

CADENZA

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Honors Cardinals: Then and now



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By MEGHAN RAPP, REAUD HONORS COLLEGE COORDINATOR

HSA Peer Mentor Bond Leads to Mobile Clinics in Peru

Undeterred by the pandemic, the student org MedLife forged ahead to make an impact at Lamar University and abroad.



Truly immersed in Peruvian life, the MedLife crew explored the capital city of Lima (above photo) while also getting to know residents as they provided medical and community support in area clinics. The student volunteers are shown on the opposite page: (first row, from left): Vicky Longoria, Annabelle Broussard; (second): Danielle Soileau, Bethany Edwards; (third) Amber Maredia, Mackenzie Savage, and Hailey Dudley; (fourth): Samana Shah, Robyn Marchand; (fifth): Conner Montgomery, Colby White, and David Matherne.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY MACKENZIE SAVAGE

A true Reaud Honors College success story, MedLife got its start when Amber Maredia reached out to her HSA Peer Mentor Mackenzie Savage in Fall 2019 about the idea of starting a chapter at Lamar University.

Two years later, MedLife earned LU's Student Organization of the Year Award, but the road to this exciting moment was a bumpy one. MedLife held its first chapter meeting in February 2020, a month before LU switched to online instruction to mitigate risks of the global pandemic.

"When COVID-19 began, we relied heavily on social media and GroupMe to keep members engaged from home, something that was a challenge for us because we were a brand-new organization that had just gotten started on campus," Maredia said.

LU's MedLife chapter was founded by five Reaud Honors students—President Maredia, Vice President Savage, Treasurer Bethany Edwards, Fundraising Officer Sindi Castillo, Volunteer Officer Deidre Dages—and now also includes Public Relations Officer Annabelle Broussard.

MedLife is best described as a college student peace corps focusing on medical and community support in impoverished places around the world. Faced with the global pandemic, LU's chapter reinvented itself at the very beginning. Rather than limit their contributions to helping underserved areas outside the U.S., MedLife students also looked at their own rural Southeast Texas community.

The students gave back to the local community in numerous ways, including hosting healthcare career panels; making care packages for nurses in the COVID-19 unit at Baptist Hospital; educating others on medical terminology at a Medical Loteria game night on LU's campus, cohosted by LUHS, another Reaud Honors student-formed student organization, which had been named "Best New Student Organization" the previous year.



When MedLife won its award in Spring 2022, two of its founding members, Savage and Edwards, were about to graduate. They had been part of a productive final year, as the chapter volunteered at Beaumont's Hope Clinic pregnancy resource center, raised more than \$1,000 for Power Hour (a MedLife fundraiser), and handmade blankets they donated to a women's shelter. By the time they graduated in May, the chapter had successfully raised enough funds in its "Moving Mountains" fundraiser to participate in its first service-learning trip—to Lima, Peru.

"The founding members of Lamar MedLife are amazing individuals who genuinely care about their mission. Their passion is why I joined the organization," said Broussard, a Chemical Engineering junior. "As soon as I heard about the service-

"Entering the medical field as a biomedical engineer is something I have been looking into lately, after I met one of the engineers who helped develop the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine."



Students volunteered in free mobile medical clinics at various sites in Lima, assisting local doctors in treating up to 90 patients a day. Students set up various health stations that ranged from providing hygiene care to pharmacy treatments. They also worked on a community development project to help prevent landslides caused by earthquakes.

learning trip opportunity, I knew it was something I needed to do. Entering the medical field as a biomedical engineer is something I have been looking into lately, after I met one of the engineers who helped develop the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.”

On May 20, a dream was realized for the MedLife chapter when 11 LU students and 1 Texas State University student traveled from Houston to El Salvador to Panama and landed in Lima, Peru, to serve at MedLife’s international headquarters and clinics. Six of them were Reaud Honors students: Maredia, Savage, Broussard, and Edwards, along with David Matherne and Conner Montgomery.

The crew volunteered in free mobile medical clinics, where local doctors saw up to 90 patients a day. In each clinic, the students set up several stations, including some providing hygiene, education, general medicine, OB-GYN, and pharmacy treatments.

Maredia found her Spanish minor helpful while volunteering in the Education station, where patients were given routine exams, such as pap smears, and provided health information ranging from nutrition to domestic violence resources. She talked to patients in Spanish about common health issues faced in the U.S., and she enjoyed conversations with Spanish-speaking students from

Puerto Rico who she volunteered with in the clinics.

“I learned a lot about how one’s culture affects their perception of medical treatments and procedures,” Maredia said. “I also worked on a development project that will help the community build a wall around their property to prevent landslides caused by earthquakes that often strike these areas. This will eventually let them own their land and receive benefits from the government such as public water and electricity.”

The walls being built to surround the highland mountain community will cost one million soles (around \$260,000). Savage recalled speaking

“Many of the healthcare problems I was able to assist in treating were due to overworked bodies and underfed bellies.”

with community leaders about the cyclic conditions of poverty: “Water is much more expensive in the highlands due to the need for street taxis to come and deliver the clean water tanks—around 20 to 40 soles (about \$5 to \$10) every week. Then, for the adults of the household, it’s around 15 soles (about \$4) a day to get in and out of the city where they work in the more populated areas of Lima or Miraflores. On a good day, these people will earn 50 soles (about \$13) after working 12-15 hours. Take away the amount they must spend on clean water, transportation, and groceries, most families do not have much left... Many of the healthcare problems I was able to



LU’s MedLife President Amber Maredia is being filmed while sharing a behind-the-scenes look of the crew’s efforts in Peru with donors who helped fund their campaign.



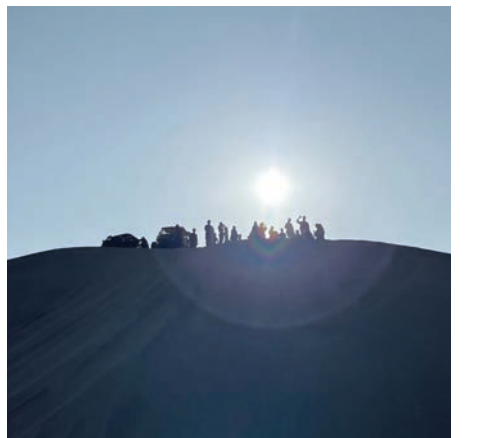
One of the crew’s fun excursions included traveling through the Huacachina desert to the top of South America’s biggest dunes, where they slid down the dunes, face-first, on sandboards.

assist in treating were due to overworked bodies and underfed bellies: gastritis from improper nutrition, early arthritis from strenuous work up and down the mountains, and cancers from minimal access to preventative care.”

In Union Santa Fe, the students visited a community center MedLife built from donations raised by chapters like LU MedLife’s, where families had “access to gas and electricity for cooking food and baking bread—called the *olla común* or ‘common pot,’” Maredia said.

At the end of mobile clinic days, students filled up heartily on traditional Peruvian cuisine—*picarones*, *pollo a la brasa*, *lomo saltado*, *lúcuma* dessert—with some *chicha morada* juice. Lima boasts it is the unofficial gastronomical capital of South America.

Explorations of Lima included up-close views of Diego de la Puente’s 17th-century painting “The Last Supper” in the Basilica and Convent of San Francisco. Peruvians chuckle at the guinea pig on the plate in the middle of the table, a typical Peruvian dish called *cuy chactado*. Descending farther





"This week has been eye opening in too many ways to count. I really feel moved to give anything we can to the communities we have worked in."



into the Baroque church built in 1657 are exposed human remains, stacked in circular stone pits, in the catacombs.

They visited Love Park, set high on the cliffs of Chorrillos overlooking the Pacific Ocean, home to a statue of lovers embracing in a kiss that is inscribed with quotes about hopeless romantics. They saw Pesimo's brightly colored mural, painted for last year's Urban Art Festival, transform a drab office building—an incredible contrast to the brown sandy overcast that colors Lima's shanty towns when viewed from miles away.

