included both a student and public lecture detailing his grandfather’s experience as an immigrant, titled “The Long Journey of Pandit Mehar: Beaumont’s First Indian Immigrant.”

Chand revealed that studying his grandfather’s journey as Beaumont’s first Indian immigrant introduced him to more personal, narrative-based research. “This is a very personal subject for me. I’ve never written anything that involves me or my family, but this is about my grandfather,” he told the audience.

Researching his grandfather helped Chand appreciate his family and their history, he says, adding, “It’s been very rewarding. It’s been a little bit more difficult for me because it’s not anything like I’m used to; I’ve never written anything like historical research, sort of individual narrative-based. But it’s been rewarding, and in particular rewarding because I’m learning more about myself and my family. It’s actually been rather moving.”

Chand’s research on this subject was inspired shortly after Hurricane Harvey. Chand returned home to help his parents, whose house had flooded in the storm. As Chand and his father surveyed the home and the damaged belongings, the elder Chand was concerned with finding one thing: his own father’s framed presidential pardon.

To their great relief, they found the document intact. His father’s reaction to finding the family relic led Chand to take a closer look at his grandfather’s story and better understand the significance of his experience.

At the end of his lecture, Chand became emotional as he recounted the events that allowed his grandfather and family to continue living in the United States: “I think a lot of his experience, and the experience of early Indian immigrants to the United States, is

applicable to the experience of many immigrants today.”

In addition to conducting research and working with nonprofits, Chand said he enjoys teaching college students: “I love my job. I love the population I deal with. For me, I find that there’s this sort of wonderment and genuine curiosity about the world, about society that I find infectious, particularly with undergraduate students. I love dealing with freshmen students and incoming students because I think that sort of wide-eyed wonderment is one of the most wonderful things. I guess I can say the world is wide open to them—they could go anywhere.

“The opportunity to introduce them to topics like political science, public policy and public administration, and to see them for the first time go, ‘I never thought

until about halfway through my Ph.D. that I started thinking, ‘Oh, well, this is actually going into academia and being a social scientist for a university. That sounds like a great gig.’ One of the great things is that I get to write about what I want.”

Chand enjoys having the opportunity to conduct research on topics he is interested in: “I wanted to do policy analysis. I really came to question what was the value of a lot of the policies and programs that we saw being implemented. And I wanted to be able to do quantitative policy analysis, which is what I get to do now for a living, looking at immigration.”

As a first-generation college student, Chand said the opportunities afforded by the Honors program built

“Honors opened up a lot of doors for me and introduced me to opportunities I may not have had if I didn’t participate in the Honors college.”

about that! I never thought that’s how the law works,’ and then for them to come in and say, ‘I’m interested in doing this. I’m interested in going to work for this nonprofit,’ and they’re doing gender equality advocacy or immigration. Their immigration, legal advocacy and all that. It’s fascinating. So, I think it keeps me young, dealing with them.”

Teaching is not something Chand expected he would do. “I never would have thought I’d be here,” he said. “Even when I started my Ph.D., I didn’t think I was going to do this. I thought I was going to go back into the nonprofit world or go work for government agencies and do policy-based research there. It wasn’t

up his belief in himself: “It instilled in me some confidence I’m certain I didn’t have before. Specifically the confidence that I’m capable of writing an Honors thesis, and then maybe even going on and writing something that’s worthy of publication in a journal. And I can do these things that people I look up to, like Dr. Dodson and others—Dr. Davis, Dr. [Donna] Birdwell. I’m capable of doing these things. That’s probably the biggest impact.”

The faculty’s impact on Chand keeps the love he holds for Lamar strong in his heart. “No matter where I go,” he says, “I am Lamar, through and through.”



Faculty Profile | **DR. ASHWINI KUCKNOOR**

Portrait of an Excellent Professor

“Knowledgeable, patient, and diligent” is how Reaud Honors College freshman Sindi Castillo describes Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor, associate professor of Biology and Castillo’s mentor for her undergraduate research project, “The Inflammatory Investigation of Cervical Cancer Cells in Response to *Trichomonas Vaginalis*.”

In October, Dr. Kucknoor became the first recipient of the David J. Beck Teaching Excellence Award, which honors a faculty member who exemplifies the pinnacle of teaching excellence at Lamar University. “This award helps recognize her efforts as both an excellent professor and mentor and serves as a milestone in her work as she continues to teach others,” Castillo said.

Kucknoor holds a special place in the heart of the Reaud Honors College. She gives Honors students research opportunities not typically available to undergraduates. Reaud Honors students who petition for Honors credit in Kucknoor’s microbiology class dip their toes in the realm of undergraduate research, a helpful advantage for students because they can gain experience and become involved early on in the Biology department.

“They’re already kind of lunging forward to get that experience in research. We have done some cool projects. And some groups, over the years, have also presented [their projects],” Kucknoor said. This glimpse into the research world benefits Honors students, she said, because some are “not at all in that zone to present at a meeting or conference.”

Afsana Islam, a Biology senior and Reaud Honors Graduate in May 2020,



"You never know when someone you met and the connection you built will help you."

said Dr. Kucknoor "has not only been a helpful mentor in my research studies, but also in everyday life."

"In the spring semester of 2019, Dr. Kucknoor and I were talking about how reports from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] have shown a drastic increase in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] across the United States," Islam recalled. "I wanted to investigate whether those claims stood true to our local Southeast Texas population."

Under Dr. Kucknoor's guidance, Islam collected de-identified data of reported cases of several sexually transmitted diseases (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis, and HIV) from the City of Port Arthur Health Department. Their analysis showed only one STD matched the trend from the CDC reports: Chlamydia, which gradually increased from 2013 to 2017, with 80 percent of cases belonging to the 13-to-25-year age group.

"While the other investigated STDs did not match with the trends stated by the CDC report, I believed there was a critical need to spread awareness about STDs. This is especially true since the target population includes a large percentage of students at Lamar

University," Islam said. "I presented my research at the Spring Undergraduate Research Expo, where I received second place for my poster presentation."

Islam said her research experience with Kucknoor not only benefited her undergraduate studies, but also positively shaped her future and career path. "Working on this project with Dr. Kucknoor most definitely helped me develop myself as a student," she said. "This research was very much relevant to the career I am pursuing, which helped me when interviewing at several medical schools across Texas. As I prepare to matriculate into McGovern Medical School at UT HSC Houston, I will be able to use the skills I learned from this project and apply it to real-life situations while I train to become a physician."

Kucknoor's compassion and dedication for her students helped distinguish her as an outstanding asset at Lamar.

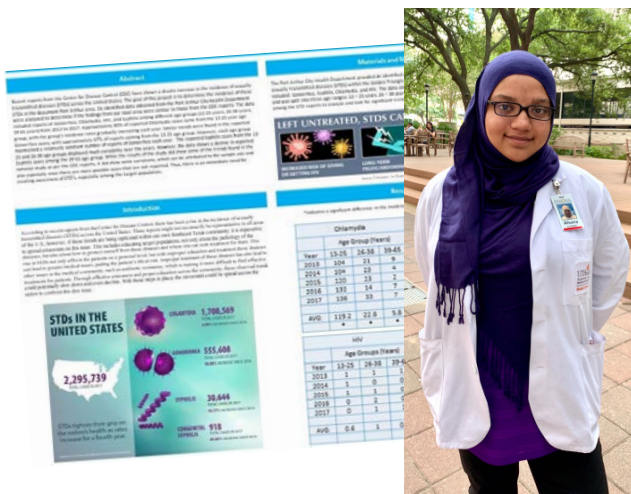
"One of the things I thrive on is building connections with students, whether they're good students or struggling students, so I look forward to coming to work," Kucknoor said. "They say, 'If you didn't push me, I wouldn't be here, and I'm thankful for



that.' I cannot explain that feeling; it's so satisfying and so fulfilling that I'm not just going in and lecturing. Yes, that is my job, but I also have this good influence on some people. It gives me satisfaction and keeps me wanting to do more and more."

Kucknoor conducted her master's research in India, her doctoral research in Canada, and her post-doctoral research in Texas. She taught at Washington State University before landing in 2010 at Lamar University,

*"What this whole **EXPERIENCE** has reaffirmed is that you should *never miss* **AN OPPORTUNITY.**"*



"One of the things I thrive on is building connections with students.... They say, 'If you didn't push me, I wouldn't be here, and I'm thankful for that.'"

-Dr. Ashwini Kucknoor; some of the Reaud Honors students she has mentored include Afsana Islam (left) and Omar Hamza (below).

where she teaches microbiology, immunology, and molecular biology.

She almost did not apply for the Beck honor. Yet she changed her mind when a former student, Carlo Vanz, nominated her.

"A whole bunch of my colleagues in my department and in other departments had been nominated, so I almost did not submit [my application] because I thought I did not stand a chance, but then I finally decided to just do my best and apply," Kucknoor said. "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade out of it," they say. What this whole experience has reaffirmed is that you should never miss an opportunity. Number one, I didn't want to let my student down. Number two, I thought, 'Okay, let me just go and apply and whatever happens, happens.' So I seized the opportunity. You cannot let go of things just because you have no time, so somehow I buckled down and made some time."

She faced some challenges along the way, most notably finding someone from a peer institution to write her a letter of recommendation.

Although asking a friend of hers to write the letter would have been simpler, Kucknoor sought to find someone who knew her for her teaching, not for her friendship. She turned to a microbiology professor from Sam Houston, whom she had met when he visited the research poster she was presenting at a national conference.

"I kind of hesitatingly emailed him, asking, 'Would you be willing to write me a letter for this application?' He only knew me by accident at that meeting. He only knew me by my poster, so he wrote about that. I think that kind of worked because he didn't know me by person, but he knew me for my work, which was my teaching technique," Kucknoor said. "You never know when someone you met and the connection you built will help you. I could've

picked my friends, but they didn't know me from my teaching or work. He knew me because of my work."

Months later, President Kenneth Evans arrived during one of her class lectures and presented her with a \$25,000 check. She thought he had come to her class to announce a program or a new opportunity for her students.

"I was totally shocked at first, and then I was really, really humbled because there were like 70 or 80 applicants who were nominated, so it was a humbling experience that I made it," Kucknoor said. "It was such a great honor to be picked as the first-ever winner for this award."

The award holds more importance to Kucknoor than the money. "It makes me feel good for how dedicated I am to the students—that is me. I will continue to do that whether I got [the award] or not," Kucknoor said. "It's something that is fulfilling. Money is nice, but it is not about just that. If it was just a plaque or medal, I would be equally thrilled."

Kucknoor will continue to be an agent of positive change at the Reaud Honors College: making an impact on her students by encouraging them to improve every day and helping them get the resources they need for success.

"Whether I got [the award] or not, I don't think I will change—this is me," she said. "I didn't do the work that I always do in anticipation of it. I think [the award] is a good feather in the cap, but I wouldn't do anything differently. I will be who I am and keep going."



Building Community

Structured Mentoring events with Honors alumni encourage an attitude of inclusiveness at Reaud Honors College.