They held baby chicks in the palms of their hands and fed llamas. They hiked toward giant boulders along the circular Ruta de los Lagares Rupestres. A dune buggy took them through the Huacachina desert to the top of South America's biggest dunes, where they laid down on sandboards and slid down the dunes, face-first, at breathtaking and thrilling speeds—like a rollercoaster had become part of their bones!

They laughed at the "Save Water, Shower Together" sign, appreciating



While visiting the MedLife headquarters in Union Santa Fe (above and inset), students saw the olla común, or "common pot" (below), that provides the community with access to gas and electricity for cooking food and baking bread. The construction of this building was made possible by donations to MedLife.

how humor can pull people together in a place where water is usually no laughing matter. Sea lions and birds got up close and personal while students explored islands near Paracas, dubbed the "Peruvian Galapagos."

Every glimpse of Peru, whether on fun excursions through the only sea-facing capital in South America or during meaningful interactions with Lima's mountain residents, settled in the students' souls.

By the end of their week in Peru, the student crew began another "Moving Mountains" fundraiser. The villagers they were treating had told them that each family group could be fed for multiple days on 24 pieces of bread that cost 4 soles (about \$1). The students wanted to share this opportunity to help with their greater MedLife community.

"This week has been eye opening in too many ways to count," Savage said. "I really feel moved to give anything we can to the communities we have worked in. The cycle of poverty is truly a crisis here, and the communities have been nothing but hardworking families who are gracious toward us for our help."





BY SHELBY GRAHAM, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Honors Cardinals:

From the beginning of the search for LU's 16th president through President Jaime Taylor's first year, numerous Reaud Honors student leaders have been fortunate to work closely with Taylor to foster a friendly and supportive campus environment for all students.

"My first impression of him was that he was a little goofy, but in a good way, and that he was very much academic," David Williams said. "He came to one of our orientation sessions, and he was just going around, meeting everybody, talking to everybody. He was really personable."

As a member of the Presidential Search Committee, Tiffany Tran questioned Taylor about his views on student engagement. She said his response showed her that "his leadership approach is genuine, and he truly cares for everything and anything LU."

LU Ambassador Shelbie Williams also views Taylor as a leader who cares, saying, "He is very down to earth and wants students' input on what will make the college a more enjoyable experience and place for not only students, but everyone who comes to campus."

As SGA President and Vice-President respectively, Tran and Williams felt supported by Taylor. "With every interaction I had with him, I could tell his sincerity in making sure that student voices are heard," Tran said.

Major student-centered projects SGA implemented during Taylor's first year included: free COVID-19 tests, creating a student engagement hour that will start Fall 2022, increasing the student minimum wage, adding an interfaith space on campus, improving campus safety, and organizing free self-defense classes.

"Throughout the year, President Taylor made sure to always listen to the student body and especially to the concerns that we introduced," said Stephanie Barron, SGA Senator for the College of Arts and Sciences. "He was always very communicative with us and kept his mind open to any suggestions. He even attended one of our joint sessions as a guest speaker and allowed students to ask him questions or voice their opinions on Lamar."

Tran predicts Taylor will leave a lasting impact on Lamar University. "His positive energy and drive to make LU the best institution in our state and beyond will lead him to make wise decisions that will benefit our university and the SETX Community," she said. "I can recognize how his involvement with the student body has slowly improved our campus culture for the better...the future of Lamar is extremely bright!"



Welcome, President Taylor!

Investiture Ceremony for LU's 16th President: Fall 2021



Reaud Honors students Tiffany Tran and David Williams, respectively SGA President and Vice-President, congratulate President Taylor at his investiture ceremony. (Below) Reaud Honors students were among those invited to participate in the President's Circle, a dinner that recognizes prestigious donors for their commitment to the success of LU students.



ALUM spotlight
Kristeen Reynolds
(Class of 2016)

President's Circle: Spring 2022



ALUM spotlight
Jena (Verrill) Still
and Brandon Still
(Class of 2006)

BY ANDREW STRANGE, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATION COUNSELOR*

Alumnus Focus | **MR. JOSHUA DAVIS**

Lifelong Learner at LU

Navigating a path from the social sciences and healthcare to reach his goals.

Joshua Davis, of Beaumont, is a lifetime learner at Lamar University. Earning his bachelor's in Sociology and Criminal Justice in 2011, a Healthcare Administration and Entrepreneurship MBA in 2015, and an MPH in 2019, Davis also plans to earn a CFRE, Certified Fund Raising Executive.

Davis said he began his academic career with his sights set on a path toward working in healthcare. After a semester or two, however, he realized his passion to help people and a natural gift with numbers could be combined, and he began to pave a way toward achieving his goals through the social sciences.

"I enjoyed the research aspects of it," he said. "It was the data and the numbers that interested me."

Davis graduated with a degree in Sociology and went to work in nonprofits. In 2016, an opportunity came that enabled him to marry his experience in nonprofits with his desire to work in healthcare—he became director of operations at Legacy Community Health-East Region in Beaumont.

"I went from operations back into fundraising, so now I am in development doing fundraising and grant management," he said. "I kind of did a big circle, but I figured out where I want to be. Now I am vice president of development for the East Region, which includes Beaumont and Baytown."

Davis said his work and personal lives are often blended as he raises funds, both for a living at Legacy and as a hobby for charities that are close to his heart.

"I am very involved with the American Cancer Society," he said.



As a McNair Scholar during his undergraduate years, Joshua Davis researched the correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence (shown in inset with his mentor, Dr. Eric Bronson, from the Criminal Justice program). Davis's passion to help people continues to motivate him in his work and service leadership.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY JOSHUA DAVIS



Joshua Davis continues to fight for justice in his Southeast Texas community, from his day job at Legacy Community Health to volunteering at the Relay for Life event that saved his life to sharing his knowledge about nonprofits with Reaud Honors College students this past spring.

"That has always been a staple of my life since I was 12. I have been working with that organization in different capacities through different events.

"My husband and I are chairing the Greater Golden Triangle Relay for Life. I am alive because of that event. When I chaired it in 2009, I got dared to shave my head. I shaved it whenever we reached a goal. About three weeks later, I received a malignant melanoma diagnosis. If it wouldn't have been for raising the money through that involvement, I wouldn't be here today."

Davis said his passion for getting involved comes, in part, from a love for a community he calls home.

"I am one of those people who never thought about leaving Beaumont—I enjoy it," he said. "There's lots of potential, lots of opportunity, lots of growth that we can do, so I am investing back into that."

In addition to fundraising, Davis also volunteers at Lamar University. He is a mentor in the Reaud Honors College's Alumni Mentor Program (AMP) and serves on the alumni council, director for the university's alumni advisory board, and is helping lead efforts to build an LGBTQ alumni network.

"I think I am more involved as an alum than I was as a student," Davis said. "It's funny, looking back on those opportunities, the growth that's happened, and what Lamar has taught me. I've come back three times, and each time, I've had opportunities to grow."



"I always tell people, if you're always comfortable in life, then you're not growing. You have to step outside of your comfort zone, be uncomfortable, and that is when you really start to blossom."

Davis said he owes his willingness to try new things to his interactions with his LU professors and to his time spent in the honors program.

"[Getting involved] was hard for me when I was an undergrad. In the beginning, I didn't want to venture out," he said. "I was introverted. But [being an honors student] pulled me out of my shell. I got involved. It helped me to step outside of my comfort zone. I learned to have a voice. And I learned how to engage and be a part of the community."

"I've come back [to LU] three times, and each time, I've had opportunities to grow."

"I really found myself once I got to Lamar to where now, I am comfortable in my shoes, I am more outgoing, and I am not afraid to get out in front of groups to talk about what there is to do and what is needed."

Among his many memories at LU, Davis holds close to the friends he made while in honors, saying, "I made friends who I still keep in touch with today. That family away from home, the relationships that were built while on campus, became your family outside of your blood family. If I wouldn't have been a part of the honors college, that wouldn't have existed. I would have been



just another college student trying to navigate my way through campus. But the honors college gave me that sense of family and a support system. It was a stabilizing force that helped to set me up for success."

He also appreciated how honors encouraged students to get involved beyond coursework while attending LU, saying, "What you get with your degree, those are things that will help you complete a job. But what you get from being involved in organizations and the networking opportunities, and stepping out, that's what helps you to grow and to get to that job."

Being involved in McNair and as a Gill Scholar helped Davis hone his soft skills to be successful professionally.

"McNair helped with my public speaking skills, getting up in front of a group of people and being able to present and answer questions," he said. "When I did my MBA, I was a Gill Ignite Scholar. I went to the conference that Jack Gill does. That was another opportunity where I learned some of those skills that you aren't necessarily taught in the classroom. Like the networking, how to work a crowd, how to mingle and connect with people and build those relationships. Both presenting and networking are critical for my success."

Davis said his path toward success has been both welcomed and unexpected.

"Am I doing what I thought I was going to be doing when I went to Lamar? No. I didn't think I'd be in nonprofits as a career. Do I love what I do? Absolutely," he said. "Life sometimes takes you on journeys that are not always planned. And that's the beauty of life—sometimes you end up in a place where you never really thought you'd be."



BY KALAN BONNETTE, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Faculty Profile | **DR. GOLDEN WRIGHT**

Leadership in the Arts



Honors students across all disciplines are invited to explore the fine arts in classes that include Dr. Golden Wright's Honors Dance Appreciation. Among them is honors nursing sophomore Patricia Castañón, who Dr. Wright twirls during his class lesson on salsa.

PHOTO BY MEGHAN RAPP; GOLDEN WRIGHT HEADSHOT
COURTESY DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE

"Honors students tend to have an appreciation—a certain drive. It's about appreciating dance and not being a historian."

"Are we playing chess while we do the interview?"

I'm not ready for Dr. Golden Wright's question, but then again, I never am; his subtle humor is often missed, and even when noticed, isn't exactly laughable.

"If you'd like, we can," I responded.

We ducked into a room in the Setzer Student Center where chess sets adorn the tables. As the department chair for Theatre & Dance, Wright has been preparing for Le Grand Bal, a major fundraising event. (He has since been appointed interim dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication.)

Wright is quite good at chess, though I shouldn't be surprised as he is full of strange quirks and abilities. In the years that I've known him, every conversation brings some new talent to light. From being a darts hustler in college to stringing tennis racquets to playing Counter-Strike, Wright is a man of many hats and wears each well.

I first met Wright when I acted in "The Birds" at Lamar. As a Mathematics and Computer Science student, I was unaware of who he was when he would check on rehearsals. I officially met him when I took his ballroom dance class the following year. He was stern, but understanding and always helpful, regardless if the question I asked seemed silly or simple. Wright took the time to encourage students who were passionate about the course material and regularly roused laughter in class. Even in casual conversations with his students outside of class, a mention of his name brought forth respect and admiration, some for his teaching style and demeanor, some for his dancing ability.

You might presume Wright has danced from an early age, but he began at

16, filling in when his sister's performance was short a dancer. He danced more and more throughout his high school career. After graduating, he sought a degree in process operations before deciding to pursue dance full time.

"I drove something like 3,500 miles to do 11 auditions in 12 days," he said.

Those auditions were largely successful; he danced with several companies, most notably Ballet Austin.

After a rigorous dance career, he pursued his Master of Fine Arts and then his Doctorate. This was a somewhat interesting choice because an MFA is a terminal degree, but he believed research in his field was important. Did he ever feel odd as a dancer in the world of higher education? "I wrote my dissertation on artists in leadership positions in Higher Ed," he said. "It's not as different as you might think."

Wright's leadership mindset is "success as you envision it." He encourages a program that allows students to discuss what they would like to do with their degrees so they can design a curriculum of courses to make their vision a reality.

This same passion was recognized by the Reaud Honors College, which invited him to teach Honors Dance Appreciation. Whether honors students are dancing as a dragon for the Chinese New Year or analyzing the beating heart of plays, they immediately pick up on Wright's positive demeanor.

"Honors students tend to have an appreciation—a certain drive. It's about appreciating dance and not being a historian," he said.

Wright enjoys his interactions with honors students. Speaking about his Dance Appreciation class, he said, "I've taught ballroom 14 out of the 16 years

we've offered it, and it's because I enjoy the class. When you meet someone special, and you want to express that to them, going to the movies just isn't going to cut it."

This hints at something deeper—Wright's love for his wife of more than 25 years. He brings her up often and speaks of her fondly. Wright's passion for his wife is mirrored by his passion for dance, which further extends past his performances and onto his students.

Does he ever miss the energy of the stage? "Watching the students grants me the same high as performing," he said. "But I do still get to perform."

Of all his performances throughout his teaching career, his favorite is one he performed with a student. For a scholarship dinner, the pair performed an aerial silks routine in the Montagne Center.

"There is a level of trust there. When you're 20 feet in the air, and the only thing keeping your partner from hitting the ground is you. There's a special trust," he said.

Being in education has also granted Wright the opportunity to take two groups of students to Taiwan. The language barrier did not pose a problem, Wright said, as the "language of dance is universal."

"I think that's checkmate," he added.

Indeed. With a swipe of his bishop, Wright has beaten me in our game of chess.

"Well, you were asking questions and writing the whole time. You'll be at salsa?"

A great conclusive segue that sums up Wright. He is multitasking, but not the type to flaunt his skills. Yet whatever the interaction may involve, it isn't as important as dance.

BY BRITNEY BREVELL,
REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT

Save OUR BEACHES FROM PLASTIC POLLUTION

Honors students conduct citizen science while learning about the adverse effects of microplastics.

Digging in the sargassum seaweed pushed away from the shoreline, as cheers erupt from rollercoaster riders at Pleasure Pier, Reaud Honors Psychology junior Kaylee Goodspeed begins her journey as a global citizen scientist helping to save the lives of marine organisms in the Gulf of Mexico. When animals mistake microplastics for food, they can starve to death.

ALL PHOTOS BY MEGHAN RAPP





Citizen scientists Morgan Luke, Kelvin Elgar, and Braylon Keys analyze the microplastics that the honors volunteer group collected along Galveston Beach. “The result was rather surprising,” said Coby Vidrine. “Seeing all the plastic pellets and other small pieces of trash that are not usually seen by the naked eye while casually walking through the beach sand.”



Coordinator Kimber De Salvo Anderson shows Reaud Honors student volunteers a poster of the sea turtles native to the Gulf of Mexico as an example of the aquatic lives that are endangered by microplastics. As she talks, students prepare themselves to collect these plastic pellets by downloading the Nurdle Patrol app where they will document the locations of any nurdles they find on Galveston Beach.

Three hundred cigarettes and three pounds of trash. This was the sad discovery made by a group of Honors students across a quarter mile stretch of beach on Galveston Island.

Reaud Honors College students from Lamar University’s Honors Student Association, LU Women in STEM, and Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers gathered at Galveston Beach to participate in a day of beach cleanup in conjunction with the Turtle Island Restoration Network (TIRN). An environmental organization, TIRN aims to promote cleaner water and beaches across the world, including the Gulf of Mexico.

Under the guidance of coordinator Kimber De Salvo Anderson, 11 LU students volunteered to help TIRN during Spring Break. Throughout the day, the students conducted citizen science while learning about turtles native to the Gulf of Mexico, the adverse effects of microplastics, and how everyday people—kids to adults—can positively impact ocean life.

“The amount and variety of sea turtles that occupy the Gulf Coast was very surprising,” said Coby Vidrine, a Chemical Engineering junior. He and his peers learned that the Gulf of Mexico is home to five species of turtles, all serving an important purpose in their respective habitats. However, the diversity of these beautiful sea creatures is declining, as humans pose a risk to them through pollution, litter, and microplastics.