Devoted to inclusiveness and community-building, the Structured Mentoring program organized by the Reaud Honors College continued in academic year 2019-20 with two events hosted by Reaud Honors Alumni Advisory Board members Carolina Ramirez Cardenas (2010) and Kristeen Reynolds (2016).

In October 2019, Cardenas, along with Dr. Catalina Castellón, Professor of Spanish and Director of the Modern Languages Program, facilitated a conversation with Latina students in the college.

"We held the conversation around three main lessons that I came away with through my journey from 2011 to now: belonging, asking for help, and building community," Cardenas said. "I initially thought that it would take a while for the students to share, but many were eager to participate."

In early March 2020, Reynolds facilitated a conversation with African-American students in the college. She was joined by Dr. Bianca Easterly, Associate Professor of Political Science, who was named 2019 Honors Professor of the Year for her work in teaching Honors American Government.

"It was just great to meet the students and interact with them," Reynolds enthused.

These meetings and the resulting organizational and educational initiatives are central to the ongoing effort by the Reaud Honors College to transform the culture of Lamar University.

"I'm excited to see what we can build in the future," said participant Hope Flores, a History major and 2020 RHC Graduate.



(Top left) Structured Mentoring event with Latina students from the Reaud Honors College, hosted by Dr. Catalina Castellón and alumna Carolina Ramirez Cardenas. (Top right) Alumna Kristeen Reynolds. (Above) The conversation with African-American students from the Reaud Honors College, facilitated by Reynolds and Dr. Bianca Easterly. (Left) Alumna Carolina Ramirez Cardenas.



Letter from TSUS Student Regent |

Katey McCall



DEAR FELLOW HONORS STUDENTS,

I am writing to share my time as the Texas State University System Student Regent with you. While serving on the Board of Regents, I had the opportunity to learn from other governor appointees, incredibly successful professionals within their fields, and many fantastic members of our school system, ranging from administrators to fellow students. I made many memories that will stay with me for a lifetime and was a part of several significant accomplishments for our school system.

I want to share with you more than just my time on the board because the decision to apply was just as impactful. As all of us know, Dr. Dodson shares a famous quote with us, which was imparted to him by his wife: “You already have the no.”

When I decided to apply, I did it knowing that getting the position would be a one out of 84,648 chance. Yes, I did the math—84,648 students attend our university system, and each year the Governor chooses one.

I didn’t apply thinking I would get the position. I applied because, well, what did I have to lose? I already didn’t have the position, and no matter how slim the chances were, I knew it was an opportunity I wanted to pursue. I share this with you to encourage you to take risks and apply for things you want, but don’t think you’ll get. We are our own hardest critics; it is easy to talk yourself out of stepping up to the plate once you have assured yourself you’ve already lost.

Just like my appointment, my time as Student Regent was full of surprises and life lessons. My first meeting of the board was a special telephone meeting to take the vote over tuition cuts for our state colleges. I remember getting out of my summer class and sitting in the Setzer Student Center to call into the meeting. I spent the entire time on the phone call shocked over the fact that I was part of a decision that was able to help students and allow so many more people to get an education. This is my proudest accomplishment during my time with the board. I was able to provide a voice for the students of those institutions and advocate for a more affordable college education.

For those who know me, I am an incredibly chatty person. I enjoy asking questions, participating in discussions, and bouncing ideas around. I spent that first meeting fairly quiet. Though I learned the value of listening as a child, I did not truly understand it until that moment. I was on the phone with school administrators and wildly successful professionals handpicked by our Governor. For the first time since I started college, I felt like a little kid among adults.

I realized how much I had to learn from every one of those people and that all of them were willing to teach me, as long as I slowed down long enough to listen. Learning to listen rather than immediately respond to what others are saying was the most impactful skill I gained from my time on the Board of Regents. Because of it, I am a more understanding, respectful, empathic, professional, and well-rounded person.





"I was part of a decision that was able to help students and allow so many more people to get an education."

Over the past year, I had the incredible opportunity to travel across Texas, attend press events, advocate for my fellow students, learn from knowledgeable professionals, and represent our school system. But the essential part of this experience is to now share it with you.

My time on the Board of Regents has taught me the following lessons: carry yourself with confidence, come prepared to every meeting, do your research, don't be afraid to ask questions, remember to listen to others rather than the sound of your own voice, approach every situation with empathy and a willingness to learn, and not to let yourself become too scared to make the most of every situation.

I found myself surrounded by numerous people who became some of my biggest cheerleaders and most knowledgeable mentors. I am still in awe over my time on the board. It felt like a dream come true the day I got the phone call about the position and still does today.

My experience on the TSUS Board of Regents taught me that we should always have faith in ourselves, listen to others, and be willing to learn.

Katey McCall
Reaud Honors College Student



TSUS Student Regent Katey McCall:
(Opposite page) Katey McCall with First Lady Cecilia Abbott, the first Hispanic First Lady of Texas. (Top, from clockwise) McCall shakes hands with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott; A group photo of the 2019–2020 student regents (McCall is fourth from left); Press release photograph announcing the TSUS tuition cut (McCall is second from left); Her final Board of Regents meeting was conducted via Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic; McCall sits behind her official Student Regent nameplate.

Reaud Honors College junior Tiffany Tran stands on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during her NMUN-DC visit.

By HIMANI VITHANAGE



By CHRISTINE OSBORNE, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT

Addressing 21ST-CENTURY GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Honors students hone debate and teamwork skills at Model United Nations in Texas and Washington, D.C.

A MECHANICAL ENGINEERING MAJOR MAY NOT BE THE BACKGROUND ONE EXPECTS FROM A REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT PARTICIPATING IN AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SIMULATION CONFERENCE.

But Caitlyn Barlow, a Mechanical Engineering sophomore, found her first time participating as a Model United Nations delegate with the Reaud Honors College to be an invaluable global engagement experience.

“Finding common ground is something that I believe every industry in the world needs more of. As a STEM major, I need to focus on finding both sides of the story in order to come up with a solution that will work and last,” Barlow said.

Another unexpected Model United Nations participant was Tiffany Tran, a Biology junior. A veteran Model United Nations delegate and aspiring dentist, Tran has participated in several conferences already, honing her skills along the way. “In order to develop relationships with patients, I need to have good communication skills that will allow them to place their trust in me,” Tran said. “[Model United Nations has] taught me that even in professional settings, emotions can and will run high, so it’s best to keep a level of composure and keep an open mind.” She expressed that there is much to learn and do in a conference like Model United Nations that any major, any person, can benefit from.

“Model United Nations serves to educate our students for civic leadership as we prepare our students for the global challenges of the 21st century,” says Dr. Kevin Dodson, Dean of the Reaud Honors College.

“2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations,” he adds, “and if anything, the interconnected crises of environmental degradation, climate change, pandemics, and refugees indicate the need for greater international

cooperation than when the institution was founded. Model UN helps prepare our students with the knowledge and skills they need in order to engage with these pressing issues.”

At Model United Nations conferences, Reaud Honors College students develop strategies for research, negotiation, and consensus building by representing nations in simulated United Nations settings. Delegations of Reaud Honors students have represented Algeria at the National Model United Nations (NMUN) in Washington, DC., in November 2019, and Mexico and Lebanon at the Texas Model United Nations (TEX-MUN) hosted



“Having your partner with you is a different type of connection. We understand each other so we know how to play good cop-bad cop, or formulate articulate arguments.”

-Ali Hamza, shown above left, with his partner delegate Brendon Camp

"Finding common ground is something that I believe every industry in the world needs more of. As a STEM major, I need to focus on finding both sides of the story in order to come up with a solution that will work and last."

by the University of Houston in Houston, Texas, in February 2020. Students use these events to hone their leadership, communication, and teamwork abilities, applying the skills in situations not unlike what they will face in their professional fields.

Maissa Salibi, a Political Science sophomore, served as head delegate for the Lebanon delegation, which earned the "Distinguished Delegation" award at the conference. "My family is from Lebanon and my uncle's wife works with the UN in Lebanon, so I was able to get some insight on how Lebanon stands on the issues I was discussing," Salibi said.

Having the cultural knowledge may have allowed her to represent Lebanon more accurately, Salibi added, but much research still needed to be done in order to understand the perspective of an entire nation.

Prior to the conference, each student delegate team must write a position paper regarding their nation's views of global issues their committees will discuss. These position papers help participants get into the mindset of their nation to understand where their nation stands on controversial issues.

Students Himani Vithanage and Tiffany Tran excelled in their position paper for the TEX-MUN conference, receiving an award for "Outstanding Position Paper for General Assembly 3." Tran commented on



Reaud Honors College NMUN-DC Delegates:
(Above) Cade Pellerin, Mackenzie Savage, David Williams, Tiffany Tran, and Tran Nguyen. (Below, front) Raegan Minaldi; (center) Cade Pellerin, David Williams, Tiffany Tran, Maissa Salibi, Himani Vithanage; (back) Brendon Camp, Ali Hamza, Mackenzie Savage, and Tran Nguyen.

By MACKENZIE SAVAGE



their preparation, remarking that, "To prepare for the conference, my partner and I worked together to create a position paper that displayed the attitudes of Lebanon in regards to human rights. At this particular conference, the topics at discussion were the 'Inclusive Development for Persons with Disabilities' and 'Combating Human Trafficking.' Many hours of research were spent examining Lebanon's history and the United Nations Database in order to develop a cohesive paper."

The pair also worked together to plan speeches for the formal debate portions of the competition. The position paper marks most of the preparation that the students must do for the conference, but Reaud Honors students go above and beyond what is required in their efforts.

At the conferences themselves, Reaud Honors College students attend their respective committee meetings, working toward the goal of a resolution all nations in the committee can agree on. "There are numerous different countries in there with many different views, you really have to compromise and listen while also getting your point across," said David Williams, a Mechanical Engineering junior and Model United Nations veteran.

Partnering with another student allows the delegates to divide up the issues. "Having your partner with you is a different type of connection. We

understand each other so we know how to play good cop-bad cop, or formulate articulate arguments,” said Ali Hamza, veteran Model United Nations participant and Political Science sophomore.

During the formal debate period, students speak in front of their committee for a 90-second period to share their nation’s position on an issue. Speaking in formal debate “helped me think quick on my feet and come up with a speech that I can get up and give to influence the way that other delegations present can vote on a certain topic,” Salibi said.

Other students found their time in formal debate just as rewarding, with delegates Hamza and Brendon Camp receiving “Outstanding Delegates in General Assembly 1” for their persuasive discussions when representing Lebanon. Hamza said a key part of his success in persuasive discussions is that he “would usually skip the small talk and tell other countries the reality of the situation,” allowing him to bring the other

nations to his nation’s side. “At first, I had five people supporting a proposal. And by the end of it, we had more than 35 countries on our side.”

The atmosphere at TEX-MUN was much more relaxed, with less emphasis on constantly staying in character, as opposed to the atmosphere at the NMUN conference. Honors delegates said they had more opportunities to speak up during debate at TEX-MUN because only 10 schools represented a small faction of the nations, while NMUN featured schools representing all the countries in the United Nations. TEX-MUN gave students the chance to develop their skills and improve their confidence for the larger conference.