Texas is the nation’s number one producer of oil and gas, but it also has many estuaries that feed into the Gulf of Mexico. This causes issues for the marine life that depend on clean

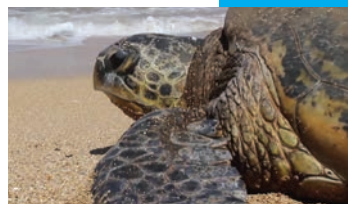
water. Many of the large petrochemical companies produce small pellets of plastic as a byproduct to the refining process: nurdles, the second-largest source of ocean microplastics. The main issue with these nurdles is that they often end up along beaches. Nurdles are beads of plastic, each as small as a pea and difficult to see, even when you’re looking for them.

Surrounding the towering wood posts of Galveston’s piers, little trenches hold water and trash. These low areas of sand are hotspots for microplastics. As part of the beach cleanup, students performed a Nurdle Patrol by searching for and collecting nurdles along the beach. With gloved hands, they meticulously dug their fingers in seaweed and sand. Some areas had none; others revealed a jackpot of life-taking detriments.

Microplastics plague the Gulf of Mexico, especially since they are a hard-to-spot contaminant. Anderson helped the honors students perform an experiment to demonstrate the problematic nature of microplastics. They gathered sand and placed it in a large separator to filter the debris for analysis. The amalgamation of trash and sand contained debris varying in size. The larger trash pieces that had been buried in the sand were now weathered away to dull, unnoticeable colors.

“The result was rather surprising: seeing all the plastic pellets and other small pieces of trash that are not usually seen by the naked eye while casually walking through the beach sand,” Vidrine said.

Microplastics are not a new topic of discussion at Lamar University. Biochemistry student Morgan Luke and Biology students Zaid Mohammed, Amber Maredia, and Britney Brevell are honors students involved in a project with Dr. Ian Lian, an associate professor of Biology, studying how microplastics affect human health. Many products used



Community outreach “is an excellent way to learn more about events going on in the world, especially when they are not taught in school.”



today contain these microplastics. These range from shampoo to plastic bottles of water.

“Since the lab does cancer research, [they] have been interested in the effect on a cellular level,” Mohammed said.

The project researchers have been studying the impact that microplastics have on wound healing. They are working to see how this changes the rate at which cells regrow. Dr. Lian and his research students are currently in the preliminary phases of their experiment and will continue to work with various cell lines and tissues. As the problem has become increasingly prevalent in recent years, research of this type is crucial in determining how these microplastics also affect human health.

Besides microscopic debris, other trash items cover the coastline, as any frequent beachgoer in the Gulf knows. Laying among the grass of the sand dunes, brightly colored litter appeared as little flecks of color along a solid blue sky backdrop. Many items were buried under sand with only a little dot of color sticking out for us to see.

During a 45-minute search along a small stretch of land, the students collected three pounds of trash and 300 cigarettes. Each cigarette has enough toxic chemicals to make approximately two gallons of sea water lethal for marine life. In this short trip, the students made a positive impact on ocean life by helping keep 600 gallons of water clean.

Community service is an important component of the Reaud Honors College, which promotes excellence among students in areas other than strictly academics. It encourages students to extend learning beyond the classroom



As you can imagine, finding microplastics in sand can be quite the challenge! Kimber de Salvo Anderson examines a pellet found by Braylon Keys and Coby Vidrine to determine if it is one of the plastic fragments that can get buried deep in the sand where sea turtles lay their eggs. This habitat pollution could begin to affect the hatching success and even the ratio of male and female turtles, as eggs incubated in warmer conditions are often females.

As Kaylee Goodspeed looks on, Kelvin Elgar and Luke Sodolak get a feel for microplastics found on the beach so they understand better what to seek while digging for the plastic pellets.



Galveston Beach Crew on Nurdle Patrol (from left): Kimber De Salvo Anderson with Reaud Honors students Braylon Keys, Kaylee Goodspeed, Kelvin Elgar, Coby Vidrine, Britney Brevell, Luke Sodolak, Arturo Lopez, Umer Malik, Morgan Luke, Ohna Danna, and Ashlynn Koon.

setting. Morgan Luke, a member of the Honors Student Association, believes that community outreach is important for students, saying it is “an excellent way to learn more about events going on in the world, especially when they are not taught in school.”

For the average citizen hoping to get involved in the fight against pollution on our beaches, change begins on a personal level.

“Making sure you responsibly discard trash is the first step to making this world a cleaner place,” Mechanical Engineering freshman Luke Sodolak said.

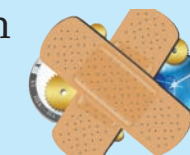
“Anywhere from using reusable water bottles...to using reusable grocery bags to cut down on [single-use plastic] are great ways that each one of us can contribute,” Vidrine said.

Any contribution, no matter how small, can minimize damage to the marine ecosystem. The next time you take a vacation to your local beach, save a turtle and scan the beach to collect and discard any trash that you see—especially those super small nurdles.



Kelvin Elgar digs near one of the “Clean, Green, Pristine” signs spotted along the beach. The Galveston Park Board takes seriously its obligation to be a good environmental steward. These signs increase visitor awareness of the importance of local recycling projects and volunteer trash collection efforts.

Impact on Wound Healing



Research has been done on the effects of microplastics on the environment, cancer, and infertility, but little is known about their effects on tissue regeneration and wound healing.

Starting in Fall 2022, Biology Pre-Med junior Zaid Mohammed will work with Biology Associate Professor Dr. Ian Lian to grow epithelial (HaCaT cells) and connective (NIH-3T3 cells) tissues. Their experiment will simulate long-term microplastic exposure in a lab setting.

They will also perform a scratch test to determine the rate at which cells replicate and migrate to close a simulated wound in the presence or absence of plasticizers.

The findings of the study may reveal the implications of microplastics on tissue regeneration and healing from injuries on a cellular level.

BY ZAID MOHAMMED, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Water Lanterns, Lion Dance, & Bollywood Hip Hop

Honors students spark cultural awareness connections on campus.



A united student body stood around Lamar University's duck pond to celebrate the Water Lantern Festival to signify a return to normalcy as the campus community renewed its bonds after being apart due to the pandemic.

PHOTOS BY EMMANUEL GRANDEZA, ASIAN BUSINESS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

Asia. The world's largest continent, comprised of more than 40 countries, it has five major regions that abound with great cultural diversity. Lamar University has around 600 students of Asian descent enrolled, as of 2021. This demographic has been steadily increasing over the years, which is in accordance with the national trend, as Asian Americans are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States.

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students from the Reaud Honors College have stood at the forefront of increasing cultural awareness on campus through their leadership of student organizations.

"I was bullied growing up, so I was really ashamed of being Asian," said

Kelvin Elgar, a Chemical Engineering senior. "But as I grew up, I have become more proud and more in tune with my culture. And those comments have really become unimportant in what I thought about them."

Elgar says he has found a place of acceptance at Lamar University, adding, "The students and the faculty here have been more open to celebrating different cultures. I really feel like they're pushing for diversity."

In 2021, Elgar became president of the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE). He saw an opportunity to lead a group of individuals that had a shared vision of showcasing diversity on campus. "At SASE, we have initiatives to not only share Asian

culture, but also work with people of other cultures," he said, clarifying you do not need to be of Asian descent to join any AAPI campus groups.

With Lamar returning to on-campus instruction in Fall 2021, SASE began the academic year with the Water Lantern Festival. A united student body stood around Lamar's duck pond, illuminated by lanterns students lit after inscribing their wishes onto them before releasing them into the water.

"The Water Lantern signifies a new life. We wanted to show students that we're hoping to go back to normal, and that they have a fresh start," Elgar said.