“Speaking in front of fellow delegates was an empowering experience,” Barlow said, adding that her experience at TEX-MUN boosted her confidence to participate in the larger conference when that opportunity comes around later this year.

Barlow was among the first-time Model United Nations delegates who found guidance from Honors students who had participated in NMUN: Maissa Salibi, David Williams, Ali Hamza, Brendon Camp, Cade Pellerin, and Tiffany Tran. “I felt like I was able to impart some wisdom to the newer students and help them out,” Williams said. Williams served as head delegate for the Mexico team, which earned an “Honorable Mention as a Delegation” award.

“I feel I have had a positive experience in Model UN from debating, working with others, and representing viewpoints on some issues I might not always agree with,” said Brendon Camp, a Political Science junior, regarding the totality of his Model United Nations experience.

From Model United Nations, Reaud Honors College students gain the invaluable skill of looking at issues from different perspectives in order to come to a unified resolution.



Award-Winning TEX-MUN Delegates:

The Lebanon team earned three awards: Distinguished Delegation, Outstanding Delegates in GA1, and Outstanding Position Paper for GA3. The Mexico team earned Honorable Mention as a Delegation. (Top, front row): Maissa Salibi, Caitlyn Barlow, Tiffany Tran, Sindi Castillo, and Line Ydi Recinos. (Back Row): Kalan Bonnette, David Williams, Brendon Camp, Ali Hamza, Dr. Kevin Dodson, Cade Pellerin, Kaylee Goodspeed, and Himani Vithanage.

NMUN-DC Delegates

(Inset, front row) Raegan Minaldi, Maissa Salibi, Mackenzie Savage, and Tran Nguyen. (Back row) David Williams, Cade Pellerin, Brendon Camp, Ali Hamza, Tiffany Tran, Bra’ah Hamdan, and Himani Vithanage.

BY JACKSON DOLCE, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Dreaming the Impossible Dream

Beck Fellowships take students outside classroom through Experiential Learning.



Reaud Honors College Beck Fellows:
(From left) Omar Hamza, Cesar Delgado, Tyler Martin, and Madeline Hiebert.

Learning outside the classroom can be highly effective for Reaud Honors College students. Experiential learning gives them the opportunity to work with others who may have different backgrounds, levels of education, and, most important, fresh outlooks. Although Reaud Honors students often develop strong peer relationships within the Honors college, new perspectives can change the way they think, the way they make decisions, and the way they approach problem-solving.

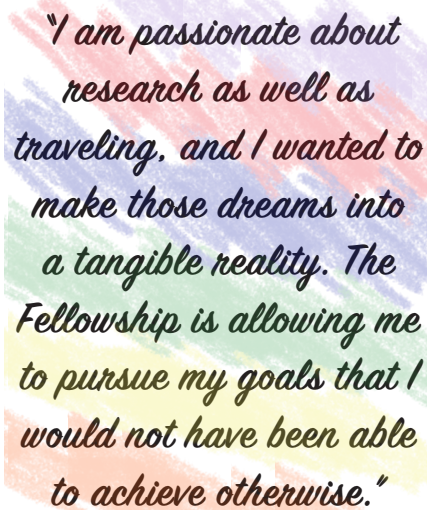
“Reaud Honors College students who earn the prestigious David J. Beck Fellowship at Lamar University do so by creating their own experiences outside the classroom to stimulate academic inquiry. Each experiential learning opportunity requires students to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results. These are the types of leadership skills our students learn as Reaud Honors scholars,” said Dr. Kevin Dodson, the Dean of the Reaud Honors College.

Whether through traveling, creating, or researching, Reaud Honors students who earn Beck Fellowships not only reap the benefits of learning on a technical level, but also on social and cultural levels, leading to both personal and professional growth.

A Lamar University graduate from the Class of 1961 and a founding partner of Beck Redden in Houston, David J. Beck attributes his success to the foundation provided to him by Lamar. Each year, he offers his undergraduate fellowships to two high-performing Lamar students who receive a full-year academic scholarship and up to \$10,000 in funding for a summer research project.

Of the 21 Beck Fellows named since the fellowship was first given in 2008, 18 have been Reaud Honors College students.

The 2020 Beck Fellowships were awarded to Reaud Honors College students Tyler Martin, a Mechanical Engineering junior, and Madeline Hiebert, an American Sign Language junior. In November, their Honors



"I am passionate about research as well as traveling, and I wanted to make those dreams into a tangible reality. The Fellowship is allowing me to pursue my goals that I would not have been able to achieve otherwise."

peers, Cesar Delgado, an English and Spanish senior, and Omar Hamza, a Chemistry senior who graduated in May 2020, presented the findings from their 2019 Beck Fellows research projects working with deported veterans (Delgado) and Syrian refugees (Hamza).

Delgado, born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas, traveled to the US-Mexico Border, specifically the Baja California region, where he interviewed United States veterans who had been deported to Tijuana, Mexico, for his summer project. Delgado worked alongside Hector Barajas, who created

the Deported Veterans Support House [DVSH], which provides services such as medical treatment, help for substance abuse, and employment and housing referrals. While in Tijuana, Delgado interviewed a deported U.S. Air Force veteran and a deported U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

“The people, both veterans and DVSH personnel, were truly inspiring,” Delgado explains, “and there is a lot to learn from them—they were resourceful, kind, and very personable, all willing to share their stories.”

When not working with the veterans or sitting in DVSH meetings, Delgado developed an appreciation for Tijuana’s rich history and culture. Without the Beck Fellowship, Delgado admitted this international research experience would not have been a possibility for him. “The Fellowship allowed me to pursue my passions for sociocultural research and international travel,” Delgado said. “And this opportunity has influenced my career plans and has provided me with a unique perspective in any field that I choose to enter.”

Hamza, a Port Neches, Texas, native, who will attend Texas A&M University School of Medicine in the fall, traveled to the Syrian-Jordanian region of the Middle East to study the psychological effects of trauma on refugees living in the Al Zaatari Camp. He worked alongside psychiatrists and psychologists who performed mental health evaluations, and he served as a translator between patients and doctors. It was never an easy fix when helping these patients.

“There isn’t much advocacy for mental health awareness or treatment

in the Middle East. It isn't a part of their culture to acknowledge or share mental illnesses. It made it difficult for the doctors to work with these traumatized patients because it is unusual for them to be speaking about their mental health," Hamza explained.

As part of his project, Hamza helped the Syrian-American Medical Society (SAMS) gather data on effective methods of treatment and mental health improvement. The team found that community-based therapy was extremely effective in trauma-based situations. Though this technique has proven beneficial in other capacities, it was particularly useful for treating refugees. Hamza presented these findings at an educational symposium coordinated by SAMS and hosted at Jordan University.

"Presenting our research was an excellent experience that served as a great opportunity for me to improve my knowledge and skills in the areas of healthcare and professional speaking," Hamza said. "Working with such skilled doctors and being part of an effort to improve mental health awareness on such a large scale was humbling and inspiring, and ultimately has prepared me to be a better physician."

This summer's Beck students have another year to prepare for their research trips, as they were all rescheduled for summer 2021 due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Hiebert has been studying Japanese for her research in Osaka, Japan, at multilingual conferences in Japanese and American Sign Language with the Sign Language Linguistics Research Section. She was scheduled to plan a conference series titled "Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research,"

"It isn't every day that someone my age is able to work on a project that has the potential to have industry-wide benefits, and I am grateful for this award and this opportunity."

as well as a Language Exhibition with both deaf and hearing researchers.

Fortunately, the Japanese researchers she is working with were understanding and invited her to attend in the summer of 2021. Though unsure of how this change will affect her tasks and experiences in Osaka, Hiebert is grateful for the flexibility of the researchers in Osaka and is looking forward to their contributions to her growth as a student and a professional.

"It is incredibly disappointing that I will have to wait another year before getting to travel and research,

however, I know it's best for my own safety and the safety of others. I am appreciative of everyone who has been accommodative and understanding," Hiebert said.

Hiebert plans to pursue her master's degree at Gallaudet University to become a certified interpreter. She aspires to work as an international interpreter for a government agency, such as the World Federation of the Deaf or the United Nations.

"I am passionate about languages, and I want to learn and utilize as many spoken and signed languages as possible," Hiebert said. "I plan on pursuing my internship with the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI), and hopefully will learn British Sign, International Sign, LSF (French Sign Language), and Japanese Sign Language."

For Hiebert, the Beck Fellowship was a means of achieving something that would have been impossible without the award. "I am passionate about research as well as traveling, and I wanted to make those dreams into a tangible reality. The Fellowship is allowing me to



(Left) Omar Hamza stands with some of the people he worked with while at the Al Zaatari refugee camp. (Right) A deported veteran gaining re-entry into the United States, one of the success stories Cesar Delgado shared during his presentation of his summer research project.

pursue my goals that I would not have been able to achieve otherwise.”

Next summer, Martin will pursue his research project at the University of Alabama, where he will investigate the properties of Inconel 625, a metal alloy that is able to withstand extreme conditions. The metal’s properties make it difficult and expensive to manufacture, a problem Martin hopes to tackle by using an advanced method of 3D printing called Powder Bed Fusion, in which a laser fuses powdered elements of Inconel into a desirable shape, layer by layer. Although this method is cheap and easy, it reduces the overall strength when compared to other manufacturing methods. To figure out a way around that issue, Martin will travel to San Francisco, California, to use one of the world’s most advanced Laser Shock Processing systems.

“This machine essentially makes materials stronger by shooting a high energy laser at the surface, which produces a shock wave that can remove detrimental stresses,” Martin explained.

Laser Shock Processing could help Martin significantly improve the overall mechanical properties of 3D Printed Inconel, which would result in a cheaper and more effective method of creating Inconel products.

After producing samples, Martin will return to the University of Alabama to run a series of tests to understand the effects of the surface engineering method on the alloy’s strength.

Martin originally hoped to travel abroad to conduct research. He had aspirations of visiting Pohang University of Science and Technology to conduct Microelectromechanical Systems research. The professor was unavailable this summer, which led Martin to discover his current topic.

“While it was disappointing at first, I very quickly found interest in my current project. And with the COVID-19 outbreak, it was for the better that I limit my travel internationally,” Martin said.

Martin plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Material Science and ultimately hopes to work for NASA. “The end goal is to work for NASA in some capacity, but particularly in their Eagleworks Lab,” Martin said. “The Eagleworks Lab is where a select group of scientists get to solve problems and find ways to advance space travel. They work on projects that are straight out of a science fiction novel, and that is where I want to be.”

Martin is grateful for this unique opportunity to learn Material Science. “The Beck has given me the chance to jump start my career in something that I am passionate about,” he said. “It isn’t every day that someone my age is able to work on a project that has the potential to have industry-wide benefits, and I am grateful for this award and this opportunity.”

Embodying the hard work and drive that the Reaud Honors College boasts of its students, our Beck Fellows throughout the years have carried their hands-on experiences into their careers, just like these students hope to do in their prospective fields of civil rights, medicine, language, and engineering. Reaud Honors College Beck Fellows set an example for future applicants interested in charting their own academic journey and showing all Lamar University students how experiential learning can be a great way for scholars to improve their skills and find their passions.



PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWS

Reaud Honors College students Julianne Haidusek (above right), a History and English junior, and Katey McCall (above left), a Political Science junior, were honored by President Kenneth Evans and Lamar University as the 2020 Presidential Fellows and will pursue their summer projects in 2021, due to COVID-19.

Under the guidance of her faculty mentor Dr. Rebecca Boone, professor of History, Haidusek will research Southeast Texas history in order to examine the effects of fur trapping and trade within the region. She first became interested in the topic while visiting the McFaddin-Ward House in Beaumont, where she discovered that regional landowners had trapped and traded fur-bearing animals as a source for supplementing their incomes since the era of Spanish colonization.

Under the guidance of her faculty mentor Dr. Thomas Sowers, associate professor of Political Science, McCall will travel to New Zealand to conduct a similar-systems analysis over the differences in public approval of New Zealand’s and the USA’s legislative branches. Although both countries trace their roots back to the British government system, they have developed in vastly different ways, which make them perfect candidates for this form of analysis. She became interested in this analysis as a freshman at Lamar during her first Study Abroad trip when she toured New Zealand’s parliament building.

Home for the Holidays



Home for the Holidays is an innovative recruitment program where Reaud Honors College students visit their hometown high schools and share their unique experiences in the Honors college.

As the brainchild of Honors alumnus and Lamar University's Director of Recruitment Tony Sarda, Home for the Holidays was initiated in December 2018 and developed through a collaboration between the Reaud Honors College and the Office of Admissions & Recruitment. The program takes advantage of the fact that colleges have a longer winter break than high schools.

Reaud Honors College students arrange to visit the classrooms of influential teachers from their high schools to share their stories. This face-to-face interaction opens the door for authentic recruiting and creates a bond between Lamar University and the respective high schools.

Honors students are often role models for their younger high school peers, and these relationships can be a medium to share the opportunities to grow academically and personally at the Reaud Honors College. High school students receive valuable firsthand knowledge about the Honors experience and university life. This personalized information can be the deciding



Emily Alvarez shared her experience as a Reaud Honors College student with students at her alma mater, Beaumont United High School.

factor on whether a student chooses to attend Lamar, as empirical evidence indicates that the most important factor influencing a student's choice of university is personal relationships.

This program also has the benefit of extending the community of the Reaud Honors College beyond its current students. Home for the Holidays has fostered a thriving system of relationships between Lamar University, prospective and current Reaud Honors students, and high schools and teachers.

By empowering Honors students with the freedom and resources to engage as full participants in the process

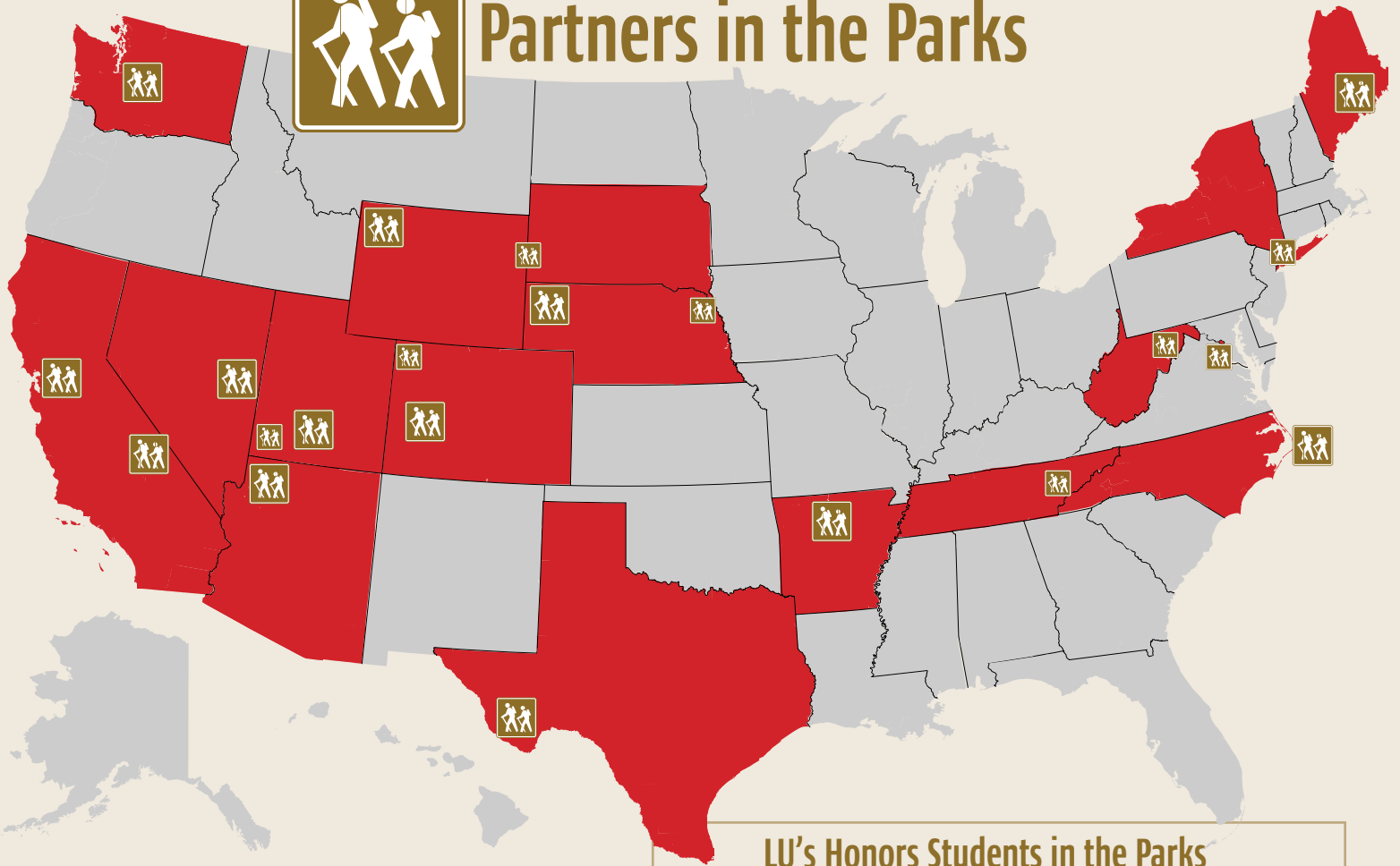
of recruiting new students, the program promotes civic duty and relationship-based decision-making among current Honors students and creates an unparalleled recruiting experience that prospective students can relate to on a generational level.

Three student participants, Edward Doan, Annabelle Broussard, and Jasmin Reyes, will present the Home for the Holidays program at the Idea Exchange during the 2020 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference.





Partners in the Parks



With Lamar University among the institutions involved in the founding of the Partners in the Parks program, Ritchie Acosta became the university's first Honors student to participate in the inaugural program, in Utah's Bryce Canyon, in 2007.

Partners in the Parks is a week-long experiential learning program formed by the National Collegiate Honors Council in collaboration with the National Park Service. Partners in the Parks brings together Honors students from around the country to explore the ecology, history, and culture of our country's great natural heritage sites.

Since 2007, the Reaud Honors College has provided grants every year to numerous Honors students to finance their participation. Reaud Honors staff and students have served on the NCHC's Partners in the Parks Committee. In 2019, the Reaud Honors College sponsored its own program, in Big Bend and the Davis Mountains, the first ever in Texas.

With the cancellation of this summer's programs, due to COVID-19, we offer this retrospective look at our involvement in all of the parks that our many students have visited throughout the years as part of the Partners in the Parks program.

LU's Honors Students in the Parks

Acadia National Park, Maine: Rebekah Maxwell (2009)

Ellis Island/Statue of Liberty, New York City: Jessica (Byerly) Savoie (2008)

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and District of Columbia:
Rebekah Maxwell, alumna (2018)

Cape Hatteras, North Carolina: Elisabeth Maxwell (2010)

Great Smoky Mountains and Appalachian Trail, North Carolina and Tennessee: Emmalee Calvert (2017)

Buffalo National River, Arkansas: Emmalee Calvert and Grace Harmond (2018)

Missouri National River, Nebraska: Miroslava (Zendejas) Camarillo (2015)

Big Bend/Davis Mountains, Texas:
Emmalee Calvert, Grace Harmond, Jared Richards, and Emma Walther (2018)

Badlands and Lakota Tribe-South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Colorado:
Ali Hamza and Omar Hamza (2019)

Yellowstone, Wyoming: Naomi Raczkovi and Luke Nguyen (2018)

Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Colorado:
Alaina (Bray) Gay (2012), Progga Chirontoni (2015)

Zion, Utah: Hannah Ross (2016)

Bryce Canyon, Utah: Ritchie Acosta (2007), Daniel Ward (2012), Sarah Colon and Emma Walther (2019)

Grand Canyon-Parashant, Arizona:
Matt Beaudry, Jessica Pospisil, and Cynthia Willis (2013)

Great Basin, Nevada: Rachel Binagia (2011), Zach Holt and Hannah Boyett (2015)

Sequoia, California: Hannah Ross (2015), Louisa Liu and Kim Tsan (2017), Emmalee Calvert (2019)

Golden Gate, California:
Edward Doan (2018), Aurora Maldonado, and Makenzie Sattler (2019)

Mount Rainier, Washington: Manisha Patel, Meghan Flanagan, and David Devers (2014), Tara Hoch, Kender Myers, and Louisa Liu (2017)

"Mudlovers," 1990: It was the end of the day, and they had been jacking around and drinking beer by Village Creek. He carried her across what we call a baygall, a boggy area of tupelo, inkberry and bay trees.

BY KEITH CARTER, WALLEES CHAIR IN FINE ARTS AT LAMAR UNIVERSITY



Mudlovers

In the Fall 2019 semester, Dr. Catalina Castellón taught Hispanic Literature in the U.S. to Reaud Honors College students. After viewing “Keith Carter Fifty Years” at Lamar University’s Dishman Art Museum, Dr. Castellón asked her students to visit the exhibition and write a short essay explaining the connections between a photograph of their choice from the exhibit and one of the readings analyzed in her Honors course.

Melissa Torres, who earned her Bachelor of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences as a Reaud Honors College Graduate in May 2020, chose Carter’s “Mudlovers” photo as a visual representation of a short story by Luisa Valenzuela, an Argentine author who lived in the U.S. during her political exile. Titled “*De noche soy tu caballo / I Am Your Horse in the Night*,” it is a story about love during political turmoil and dictatorship.

A female narrator (called Chiquita by her lover, Beto) recounts a secretive spontaneous encounter. The structural and conceptual compositions of the piece allow for multiple interpretations of the story. The reader must discern the dream and reality aspects behind the encounter, which seems to be evoked while the narrator is being tortured. The story presents a disparity of contradictory emotions, in spite of which love prevails.

I went to Keith Carter’s reception on Friday and got to sip on some Cabernet while I observed the captivating photographs. I ended up purchasing Carter’s book (and getting it signed) because I was so intrigued and felt that my brother, an angsty teenager currently exploring his love of photography, would really enjoy and appreciate it.