SASE credits collaboration for playing a big role in improving cultural awareness at LU. For instance, Elgar

organized the Asian Night Market with Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) Vice-President and Reaud Honors Computer Science and Game Development junior Jennifer Tsan.

Tsan also grew up attending schools where only a handful of AAPI made up the student population. She first focused on fitting in, she said, but as she became older, she "really embraced Asian heritage and culture."

Once at Lamar, Tsan found a strong community among students who share her Vietnamese origin. The markets and bazaars popular in Asia inspired Tsan's vision for Asian Night Market. Elgar and Tsan invited a variety of AAPI student-run businesses and clubs to host stalls and secured donated food from local restaurants.

The air surrounding Asian Night Market was filled with scents of fragrant kabobs and sweet cupcakes generously donated by local Asian businesses Rudy's Bar-B-Q and Suga's, respectively.

Invited clubs included the Pakistani Student Association (PSA), formed by twin sisters Samira (Class of 2021) and Umera (Class of 2022) Ahmed, who moved to the U.S. from Pakistan when they were five. Psychology Pre-Med senior Saniya Shahzad ran the PSA stall at Asian Night Market, selling desi bracelets, known as bangles, traditional ornaments in South Asia.

The high turnout led to success for one Reaud Honors student entrepreneur. Volunteer Chair of VSA and Biology senior Krystal Le sold out of items from her clothing business, KCreatesByKrystal. Inspired by her success, Le cofounded the Asian Business Student Association (ABSA) to help aspiring entrepreneurs next year.

The Lamar community recognized Asian Night Market as "Program of the Year" at the Toast to Leadership ceremony. Gratified by the event's success, Tsan said, "People are more open to learning our culture, and they were excited to come to our event."

As a member of VSA, SASE, and ABSA, Tsan hopes to continue pushing

Remarkable student leaders "all talked of a shared vision to make diversity a central value to Lamar University and the Reaud Honors College."

cultural events. At VSA's Lunar New Year Festival, students commemorated the Year of the Tiger by giving out "lucky" money in red envelopes, while a group performed the Lion Dance, a traditional dance in Vietnam and China, to usher in good fortune.

"There are other cultures that we want to celebrate, and we hope to continue to collaborate with fellow AAPI organizations to spotlight other regions of Asia," Tsan said.

India Night also emerged from a collaboration, between the Indian Students Association (ISA) and SASE.

ISA was established this academic year by Biochemistry Pre-Med junior and Vice-President Susann Kalathra, with some of her peers. Their goal is to create a haven of cultural unity and celebration between students of Indian descent and the general populace.

"In grade school, I wasn't around many Indian-Americans, so I wasn't too accepting of my own self-identity," Kalathra said. "But now that I've come to Lamar and met others who have similar experiences as me, it's been a little eye opening. I don't feel embarrassed or intimidated."

India Night, ISA's flagship event in Fall 2021, gathered students and members of the local South Asian community. Glitzy decorations of bright colors and lights brought a festive mood. Students wore kurtas, saris, shalwar kameez, and other traditional South Asian clothing. Indian professors gave speeches sharing their personal and academic journeys from India to the U.S.

"We celebrated our culture through music, food, and dance performances," Kalathra said. "Multiple types of dances of the Indian culture were performed, from classical dances, like Bharatnatyam, to Bollywood hip hop."

The increase in AAPI cultural events on campus was appreciated by Chemical Engineering senior Luke Nguyen. "I started college in the fall semester of 2016, and to my knowledge, AAPI events were not very prevalent," he said. "Asian culture and pride are flourishing right now" because of the rise of student-led organizations, such as SASE, VSA, PSA, ABSA, and ISA.

Former SGA President and honors alumnus Edward Doan concurred, saying that the groups have grown from "little to none" to "sizable organizations by the time I graduated in Fall 2020."

Doan also credits the Reaud Honors College for supporting him personally through his journey at Lamar. "The people I initially met from the RHC were my biggest cheerleaders and advisors, which enabled me to become the person I am today," Doan said. "I spent my latter years passing it on to help enable the next group."

In conversations with these remarkable student leaders, they all talked of a shared vision to make diversity a central value to Lamar University and the Reaud Honors College—where we celebrate all cultures with enthusiasm.

That dream becomes real whenever students work together to build on successes of the past. This academic year, students helped lead the charge to expand LU's Multicultural Festival to include community organizations and open the festivities to the public.

Looking ahead, Reaud Honors students in AAPI organizations say they hope to continue to play a major role in cultivating cultural awareness at LU through gatherings that recognize our similarities and celebrate our differences. By taking initiative and bringing people together, they highlight some of the best qualities of our honors college.

Walt Disney Magic While Reimagining Honors

Our college's first Experiential Learning Program travels to Orlando!

The Reaud Honors College's first Experiential Learning Program (ELP), under the guidance of Class of 2007 alumna Dr. Lindsey (Cauthen) Minter, empowered a team of Reaud Honors students to develop innovative platforms that focus on cancer education to connect patients and caregivers with health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"All projects were unified by the aim to provide scientifically sound perspectives on treatment options for cancer patients," said Menna Elsaka, a Biochemistry and Chemistry Pre-Med research team member who graduated in May 2022.

The team's innovative research led three members—Biology Pre-Med sophomores Sindi Castillo, Jasmin Reyes, and Arizbeth Lopez Garcia—to be the first students ever to participate in the Resilience and Recovery Summit at Lamar University. In the next semester, Fall 2021, five research students traveled to the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference in Orlando, Florida, to share their Cancer ELP work as a way of reiminaging honors education.

Featured here are highlights from the research team's NCHC adventure.



The Reaud Honors College cancer research ELP team enjoys a Disney-fied NCHC adventure! (Opposite page, top, from left) Dean Tilisa Thibodeaux, Jasmin Reyes, Kaylee Goodspeed, Sindi Castillo, Menna Elsaka, and Krystal Le.

Getting Creative in Honors

Expanding beyond STEM academic pursuits can nurture analytical skills.



Mathematics and Computer Science senior Kalan Bonnette found his creative path at LU after taking an Honors Theatre Appreciation course. He had a lead role in “The Book Club” (left, at far right), one of four university plays he has acted in so far.

PHOTO BY LYNN LANE /
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE

vastly different from words on a page, but the emotions both creative expressions bring out of people are the same.”

Cooper said she often encourages her fellow STEM peers to get creative. “Writing is a major component to most careers, so learning to write properly or learning to enjoy writing can be a lifesaver,” she said. “If you truly let go and get creative with it—even if it is a boring ol’ essay—you’d be surprised at what you can do.”

Mathematics and Computer Science senior Kalan Bonnette also forged a creative path at LU based on earlier interests. He explored theatre while in high school but felt intimidated by the prospect of taking an Honors Theatre Appreciation course in college.

“I was concerned that the workload would be more intense than the standard course,” Bonnette explained, “but I was completely wrong. I was impressed by the ability of the class to come together and have a dialogue instead of a bunch of disinterested students being forced to chat on a digital discussion board or in a much larger class.”

Discussing theatre with his classmates was his favorite part of class, saying, “Art is all about ideas and what others see in a piece. Talking about that with other people is always refreshing. I am upset that these conversations don’t happen more in

“People seemed to really enjoy the way I read, which left me tickled. I know if a career in Biology or English doesn’t work out, I can get a job as an announcer.”

our everyday lives because art is often about a shared experience.”

Taking the course offered performing opportunities for Bonnette. “One day in class, Professor Joel Grothe made an offhand comment that the Theatre Department had open auditions, meaning anyone could audition. I approached him after the session and asked when the dates were for auditions,” Bonnette said. “I’ll never quite forget the slight look of skepticism in his face. I showed up to auditions, got cast, and the rest is history.”

Bonnette has participated in four LU shows to date— “The Birds,” “The Good Doctor,” “The Book Club,” and most recently, “Split.” Reflecting on his first show, “The Birds,” he recalled the experience of acting as part of a cast of four characters. “It was absolutely amazing to work with Grothe as a director and to bond with such a small cast,” he said. “We had plenty of time to learn our lines and refine the show, and it felt like a little family.”

He also recalled some challenging moments. For his role in “The Good Doctor,” Bonnette said, “I couldn’t figure out how to make a certain monologue comical. I spent hours trying to figure everything out and was asking my director what I could do differently, and I thought he wasn’t giving me much direction. In actuality, he just knew what I was capable of. Eventually it clicked. After hours of work, I delivered a humorous monologue.”

Beyond theatre, Bonnette has also taken a ballroom dancing course at LU taught by Professor Golden Wright. He would like to further explore other forms of dance—tap, jazz, and aerial silks. He also wants to venture down the road of

music classes, particularly music theory, since he already plays piano.

After his experience in theatre and dancing, Bonnette formed a student organization for partner dancing, Ballroom and Social Event Dancing (BASED). The group is open to anyone in the LU community who wants to express their creativity through dance.

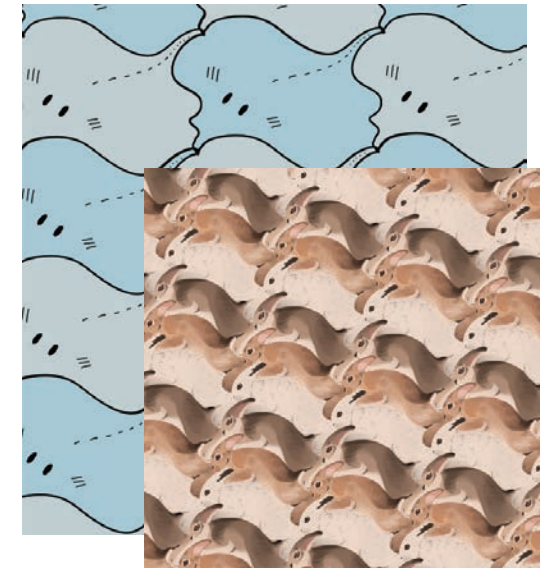
He urges his fellow honors STEM majors to pursue their creativity, saying, “Personally, I think it helps your analytical work when you nurture the ability to think and process creatively. From a more philosophical perspective, when someone has never experienced something, they may have no idea that they would grow to love it.”

He added, “Maybe a composer greater than Mozart is lying beneath someone who is a nursing major who doesn’t particularly care for the career path but is doing so because he feels it is a secure path.”

Kadie Sloane, a Psychology junior, added a writing minor to her academic pursuits. “Though I love studying the human mind from every angle, I’ve also always had a passion for writing. One of my goals is to write and publish a book using the knowledge I gain from my degree,” she said.

Sloane first found Gretchen Johnson’s Creative Writing: Fiction class to be nerve-wracking. “I was a bit nervous to be in a class of what I expected to be English majors—all better than me at writing—but I was more than pleasantly surprised by the content and supportive classmates and teacher.”

Through the course structure of reading and writing short stories, Sloane stepped out of her comfort zone as she explored a variety of writing prompts.



Reaud Honors College offers opportunities for creativity through Honors Topics and Seminars. Shown are tessellations created by Kamryn Knafelz and Adrien Connor (inset) while taking Dr. Jennifer Fowler’s Honors Seminar: Artwork of M.C. Escher in Spring 2022.

By KAMRYN KNAFELZ AND ADRIEN CONNOR

The prompts “fueled my creativity and aided me in exploring my writing style and learning the do’s and don’ts of fiction writing,” she said.

Encouraged by her experience, Sloane expanded her writing capabilities by joining Cooper in the Creative Writing: Poetry class.

“I highly recommend STEM majors take creative classes,” Sloane said. “It definitely helps me connect with my passionate and inventive side, something that all majors alike need to home in on.”

Being part of the Reaud Honors College community means you are the type of honors student who cares about more than getting a good GPA.

“Typical honors students have their heads in science books,” she said. “It is necessary to venture into other areas to open your mind and spark your creativity in your field. Taking creative writing classes was one of the best decisions I made during college. I will be continuing my minor in writing and will keep exploring different avenues of writing after my journey at Lamar ends.”



BY JERI WOLFE, *REAUD HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT*

Stepping Up for SETX

From helping families with incarcerated parents to raising crisis intervention awareness, honors students build bridges of hope.

Advocating on behalf of others, especially those whose voices are often unheard or misunderstood, is most effective when diverse perspectives inform the basis for decisions and actions. That includes the youth voice.

Since 2017, Southeast Texas nonprofits have benefited from the enthusiasm, drive, and compassion offered by Reaud Honors students through the college's Stepping Up service leadership initiative. In exchange

for contributing their youth perspective as non-voting board members, students develop effective communication, time management, and other leadership skills they will carry on into their careers.

After learning Nonprofit 101 at a workshop, students participate in "speed matching" where they have five-minute chats with each nonprofit director. These conversations empower nonprofits and students to choose the experiential learning option that best meets both of

their needs. Nonprofits are selected by the college's partner, Southeast Texas Nonprofit Development Center, after reviewing student applications sharing skills and interests.

To reveal how Stepping Up makes a positive impact on student development, I share my civic leadership experience, along with two peers. This academic year saw the largest cohort—13—of Reaud Honors student civic leaders.

Here are our stories.



JERI'S JOURNEY

Helping incarcerated families that remind me of my own

As a child of an incarcerated parent, I was struck by a local social justice movement to positively change the lives of families with incarcerated or deceased parents, helping in ways that I never got to experience while I was growing up in Southeast Texas.

When my mother went to jail, my physically disabled father was left to raise twin girls on his own. My sister Teri and I were in elementary school. In between applying for jobs and dealing with his health, my father had close to no time to shop for school uniforms required by our district. Beyond the constraint of time, he also carried the expense of buying two of everything.

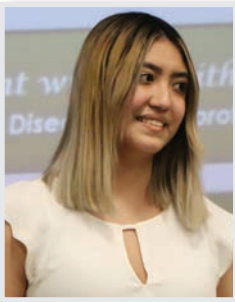
If Augusta's Angels had been around when I was a child, I believe my father would have not only felt a burden lift off his shoulders, but also would have found a community to turn to for support. Today, when I see children receive toys, meals, and clothing, and play educational activities through the nonprofit, I admire their joy. Augusta's Angels opened me up to a new world of volunteering and serving communities.

I always wanted to make an impact. Before Stepping Up, I never thought to join a nonprofit. Through the initiative, I met nonprofits ranging from sports to the environment to healthcare before I matched with the nonprofit Thira Smith founded in 2012 as a legacy to her brother, Augusta Sr. His last act of kindness happened on Christmas Day in 2011, when he helped a crying boy get a bike he desperately wanted.

Before I knew it, I was labeling bikes and stuffing stockings to give to children at Angel Tree Christmas, the board's biggest event. After a couple of months, I knew that Stepping Up had helped me find my place in my community, a place that reflects a position I was in during my life.

My time as a non-voting board member broke me out of my shell and pushed me into the world. I saw firsthand how, even in uncertain times, a community can band together to accomplish important tasks. I discovered how essential conflict management is in keeping progress moving within an organization. And I saw lots and lots of joy. I loved seeing the kids have so much fun.

As a leader, I have learned to step up for more community-led opportunities and to become a passionate advocate for improving the lives of families like mine. Looking ahead, I am excited to continue contributing to the future of Augusta's Angels as a board member.



ARIZBETH'S JOURNEY

Inspired to professionally serve medically underserved communities

"I was caught between choosing other boards, as they all were so interesting and had incredible mission statements, but I know I made the right choice choosing Legacy Community Health," said Arizbeth Lopez Garcia, a Biology Pre-Med junior.

"The board's mission is to provide anyone with healthcare despite their financial situations and insurance status. I want to become a doctor and, after learning how nonprofit medical boards are run, I now have a goal to open up similar clinics in Mexico for those who can't afford care."