I’ve always had an appreciation for black-and-white/greyscale photography because I feel like the lack of colors contributes to the emphasis of emotions and how the viewer takes in the message, almost in a strong way of depriving your sense of color to achieve it.

I was mesmerized by Carter’s portraits especially and found myself spending the most time staring into the people’s eyes or examining the lines that delineated their bodies. I’ve always found beauty in nudity and eyes—a sense of vulnerability takes over, and it’s almost as if you’ve known a complete stranger forever.

I loved his work, and although finger foods and wine were a fun time, my introvertedness and social anxiety got the best of me and interfered with my experience. I think I will be going back another day, when there aren’t as many people present, to take in the photographs again.

While several of the photos spoke to me in a way that I struggle to put into words, one that particularly caught my attention and pulled my heartstrings was “Mudlovers” (1990). Interestingly enough, as soon as I saw this image, I thought of Luisa Valenzuela’s “I Am Your Horse in the Night.” This has been one of my favorite pieces we’ve read in class, and I’ve shared it with several friends, my partner, and my parents as a strong piece of exile literature—a

political statement, but also a twisted testament to the power of love.

As soon as I saw the piece, I thought of Beto and Chiquita, and what their love could have or might have been, certainly a love they deserved.

Carter’s blurb read that it was the end of the day; they had been drinking and “jacking” around, and that he had carried her across a boggy area in the trees. We see a blurry image of a man carrying a woman through the mud. They embrace one another, and there’s a sense of intimacy and nurturing that the photo exudes. She holds him tight and nestles her chin in the nook of his neck, something that to me screams, “I feel safe.”

Ironically, Chiquita and Beto were never safe—but in her brief dreams, everything is right and everything is okay. I am a hopeless romantic, and I love love. This photo made me feel love.

I very sincerely am considering finding out if there is a way I could purchase a print of this photograph, among others—I personally have a fascination with butterflies and moths, and he has several images where they steal the show.

Photography is such a powerful medium, and although it gives you a view of what artists see through their own eyes, it can communicate something different to each and every person who views the photograph. Photos have the ability to evoke feelings and thoughts and memories and emotions you didn’t even realize you had and can take you back to places you forgot existed.

I truly struggle to put into words all of the feelings the images brought out from places and spaces I had forgotten about, but I am so incredibly glad this assignment led to the experience.

BY MACKENZIE SAVAGE, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

A Spark to Help Our Community Grow

A Biology Pre-Med junior shares her story on how the Stepping Up initiative enlightens Reaud Honors students through nonprofit work.

Every year, since 2017, the Reaud Honors College has invited students interested in giving back to their communities and gaining civic leadership skills to attend a leadership workshop during the spring semester.

Developed in partnership with the Southeast Texas Nonprofit Development Center, the seminar teaches students how they will participate as non-voting members on the boards of local nonprofit organizations and how to craft resumes to introduce themselves to nonprofit representatives.

For the Spring 2020 workshop, two Reaud Honors College students participating in the 2019-2020 Stepping Up program shared their experiences. Adelin Hernandez, a Biology junior serving on the TAN Healthcare board, gave advice on how students could best present themselves during the mixer hosted by the Reaud Honors College where they would meet representatives from the participating nonprofits.

Mackenzie Savage, a Biology Pre-Med junior, shared how she benefited from participating in Stepping Up. She and two of her Honors peers, Josef Kalathra (Southeast Texas Food Bank) and Tiffany Tran (Seafarers' Center of Beaumont), will continue their roles with local nonprofit boards during the 2020-2021 academic year. The story Savage told next year's group of civic leaders is shared here.



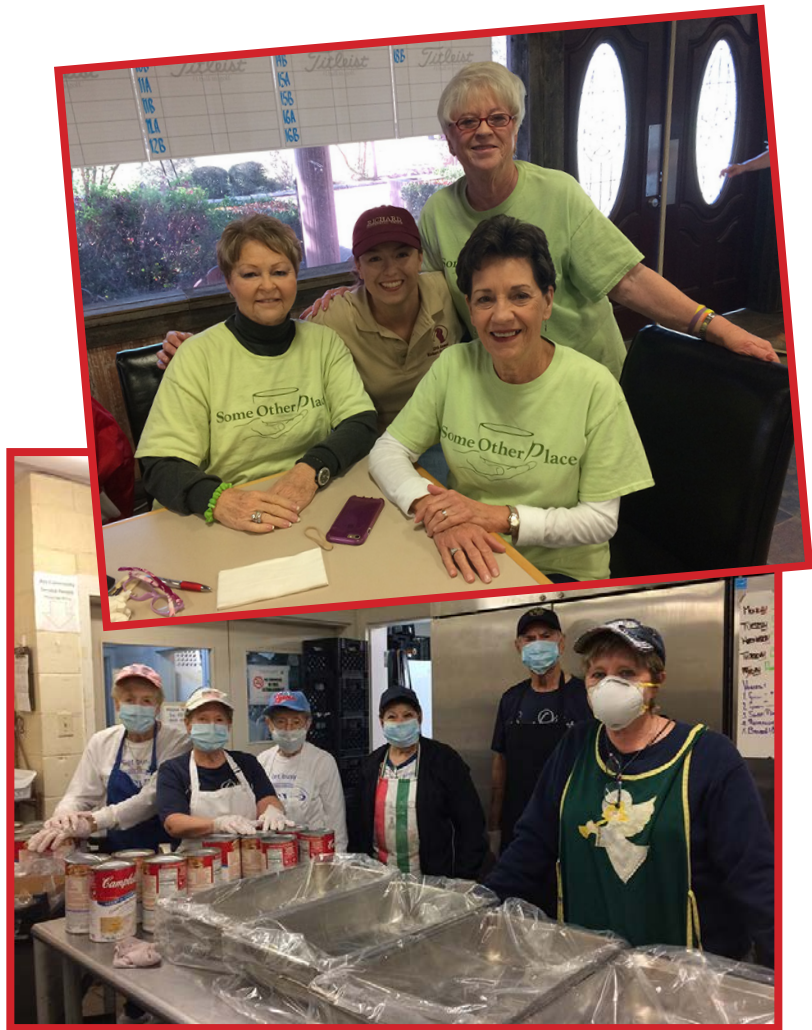
When I heard about the Stepping Up initiative last year, I thought it would be a great way to give back to the community, as well as earn some volunteer hours and Honors Experiences along the way. Since day one of participating in this program and truly getting to know the people and the vision and mission of the board in which I serve, I have learned more than I would have ever imagined.

The Reaud Honors College's Stepping Up Civic Leadership Initiative places Honors students as non-voting members on the boards of local nonprofit organizations.

Right from the start, at the event in which we were matched with our nonprofit organizations, I really got to see how involved and interconnected our community is. I had the chance to mingle with board representatives from nonprofits ranging from the Southeast Texas Food Bank, local art museums, education programs, and even animal therapy.

Going in, I wanted to align myself with a nonprofit rooted in healthcare as it would fit in with my education at Lamar and ultimately my career path. However, when I left the matching event, the programs on the top of my list were extremely diverse and out of the box from what I thought I would enjoy the most. Getting to converse about the work of each nonprofit made me excited and drew me to the possibility of a new journey outside of my comfort zone. I ended up joining the board of Some Other Place, after discussing the opportunity with Ms. Deborah Drago, the Executive Director of the Southeast Texas Nonprofit Development Center and the Reaud Honors College's partner in the Stepping Up initiative.

The best way to describe Some Other Place is honestly with its name. It is another place to turn to for those who are in need. Some Other Place is a catch-all nonprofit dedicated to the ebb and flow of the needs of the Southeast Texas community.



Some Other Place Executive Director Paula O'Neal (top photo, standing) is among the board members who helped instill civic leadership skills in Mackenzie Savage during her Stepping Up experience. Whenever she could, Savage donated to the soup kitchen (above) that was discussed at every board meeting.

ALL PHOTOS OF SOME OTHER PLACE BY PAULA O'NEAL

If a homeless person needs a good meal, a shower, laundry done, or just a place to be, he or she can go to Some Other Place. If a single mother cannot pay this month's bills while taking care of her child, Some Other Place will pay it for her. If someone cannot afford a bus ticket to travel to a job interview, Some Other Place will make sure they get to where they need to be. If a community member cannot afford

a wheelchair, needs assistance finding an apartment, or help battling a drug addiction, Some Other Place takes on each diverse need with open arms.

While serving on the board of Some Other Place, I have learned all about what it takes for a nonprofit to run smoothly. The most important lesson I learned is budgeting. Collaborating with other members on my board about which money should go into which

"I discovered through my experience with Stepping Up that true personal and professional growth comes from being a part of something that matters."



bank account, or what holiday program should receive more fundraising, is only the beginning.

The hard part that requires a tough heart is when the board has to say, “No,” to a request for help. Some Other Place hears about tons of problems every single day. In the end, it is still a nonprofit with a budget—every penny comes from donations, grants, and fundraisers.

Each day, Ms. Paula O’Neal, Executive Director of Some Other Place, and other board members have to decide: Who gets the drug addiction medication? Who gets the wheelchair? Which homeless individuals get to eat what meal tonight? Which of the community’s children get gifts from Some Other Place during the holidays? These are questions I never would have considered before joining the Stepping Up initiative.

Those tough daily decisions aside, each meeting is not all daunting tasks and impossible solutions. I also heard

*“Every step I have taken
with Some Other Place
has humbled me, grown
my desire for service,
and opened doors I
would not have imagined
before this experience.”*

stories of success, such as the homeless man who got a bus ticket from Some Other Place so he could interview for a job as a truck driver. Months later, he drove to Beaumont, honking on the horn of his work truck and bringing with him a homeless person he had met so that person could get assistance from Some Other Place.

Other successes included the “Thanksgiving Store” event, which the organization sets up to provide hundreds of local families with the groceries needed to prepare a Thanksgiving dinner. This project sticks out because my Lamar Softball teammates and I donated to the cause and helped set up the store prior to Thanksgiving. I was absolutely amazed to see just how much people care, with groceries showing up at Some Other Place by the truckful. I was even more shocked to see how many people came to get groceries. On the day of the store’s opening, traffic control and overfill parking were needed to assist all of the families who qualified for the free food.

My time with Some Other Place started with a spark to help our community grow. But this spark has turned into a realization of just how many people are in need. As students at Lamar, we usually see only the surfaces of our community—the showcased places and events that define Southeast Texas

as a whole. But at the end of every day, who is taking care of the people behind the scenes: the sick, the homeless, the poor, the disabled, the addicted, the uneducated, and the people in true need? These are the members of the community we need to turn our attention to, and it can start with programs like the Reaud Honors College's Stepping Up initiative.

My mindset and gravitation toward civic leadership and engagement has grown immensely since joining a nonprofit board. I have learned the clinical side of being a board member, such as the proper protocols during professional meetings, the order of each meeting, how to read meeting minutes, budgets, and term summaries.

But I have also experienced being a part of something you cannot explain on paper or in words—the feeling of true service and gratitude toward this community. Honors Experiences and the program's inclusion as a High Impact Educational Practice may have been my initial reasons to participate. Yet I discovered through my experience with Stepping Up that true personal and professional growth comes from being a part of something that matters.