Initially, the board wasn't what she expected. Going in, Lopez didn't realize Legacy was bigger than its footprint in our coastal city. Her role as an honorary board member would be with Legacy's Beaumont Advisory Board, overseen by the larger main clinic located in Houston.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the board adapted to host meetings bimonthly with a mixture of in-person and online. In the board meetings, she witnessed the process of problem solving, with the most pressing problem being the effect the pandemic had on nonprofit funding. The members decided to get involved with the community in non-health-related situations.

The biggest event the board hosted, Lemonade Day, teaches children about starting their own businesses. After the kids get funding from their parents, the board assigns the kids a budget to get materials for their lemonade stand. On Lemonade Day, kids all over Southeast Texas set up their stands to sell lemonade to their neighbors and friends.

"Once the day is over, the board informs the kids of the profits they made. Their profits are assigned to savings and spending, and they also set money aside to pay back their loan that they got from their parents in the beginning," Lopez explained.

After her nine-month service, Lopez intends to stay on, saying, "I want to continue going to their meetings so I can keep learning and growing by helping my community in need of healthcare."



AVERY'S JOURNEY

Spreading the word about local crisis intervention services

Nursing sophomore Avery McLain first heard of the Stepping Up initiative through the testimonies of previous participants. "I'm not from the area, so I don't know a lot about the community that I'm spending my college years in," said McLain, who grew up in Tolar, Texas. Stepping Up gave me the "opportunity to contribute and learn about the people in this community. I really saw that drive to serve with the United Board of Missions."

When she joined the United Board of Missions, a local crisis intervention and family assistance organization, the board wanted to get its website back online, so they suggested McLain help them create a new one. From her experience with making an e-Portfolio through the Reaud Honors College, she designed a website sharing the nonprofit's mission statement, programs, staff directory, and contact information. In addition to web design, she had the opportunity to manage the board's social media pages.

"Communication skills during professional meetings and time management are just a few of the skills I have felt improved. I always try my best to be involved where I can, because you know you're representing Lamar and the Reaud Honors College. Even when you don't have scheduled time with them, you do want to make sure that you're on top of things. That's just one of the beneficial parts of the Stepping Up program," McLain said.

Besides helping children receive school supplies and uniforms throughout the school year, McLain also participated in the board's annual Christmas program. "Share-A-Toy" is set up like a small toy store for parents to shop for their kids, except the toys have zero cost. "Seeing their love for these families during the holiday season was a great experience," McLain said.

"In the future, I want to be involved in nonprofits," McLain said. "I'm glad I got to work with the United Board of Missions to see the inner workings of a nonprofit, like the grant writing, the fundraising, and how decisions are made. I'm grateful I got to provide my own input in that setting."

Chasing Lightbulb Moments

Dr. Christopher Martin's infectious passion for academic excellence at LU: 2004-22.



“Oh, the Places You’ll Go!”

Most have heard these five simple words, filled with whimsy and expectation, made famous by the great, late Dr. Seuss. They have encouraged individuals to weave beautiful tapestries colored by lives full of excitement and disappointment, growth and hardship, joy and sorrow.

While traveling along his own adventurous path, as an associate professor of Chemistry at Lamar University, Dr. Christopher Martin has brought educational light to his students for nearly 20 years. His next journey will take him to Ohio Dominican University, where his responsibilities include continuing to teach General and Organic Chemistry to another set of fortunate students.

Martin says he will carry with him significant lessons he’s learned from

educating students at Lamar: “I have learned that really good teaching is not static, it’s dynamic. To be a good professor and really teach, you must know how to read students.

“That instant feedback is essential. You must process it quickly, pivot, and try again if necessary. As Stephen Covey said, ‘Seek first to understand, then to be understood.’ Translation: Be quiet and listen. As a professor, I cannot give my students what they need, if I don’t know who they are.”

His own insatiable desire to learn first brightened for him as a child, when he devoured the contents of encyclopedias purchased by his dad, spending hours and hours absorbing information gleaned from its pages. His growing aspiration to share his knowledge with others brought forth a calling to teach.

Reaud Honors students joke around with Dr. Christopher Martin on his last day at Lamar University, deeply appreciative of how his infectious passion for learning has inspired their own academic journeys.

PHOTO BY MEGHAN RAPP

“I love what I do, and I’m doing what I love,” he said. “I have never been satisfied with saying that being a professor was just a job.”

While he fulfilled his call to teach on LU’s campus, countless students have benefitted from Martin’s willingness to pass on his infectious passion for academic excellence and his chasing of “lightbulb moments”

“After seeing how much love he holds for his profession, it has inspired me to look for that same level of passion in my future career,”

said Dakota Emerson, a Chemical Engineering junior.

Armed with dedication, excitement, and tenacity, Martin arrived at Lamar University in July 2004 ready to teach and conduct research. Interested in photochemistry on biologically active systems, he taught his Reaud Honors research students how using light creates changes in substances.

Every chance he can, he relates his research to his teaching to demonstrate to his students that real science happens today, not just in their textbooks.

“I believe in the adage, ‘Give a man a fish, he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, he eats for a lifetime.’ I strive to convince students that learning is fun and want them to want to learn more. I’m successful when my students succeed,” he said.

“Dr. Martin’s teaching increased my confidence and helped me improve my problem solving and verbal communication skills,” said Menna Elsaka, a Chemistry and Biochemistry Pre-Med graduate (Class of 2022). “He was instrumental in changing our bad habits as students. I learned how to refine points, communicate more efficiently, and became a better learner overall.”

Elsaka’s appreciation for the chemistry professor was reflected by her Reaud Honors peers, when the Honors Student Association honored Martin as “Honors Professor of the Year” in 2021.

Touched by the student recognition, Martin reciprocated his respect for the community of high-achieving students, saying, “The honors college provides an excellent opportunity to keep peer support and like-minded individuals together, while simultaneously providing mutual mental engagement.”

Encouraged by the honors college to seek growth and learning opportunities during their undergraduate years, honors students frequently develop deeper connections that begin in the classroom and evolve from professor-student to mentor-mentee relationships. Martin’s classroom inspired many such relationships.

“Being in his Honors Organic Chemistry section, I was able to get to know him more as a person rather than a professor. Hearing about his life—how he became a professor, his motivation, and the love for his family—is all very inspirational. It pushes me to be the best version of myself academically and personally. I want to be able to adjust, overcome, learn, and succeed just like him,” said Morgan Luke, a Biochemistry Pre-Med sophomore.

“I was able to get to know him more as a person rather than a professor.... I want to be able to adjust, overcome, learn, and succeed just like him.”

Carly Theriot, a Biology Pre-Med junior mentored by Martin as a research student, said, “He has pushed me to truly believe that I am capable of doing the big things I want to do. My dream is to become a doctor, and he has never once questioned that dream or made me feel like I could not do it. He always just encouraged me and offered his support in any way he could.”

Never expecting more from his students than he does of himself, Martin said, “I give everything because I do not want to let my students down. How I act, how high I set the bar for myself, sets the bar high for them too.”

As one of his current Honors Organic Chemistry students, I, too, can attest to the superior quality and high standards of distinction and motivation Martin affords to those he teaches.

Martin’s legacy at Lamar University will shine through his students as we take what we have learned under his tutelage and advance that knowledge forward into our continued education and careers around the world.

Martin taught us, “We must all be willing to change and grow, even when it is uncomfortable.” He also advised, “Life does not give curves.”

Martin’s energy and enthusiastic teaching style opened up many eyes in a multitude of ways. His former students will—whether happy, sad, lost, waiting, or found—carry his lessons onward to all the places they will go in this great balancing act of life.

Let’s wish Dr. Martin a fond farewell with a Dr. Seuss-like goodbye:

Good luck, Dr. Christopher Martin. Congratulations on climbing this new mountain!

As you head off to your next adventure along the way, your LU students want to thank you today.