I personally feel more well-rounded and even more grounded in ways outside of the classroom, and I have especially grown my community engagement.

You never know who you will meet participating in a nonprofit board. Each connection I have made has been equally powerful and memorable. Talking with the Some Other Place board members has brought me many stories of the rich history of Some Other Place and helped me understand how much the nonprofit has grown over the years.

I am proud to be a member of the Stepping Up Civic Leadership Initiative and would encourage all my fellow Reaud Honors College students to participate. Every step I have taken with Some Other Place has humbled me, grown my desire for service, and opened doors I would not have imagined before this experience.



FUTURE REAUD CIVIC LEADERS

This June, Reaud Honors students and representatives from nine local nonprofits participated in a virtual mixer via Zoom, which will allow the Stepping Up initiative to continue for 2020-2021. Our future Reaud civic leaders are: Sindi Castillo, Edward Doan, Morgan Dollar, Bethany Edwards, Nicole Lavergne, Stefany Rico, Maissa Salibi, Erin Taylor, and Andrew Zinck. They will be assisting these nonprofit participants: Beaumont Children's Museum; CASA of the Sabine Neches Region; Crime Stoppers of Southeast Texas; Downtown Beaumont Cultural Arts District; Nutrition & Services for Seniors; Spindletop Center; United Board of Missions; United Way of Mid & South Jefferson County; and YMCA of Southeast Texas.



KLVI 560 AM-10 AM
KYKR 95.1-10 PM
KKMY 104.5-10 PM
KIOC 106.1-7 AM
KCQL 92.5-9 PM
on Sunday

LU Moment's Podcast Shared Stepping Up Stories

Reaud Honors College students Josef Kalathra, a Biochemistry sophomore, and Aurora Maldonado, a Social Work junior, shared their Stepping Up experiences during an interview with Shelly Vitanza, the Director of Public Affairs, for Lamar University's *LU Moment* podcast on January 30.

"It's been great," said Kalathra, about working with the Southeast Texas Food Bank. "I've really gotten to see the inside of how the Food Bank operates, like the different programs they have. Whereas if I was just a volunteer, I don't think I'd be offered that experience."

Maldonado shared how happy she was to have the opportunity to learn from Boys' Haven of America: "I want to work with a lot of populations, but working with at-risk youth is one of my passions, so it was really good that I got matched with them."

BY MEGHAN RAPP, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE COORDINATOR

Helping Save Lives During COVID-19



(Far left) Holding the ear savers made for CHRISTUS employees, Reaud Honors College senior Nathan Rose stands next to CHRISTUS CEO Ryan Miller.



(Left) The first to use Makerspace's 3D printer to make PPE gear during the COVID-19 crisis, Reaud Honors College senior Ian Kennard holds his face shield frames next to the printer stacked with the next batch.

Ian Kennard never foresaw what this year would bring. A year that had hospitals directly reaching out to him for protective equipment. A year that had him worried that if he couldn't keep up with the need, he would have to start saying, "No."

A Reaud Honors College senior majoring in Mechanical Engineering, Kennard did more than isolate himself to slow the spread of COVID-19; he sprang into action.

He remembered that Makerspace encouraged student use of its 3D printer, which he learned during a March 5 meeting of the Reaud Honors College Battlebots team, advised by Dr. Kevin Dodson, Dean of the Reaud Honors College, and Dr. Kelley Bradley, the Director of Makerspace. By mid-March, all 50 states and four US territories had reported cases of COVID-19.

One of Kennard's best days with the 3D printer was March 24, during the week after Spring Break when Lamar's campus transitioned to online

instruction, and three days before labs would be closed to align with stay-at-home orders issued in Beaumont. That day, Kennard cracked the code to print stacks of headband frames for face shields that help protect doctors, nurses, and medical personnel who risk their lives every day to take care of COVID-19 patients.

After making 25 frames on campus, Kennard jokingly asked Dr. Bradley who he would have to persuade to allow him to take the 3D printer home so he could continue his project. Dr. Bradley and Assistant Provost Paul Bernazzani, who is also the Director of the Science & Technology Building that houses Makerspace, agreed that the cause far outweighed the risk of loaning a student the printer and gave Kennard permission to take it with him.

From his parent's home in Pearland, a suburb within the Houston region, Kennard became one of only a handful of people printing PPE gear for the Houston group of Masks for Docs.

While still staying focused on his college assignments, Kennard worked from scratch on settings for the printer to use PETG plastic to print the frames. Due to the printer's plate size, he then had to stack the frames so he could print more at once, but that first required figuring out a method of dumping the molten plastic to avoid the frames fusing together and becoming inseparable. And he had to figure out a method that wouldn't force him to use a razor blade to separate the frames, because every other frame was breaking in the process.

"You chase your tail for a day fixing a problem and causing three more at once, until you get everything dialed in and it works," Kennard said.

By April 10, he reached "mass production," with the 3D printer making about 20 frames per day. Every day, he swapped spools of filament, pulled the stack of frames off the plate, pressed go on the printer to start another stack, and spent five minutes pulling the finished frames apart.

At a time when stores were shutting down and shipping was slow, a resourceful Kennard found a place where he could purchase the materials he needed to make his frames: Micro Center, an electronic device store in Houston. With the filament purchased by Dr. Bradley and Dr. Bernazzani on backorder, Kennard paid for his filament using funds set aside for his Fall 2020 semester. Because he was at home, he was not earning money from his student job as an IT assistant for Lamar's College of Fine Arts and Communication.

A one-kilogram spool of PETG with a 1.75 mm diameter cost about \$20 and produced about 50 frames. Although color didn't matter, through trial and error, he figured out the process worked best with shiny/translucent colors. "I think it has something to do with matte finishes allowing for fusing between parts," he said.

The staples of 3D printing are ABS and PLA. ABS is strong, but problematic when against bare skin for long periods of time. PLA would not last more than one sterilization and use cycle. "In a perfect world, PPE would be used once and then tossed," Kennard said. "We can't afford that right now, so the material needs to be able to be sterilized multiple times through both chemical and radiation processes. PETG fills this role with strength, flexibility, and being able to survive multiple-use cycles."

Whenever Kennard had about 70 frames ready to ship to Austin or Houston, he Zoom conferenced with his Houston contact at Masks for Docs, a group of global volunteers organized to deliver protective supplies to healthcare workers. His contact arranged a time for Kennard to drop off the supplies. Other groups handled the final assembly for the shields and their distribution to area hospitals that needed them.

While Kennard was working on the face shield frames, his Reaud Honors peer Nathan Rose, also majoring in Mechanical Engineering,

"The Reaud Honors College has given me the confidence to take on a challenge that doesn't come with instructions...."

joined the efforts to help make PPE gear for healthcare heroes.

CHRISTUS Southeast Texas Chief Operating Officer Ryan Miller had reached out to Lamar to find out if the university could make ear savers. With employees having to wear masks longer than their usual use, they were getting chafing and rashes where the elastic loops rubbed against their ears. A hospital staff member with a 3D printer had made a prototype of a flexible plastic connector that could rest behind the head and allow the wearer to hook a mask to the connector as opposed to looping it around the ears. CHRISTUS needed help producing a mass quantity.

Lamar had only one filament 3D printer on site. Dr. Bradley ordered five more, but the manufacturer ran out and the order was delayed. As a workaround, he also ordered polypropylene sheets to see if those could be turned into ear savers with Makerspace's laser cutter.

"The delay on the 3D printers may have been a blessing in disguise because it turns out that we can produce the laser-cut ear saver much faster than 3D printing," Dr. Bradley said. "Nathan Rose was able to get the process to a little under 15 minutes to produce 12 ear savers from one sheet."

Polypropylene sheets are a heavy plastic that you can bend and shape. Rose drew out the sketch and cut it out, creating the laser cutter file for the machine so that the College of Engineering team could print ear savers for 1,500 CHRISTUS employees.

"I am so glad that I've been able to help with this project," Rose said. "Knowing that I can do something during this time and gain experience, it seems irresponsible to do nothing. I

don't expect to end the pandemic with 'ear savers,' but I am hoping that I can make things a bit easier for the people who will."

Because of Rose's leadership, Lamar's efforts proved "vital" in CHRISTUS "protecting our frontline associates and giving them the tools they need to safely and effectively care for our patients. We are thankful for Lamar as a resource during this unprecedented time and are honored to share a unified commitment to Southeast Texas," Miller said.

Back in Houston, Kennard had also begun making ear savers along with his face shield frames. He eventually acquired a large-format 3D printer of his own to help produce both in much larger batches.

"As things eventually wind down in terms of need, I'd like to offer the printer's capabilities for the Reaud Honors College's Battlebots team since these robots will need to be light and will most likely fit into the build volume of the printer," Kennard said.

What Kennard and Rose masterfully accomplished during a stressful, scary time is all the more impressive given that they also had to juggle Spring 2020 classwork and exams while working on their lifesaving community healthcare projects.

"A lot of Monster Energy, loud music, and patience" helped push Kennard forward. Yet he never felt discouraged to take action at this critical moment in history.

"The Reaud Honors College has given me the confidence to take on a challenge that doesn't come with instructions, but has real world effects if I cut corners or do something halfway," Kennard said.



HONORS BRIEFS

RECOGNITIONS



PHI BETA DELTA: The Reaud Honors College is the home of Lamar's Beta Xi Chapter of Phi Beta Delta, the first honor society dedicated to recognizing scholarly achievement in international education across all disciplines. *Inductees:* (College of Arts & Sciences) **Omar Hamza** and **Mackenzie Savage**; (College of Business) **Kara Ficken** and **Bra'ah Hamdan**; (College of Fine Arts & Communication) **Jennifer Caltzontzin**.



PHI KAPPA PHI: Honoring Reaud Honors College Dean Kevin Dodson in recognition of his service to the university, Lamar University Chapter 95 endowed a gift of \$22,000 in 2017 for the Dr. Kevin Dodson/Phi Kappa Phi Scholarship. Founded in 1897, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest and largest collegiate honor society. *Inductees:* (College of Arts & Sciences) **Umera Ahmed**, **Haya Alani**, **Riley Almufti**, **Katherine Correa**, **Hope Flores**, **Ana Mendez Lopez**, **Aurora Maldonado**, **Brody McBee**, **Katey McCall**, **Adriana Robinson**, **Mackenzie Savage**, **Aziz Shaaban**, **Yen Vu**, and **Michael Whitman**; (College of Education & Human Development) **Emma Walther**; (College of Engineering) **Daniel Quispe**, **Nathan Rose**, and **Cody Sasser**; (College of Fine Arts & Communication) **Emily Trahan**.



2020-2021 HSA OFFICERS

Honors peers elected **Maissa Salibi**, **Ali Hamza**, and **Hannah Abdullah** (shown) to lead the Honors Student Association as Secretary/Treasurer, President, and Vice President. **Annabelle Broussard** and **Madison Taylor** will lead the Service Committee; **Marie Arrieta** and **Jennifer Tsan**, Campus Involvement; **Luis Arevalo** and **Andrew Zinck**, Intramural Sports; **Darya Romashets** and **Stefany Rico**, Social Events; and **Kelvin Elgar**, **Kaylee Goodspeed**, and **Menna Elsaka**, Peer Mentoring. Senator **Leonardo Lopez** and Representative **Cade Pellerin** will represent the Reaud Honors College in the Student Government Association.

LU AMBASSADORS

The Office of Alumni Affairs has announced the new Lamar Ambassadors for 2020-21, and Reaud Honors students are well represented among their ranks. The following Honors students were named Ambassadors: **Haya Alani**, **Viviana Denova**, **Edward Doan**, **Jackson Dolce**, **Ali Hamza**, **Adelin Hernandez**, **Osha Jones**, **Fizzah Khan**, **Katey McCall**, **Luke Nguyen**, **Ayo Oni**, **Cade Pellerin**, **Maissa Salibi**, **Tiffany Tran**, and **David Williams**.

McNAIR SCHOLARS

Jalynn Banks, **Aurora Maldonado**, and **Rosalia Triana** have been accepted into the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. The program encourages students to pursue graduate studies by providing opportunities to develop research and presentation skills, build relationships with faculty mentors, and prepare them for the Graduate Record Exam. Among its many benefits, the program provides for six weeks of summer research and a stipend of up to \$2,800.

LU STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The following Reaud Honors students will represent their peers as part of Lamar's Student Government Association: **Taliah Belcher**, Secretary/Treasurer; **Katelyn Holmes**, Fine Arts & Communication Senator; **Emily McCall** (Honors alumna), Graduate College; **Kaylee Goodspeed**, Sophomore Class; **Leonardo Lopez**, Reaud Honors College Senator; and **Cade Pellerin**, Reaud Honors College Representative.

OUR GRANT RECIPIENTS

The following Reaud Honors students received a 2019-2020 academic year Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) grant, which includes a \$500 stipend and \$1,000 in research support for each student: **Sindi Castillo** (Biology); **Menna Elsaka** (Biology); **Donna Fleming** (Chemistry); **Aris Martinez** (Physics); **Jared Richards** (Physics); and **Kim Tsan** (Biology).



HEADING TO CAPITOL HILL

Daniel Quispe, a Mechanical Engineering junior, will participate in this year's prestigious Council of Undergraduate Research's event, "Posters on the Hill," held annually in Washington, D.C. Quispe will present a paper titled "Implementing Solar Energy into Southeast Texas with Efficient Solar Cells" to policymakers at the Capitol.

C. ROBERT KEMBLE AWARD

Jackson Dolce (Business Management) received the 2020 C. Robert Kemble Award. Created by the Division of Student Engagement in 1981, the annual \$1,000 award recognizes a senior man for outstanding contribution and service to the university and for scholastic achievement. Dr. C. Robert Kemble was president of Lamar University from 1977 to 1984 and served as chancellor of the Lamar University System from 1984 to 1986.

HONORS PROFESSORS OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to **Dr. Xiangyang (Sunny) Lei** and **Dr. Robert Vallin** for earning a special student recognition as Honors Professors of the Year by the Honors Student Association.

Dr. Lei is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Lamar University. She has taught more than 3,000 students at Lamar in the past 12 years and has been teaching Honors Organic Chemistry since 2009.

Dr. Vallin is an Associate Professor of Mathematics at Lamar University and Chair of the Mathematical Association of America's Special Interest Group in Recreational Mathematics. He enjoys sharing these passions for recreational math and magic with Honors students.

BESS GENTRY AWARD

Haya Alani (Chemistry) received the 2020 Bess Gentry Award. Created by the Division of Student Engagement in 1975, the annual \$1,000 award recognizes a senior woman who has demonstrated outstanding character, leadership, service, contribution, and scholarship as a student at Lamar University. Bess Gentry was the Dean of Women from 1944-1968 and head of the Women's Health and Physical Education department from 1944-1956.

SENIORS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Seniors of Significance Award, created by the Division of Student Engagement in 2016, recognizes seniors who have made a positive impact on the Lamar University campus and in their individual academic fields during their time in college. The following Reaud Honors College students were recognized as 2020 Seniors of Significance: **Afsana Islam**, Biology; **Bra'ah Hamdan**, Management Information Systems; **Casey Smith**, Management and Human Resource Management; **Edward Doan**, Chemical Engineering; **Govin Kaggal**, Political Science; **Haya Alani**, Chemistry; **Jackson Dolce**, Business Management; **Jordan Curl**, Biology; **Marcus Rodgers**, Mechanical Engineering; **Omar Hamza**, Chemistry; and **Raegan Minaldi**, Applied Arts & Sciences Political Science.

JASON PROJECT

The following Reaud Honors students returned to Lamar University early from winter break to help motivate hundreds of area middle schoolers to pursue their interests in STEM: (Back row, from second left) **Brody McBee**, Biology senior and HSA vice president; **Zainab Mariyah**, Chemical Engineering sophomore; **Annabelle Broussard**, Chemical Engineering sophomore; **Natalia Doiron**, Marketing freshman; **Lily Yoder**, Speech and Hearing Sciences sophomore; and **Jasmin Reyes**, Biology freshman. (Front row, from second left) **Emily Alvarez**, Advertising Communications freshman; **Viviana Denova**, Accounting junior; and **Tien Nguyen**, Biology freshman.



HONORS BRIEFS

Alumni News

Reaud Honors College Alumni Advisory Board

Chair Alisa Hicklin-Fryar **2002**; Jenny Achilles **2003**; Bethany Aiena **2011**; Carolina Ramirez Cardenas **2010**; Danny Chand **2002**; Josh Daspit **2004**; Stephanie Glover **2005**; Daniel Grooms **2002**; Christine Herndon **2011**; Valerie Juarez **2011**; Lindsey Minter **2008**; Kristeen Reynolds **2016**; Kayleigh Romero **2013**; Brittany Ross **2011**; and Brandan Still **2006**.

JACE DAIGLE **2007**

Jace Daigle is the Hardware Group Manager of the Printed Circuit Board design team at National Instruments. His focus is people development and driving continuous improvement initiatives, mainly related to process efficiency and client communication.

EMILY LOCKARD FURRY **2007**

Emily Lockard Furry has built her travel agency, Traveluxe, from one person to a team of seven women around the world—from Beaumont to South Africa. Traveluxe is still thriving, even in the midst of COVID-19, which has seriously damaged the travel industry.

FELICIA (FARMER) DAIGLE **2008**

Moving into a management position at the Baylor Scott and White Institute for Rehabilitation, Felicia (Farmer) Daigle works as Center Manager of a new clinic that she helped design, build, and grow. In her continuing work as a physical therapist, she is a vestibular specialist, clinical instructor, and the company's alumni program leader.

BOONE DRUMMOND **2009**

Boone Drummond has been working for 10 years at CLEAResult, an energy efficiency consulting company that is a leader in the industry and one of the largest in the U.S. and Canada. He is transitioning into a position to lead the Technical Resource Manual, Business Development, and Process Standardization for the COREngineering group, which will facilitate and empower the local team to learn and deploy the company's best practices to achieve larger and more cost-effective energy efficiency measures and programs.

ERIN BINAGIA PICKARD **2010**

After finishing her residency in July, Erin Binagia Pickard will begin working as a veterinary emergency and critical care specialist this September. She just published a paper on salmonella mesenteric lymphadenitis causing septic peritonitis in dogs that eat a raw diet.

RAJIV JAINI **2010**

After earning his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering in 2016, Rajiv Jaini worked for Ford Motor Company's electrification program as a lithium-ion battery engineer

(he even contributed to the new all-electric Mach-E). Starting last year, he now works for the Boston Consulting Group in Houston, Texas, where he helps solve business and social impact problems. He is also working on a side project to develop a tool to address the ongoing problem of remedial education and higher education institutions (HEIs).

LAURA (WHITMIRE) BACKER **2010**

Laura (Whitmire) Backer will be moving to St. Louis, where she has accepted a position as the Director of Admissions for Notre Dame High School.

BETHANY AIENA **2011**

Bethany Aiena became the National Coordinator of the National Diversity VTEL Series for Psychology Residents for the Veterans Administration (VA), a monthly virtual diversity seminar with different VA sites across the country contributing/participating.

JOSHUA DAVIS **2011**

Joshua Davis participated in Leadership Beaumont (Class of 2020) and will serve on the planning committee for the upcoming Leadership Beaumont class.

AMANDA LILLEY **2011**

Amanda Lilley is now working as an Assistant District Attorney for Garfield County, Oklahoma, and was in the April 2020 Oklahoma Bar Association Leadership Academy, a highly selective annual program for future leaders of the bar.

KAYLEIGH ROMERO **2013**

Kayleigh Romero will be the 12th grade Path College Career teacher at Beaumont Early College High School. She started working on an Ed.D. in Instructional Systems Design and Technology at Sam Houston State University in Fall 2019 and has received an Innovative Teacher Grant from the Port Arthur Education Foundation.

LINDSEY (DARBY) RABY **2016**

Lindsey (Darby) Raby is pursuing a Master of Arts in Public Relations through Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana (also the Cardinals! Graduating May 2021). She

is now entering her fourth year of teaching social studies, but has moved to Dallas ISD after teaching three years at West Brook High in Beaumont ISD.

MIROSLAVA ZENDEJAS CAMARILLO **2016**

Miroslava Zendejas Camarillo started working for Child Protective Services six months ago as a Family Based Safety Specialist. She conducts strength and needs assessments to help families get services and resources needed to tackle the source of problems (e.g. substance abuse, trauma, counseling, domestic violence). The goal is to make the children's home safe and keep the children with the family instead of sending them to foster care.

SKYLAR MURPHY **2017**

Skylar Murphy is completing dual Master of Science degrees in Environmental Science and Occupational Safety and Health at University of Houston-Clear Lake. She is also working as an Environmental, Health, and Safety Engineer at International Paper at two of its Global Cellulose Fiber Facilities.

PROGGA CHIRONTONI **2018**

Progga Chirontoni earned her Master of Science in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin.

KENDER MYERS **2018**

Kender Myers earned her Master of Science in Accounting from Lamar University.

SAKURAH FISHER **2019**

Sakurah Fisher received the Rotary Global Grant and began her graduate program at Korea University in Spring 2020. She is studying international peace and security with an emphasis on human rights and conflict resolution.

CADE JOHNSON **2019**

Cade Johnson earned his Master of Business Administration from Lamar University. This summer, he is taking classes at UTHealth-Houston, where he plans to earn a Master of Public Health. In Fall 2020, he will start M.D. classes at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth-Houston.

Growing for Honors Future



Alumni Champions: Dr. Donna Birdwell (center) and her former Honors students who are giving back to Lamar's Honors community. (From far left): Dr. Josh Daspit, Dr. Alisa Hicklin-Fryar, and Jenny Achilles. (From top) Aimeé Lieby Weatherford and Dr. Daniel Chand.

As Director of the Lamar University Honors Program from 1999 to 2008, Dr. Donna Birdwell was instrumental in the development of Honors education at Lamar University, including first proposing the establishment of an Honors college.

Last year, a group of her former students helped create and fund a scholarship in her name to honor Dr. Birdwell and invest in the lives of future Honors students.

Due to the generosity of our Honors alumni, the Dr. Donna Birdwell Honors Scholarship was fully funded as of this Spring. Special thanks to Dr.

Josh Daspit, Dr. Alisa Hicklin-Fryar, Jenny Achilles, Dr. Daniel Chand, and Aimeé Lieby Weatherford.

We invite our alumni to continue their good work of providing support to our Honors students by sending in your donations, which can be made as a one-time payment or as multiple payments, via check or credit card.

"So glad to see this come to fruition," Weatherford said. "Please, check with your employer for matching gifts opportunities. I was able to quadruple my giving this way.... I was a scholarship kid, so I recognize the importance of giving back."

DONATIONS



CREDIT CARD: Please visit Lamar's secure giving page lamar.edu/giving and click "Give Now." In the Designation dropdown, choose "Other (please specify below)." In the "Other Designation" box, reference "Dr. Donna Birdwell Honors Scholarship." If you need assistance with your online gift, please call the Foundation office at 409-880-2117.



CHECK: Please reference the "Dr. Donna Birdwell Honors Scholarship" in your check's memo line. (Gift forms are also available from the Honors College on request.) Make checks payable to Lamar University Foundation and mail to: *Lamar University Foundation | P.O. Box 11500 | Beaumont, TX 77710.*

Reaud Honors College Alumni Board Chair Hicklin-Fryar and member Daspit organized the effort, with strong support from fellow board members Achilles and Chand, and Reaud Honors College Dean Dr. Kevin Dodson.

"Dr. Donna Birdwell had a positive impact on so many (myself included). This is just a small way to honor her legacy of 'paying it forward' for future Lamar students," Daspit said.

Dr. Birdwell remains committed to an annual gift to keep the fund growing. To her alumni champions, she says, "I'm so grateful to all of you who have made this possible. Here's to the future!"



2020 - SPRING & SUMMER GRADUATES

Due to COVID-19, in lieu of the group photo, the Reaud Honors College produced a video and biography photo album featuring Spring & Summer 2020 Graduates. You can watch the video on our YouTube Channel and view the biography photo album on our Facebook page. The QR codes on the opposite page share direct links to both: red (video) and black (photo album).



Maria Azpilicueta



Emily Brown



Logan Brown



Jennifer Caltzontzin



Emmalee Calvert



Patricia Correa



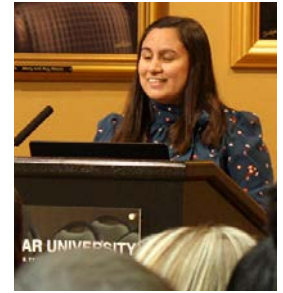
Jordan Curl



Amanda Essoh



Hope Flores



Areli Garcia



Kaily Garcia



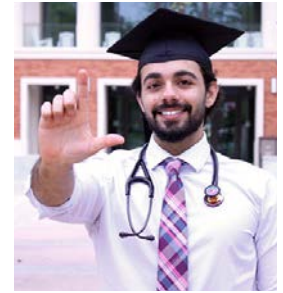
Antonio Gussman



Madison Hamby



Bra'ah Hamdan



Omar Hamza



Veronica Hobbs



Afsana Islam



Govin Kaggal



Ana Mendez Lopez



Brody McBee



Raegan Minaldi



Rebekah Newell



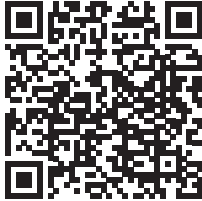
Steve Nguyen



Tran Nguyen



Amy Page



Kayla Painter



Marcus Rodgers



Bonnie Ruten



Aziz Shaaban



Casey Smith



Melissa Torres



Emily Trahan



Kim Tsan



Emily (Morton) Washburn

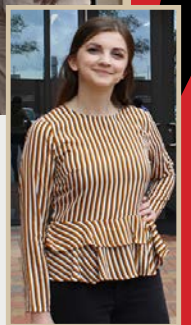


REAUD HONORS COLLEGE



2019 - FALL GRADUATES

Savannah Agee (Management Information Systems), Dejanella Routt (Biology), Katelin Catching (Biology), Joya Polk (American Sign Language), and Stanley Truong (Biochemistry). *Inset:* Shelby Williams (Interdisciplinary Studies-Teacher Education).



FAREWELL *from the Dean*

At the 50th Anniversary Celebration of the Lamar Honors Program in 2013, Lamar University President Kenneth Evans announced the establishment of the Honors college. Since then, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as the Founding Dean of the Reaud Honors College.

We have built a state-of-the-art Honors college that has transformed Lamar University and serves as a model for comprehensive regional universities around the country and beyond. So it is with great pride, and some sadness, that I am announcing my retirement as Founding Dean of the Reaud Honors College and from Lamar University.

I came to Lamar in 1991 as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy. My involvement with Honors began in 1994, when I started teaching Honors Philosophy of Knowledge, became Assistant Director under Dr. Donna Birdwell in 2004, and was promoted to Director after she retired in 2008. Throughout that time, and even after I became Dean, I stayed in the classroom and taught Honors courses in the core curriculum (Honors Ethics and Honors Art and Ideas) and advanced Honors Topics courses such as Popular Music and Cultural Studies, Islam, J.R.R. Tolkien (with Dr. Nicki Michalski), and Model United Nations.

I have always considered myself a teacher and scholar first, so working with Honors students throughout the years has been the highlight of my academic career. I have met with so many memorable, intelligent, and talented students over the years that I will not even try to mention names. To all my former students, please know that I consider any modest contribution that I might have made to your success to be the most important part of my legacy as a teacher and a scholar.

In keeping with the college's mission to promote academic excellence, community service, and civic leadership, we have established a robust and rigorous program that prepares our students for the global challenges of the 21st century. In addition to Honors coursework, the Reaud Honors College has been at the forefront in advancing undergraduate research and study abroad at Lamar. The college has pioneered initiatives in areas



such as global engagement, digital literacy, and service learning, many of which you have read about in this and previous issues of *Cadenza*. The college's engagement with students begins while they are still in high school and continues after their graduation. Our work with Reaud Honors College students has transformed Lamar University.

I have expressed myself in the first-person plural because I was not alone and unaided in these efforts. I had the privilege to work with an exceptional team who always put student interests first. Thus, I want to thank the staff of the college during my tenure in administration—Ms. Kimberly Vizona, Dr. Nicki Michalski, Ms. Rebekah Maxwell, Dr. Tilisa Thibodeaux, Mr. Andrew Strange, Ms. Meghan Rapp, and our many student assistants—for their continuing hard work and commitment.

I want also to recognize all of the members of the Executive Committees of the Honors Student Association with whom I worked, as they were all outstanding leaders. I extend my gratitude to the university's Honors Council members for their counsel and contributions to the development of the college. My deepest appreciation also goes to the members of the college's Alumni Advisory Board, who have been invaluable in their support of and assistance to the college whenever I asked. To all my outstanding colleagues on the Lamar faculty, I am grateful for your constant support of the college and the education of our students. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contributions that staff across campus made to the effective running of the college. Thank you.

After 29 years of service at Lamar University, I am looking forward to opening a new chapter in my life, but I will always cherish the memories I take with me.

As always, Cardinal Proud! Go LU!

-Dr. Kevin Dodson

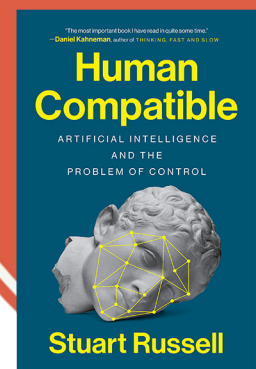
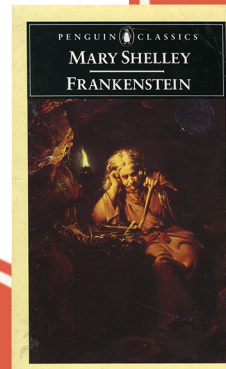
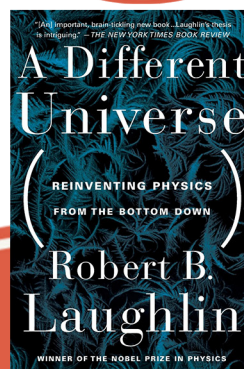
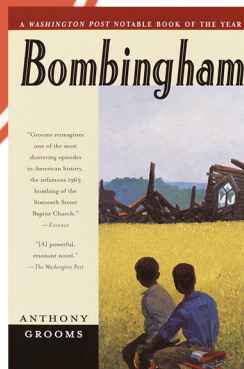
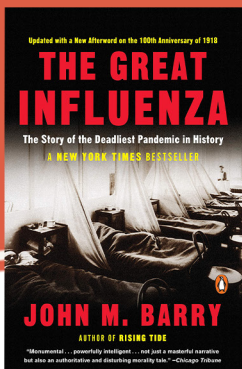
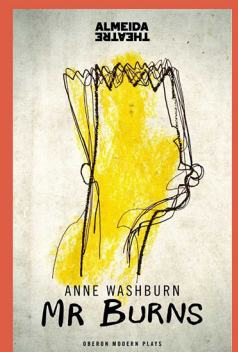
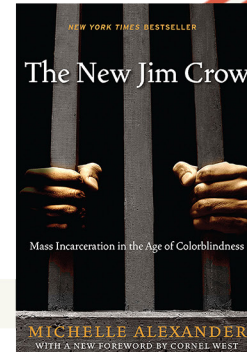
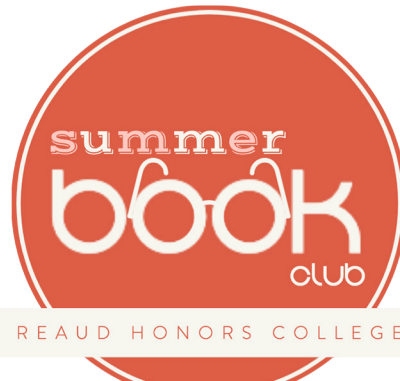
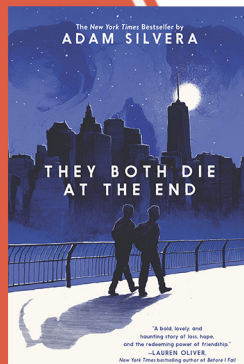
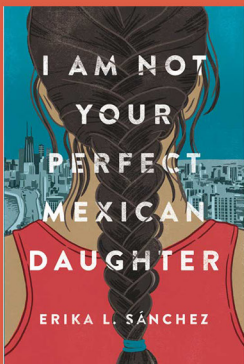


REAUD HONORS COLLEGE
LAMAR UNIVERSITY

P.O. BOX 10968
BEAUMONT, TX 77710

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 54
BEAUMONT, TX

Summer Reads for Reaud Honors



Reaud Honors College students will be participating in our Summer Reading program by getting together virtually with their reading clubs during July, instead of meeting in person during the first week of classes in the Fall, due to COVID-19. Shown here are the books they will be discussing.