We know you’ll enjoy all the places you’ll see.

We count ourselves lucky among the lives you have touched.

Never forget that we will miss you so much!



Imagine. Innovate. Impact. Inspire.

CHANGEMAKERS

“My motto for this past year was, ‘Become comfortable with being uncomfortable, and seize the opportunity.’ If there’s any advice that I could give to incoming Cardinals or current students, it’s to just go for it and you will do great things.”

—*Taliah Belcher,*

TSUS Scholar, Presidential Fellow, McNair Scholar, OLR Grantee, and Study Abroad Scholar

From the start of her freshman year, Plano native Taliah Belcher has been actively involved in numerous campus clubs and organizations. During the 2021-22 academic year, she served the LU community in numerous ways, including as: LU Ambassador, president of accounting honor society Beta Alpha Psi, president of the College of Business Student Advisory Council, resident assistant, and student director and co-chair for Cardinal SOAR. She previously served as secretary and treasurer for the Student Government Association.

Belcher entered Fall 2021 as an accounting and finance senior, fresh off her summer internship with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). She gained her H.I.E.P. edge by: helping First Robotics enhance its marketing and promotion efforts; learning about PwC’s strategy to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace; and becoming a better problem solver. She also earned recognition for her Digital Acumen and her Human-Centered Design. Belcher will continue to build her network at PwC when she returns next summer, as a tax intern.

Fall brought Belcher an amazing honor. When she earned the prestigious TSUS Regents’ Student Scholar Award, she said, “I didn’t expect that I would be able to accomplish all of these things, especially going through adversities and difficult experiences. But this moment teaches me that I am doing the right things, and I am on the right path.”

The path for Belcher this academic year has included earning three opportunities to expand on her undergraduate research exploring the impact of militarization on the financial and economic growth of highly militarized countries. During summer 2022, she will head to Alicante, Spain, as a Study Abroad scholar. She will then work in Stockholm, Sweden, and Bonn, Germany, as a Presidential Fellow, where she will test multiple hypotheses by obtaining data from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the United Nations. To perform her statistical analysis tests for each of her hypotheses, she will examine Global Militarization Index rank, GDP per capita, military expenditures and foreign direct investment. She will return next fall to share how her research impacts highly militarized countries that are developing countries—as an O.U.R. Grantee—and developed countries—as a McNair Scholar.

Belcher’s undergraduate research journey has been guided by mentor Dr. Gevorg Sargsyan, assistant professor of Finance. “When I’m working with Taliah,” he said, “I know that I am working with a top-tier student who wants to learn at every single minute and use every opportunity to grow.”

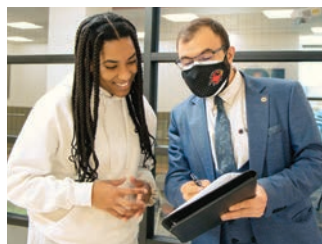
**Our Changemakers feature offers an assortment of Reaud Honors students to share an overview of how they imagine, innovate, impact, and inspire our campus community each year. This is not a comprehensive list. Our students contribute in many meaningful ways, and our college is proud of each and every one of our Honors Cardinals.*



LU AMBASSADORS

Reaud Honors students joining LU Ambassadors team in 2022-23:

Julia Barrett,
Kalan Bonnette,
Waverlee Cooper,
Tomisin Egbewale,
Conner Montgomery,
Jacob Murphy, and
Shelbie Williams.



Leadership

Sindi Castillo, Biology Pre-Med Junior:

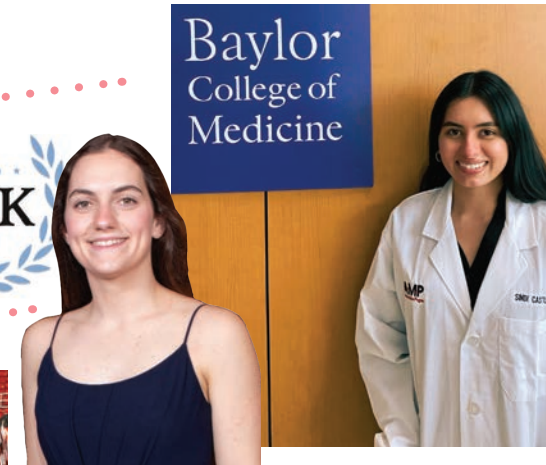
Heading to McGovern Medical School in Houston for her internship as part of the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP). Last summer, Castillo interned at Baylor College of Medicine where she learned anatomy in a cadaver lab, simulated medical patient encounters, and participated in roundtable discussions with various physicians.

Britney Brevell, Biology Pre-Med Junior:

Named Omicron Delta Kappa LU Chapter President. Lamar University become the first college in TSUS to charter the leadership honor society.

Madison Taylor, Nursing Junior:

In her role as Rotaract President, Taylor shared “Rotaract’s Impact at Lamar University” as the featured guest speaker at Rotary Club. She is also an LU Cheer athlete (shown with Dean Thibodeaux) and an LU Ambassador.



David Williams, Mechanical Engineering Graduate:

In his role as SGA Vice-President, Williams proposed Student Activity Hour for all TSUS institutions at the TSUS Board of Regents meeting. LU will implement his idea, as Cardinal Engagement Hour, starting in Fall 2022.

Ryan Shugart, Mechanical Engineering/Electrical Engineering senior
Christine Osborne, Marketing/English senior:

As founders of the Robotic Cardinals student organization, Shugart and Osborne launched Robotic Weekend workshops to teach Texas Academy, Lamar University, and area high school students how to build robots. Both are also active leaders in LU’s summer engineering youth camps.



PEER HEALTH EDUCATORS

At the LU Student Health Center, three Reaud Honors students are serving their LU community as Peer Health Educators. Their certification journey started in Fall 2020, under the guidance of Marie Murray, assistant director of Health Education Services. They continue to teach personal health self practices through social media and brainstorm the best ways to lead campus conversations on health issues that include suicide, sexual assault, and alcohol abuse.

Amber Maredia,
Biology Pre-Physician
Assistant senior

Stefany Rico,
Psychology
junior

Chloe Smith,
Speech and Hearing
Sciences and
Psychology junior



Baylor
College of
Medicine

SGA LEADERS

The Lamar student body elected the following Reaud Honors students to be their voice in Student Government Association in 2022-2023:

Kelvin Elgar, Senior Class Senator;
Morgan Luke, Junior Class Senator; and
Angelie Bautista, Sophomore Class Senator.
Honors Student Association members elected
Shelbie Williams as Reaud Honors College
Senator and Luis Arevalo as
HSA Representative.



2022-2023 HSA OFFICERS

Honors peers elected Lexus Wilkerson, Sindi Castillo, and Aleena Huda to lead the Honors Student Association as President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer; and Senator Shelbie Williams and Representative Luis Arevalo to represent the Reaud Honors College and HSA, respectively, in Student Government Association.

Caitlyn Barlow and Annanniyavani Nathamuni Suresh will lead Community Engagement; Muhammad Jabbar and Morgan Luke, Service Committee; Patricia Castañon and Luke Sodolak, Intramural Sports; Ella Oyakawa and Brenna Swanton, Social Events; and Stephanie Barron, Waverlee Cooper, and Hannah Norwood, Peer Mentoring.

Imagine. Innovate. Impact. Inspire.

CHANGEMAKERS



DR. PAUL RIZK (CLASS OF 2014), UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA:
GUEST SPEAKER AT O.U.R. EXPO 2022

Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity

Reaud Honors students presented their findings at the following conferences during 2021-2022.

O.U.R. Texas STEM Conference 2021: Tomisin Egbewale, Zaid Mohammed, Vishal Mundodi, and Nyah Sciarilla. **HASBSEB Conference 2021:** Claudia Cooper, César Delgado, Viviana Denova, Kaylee Goodspeed, Jaidyn Green, Tyler Martin, Tien Nguyen, and Chloe Smith. **McNair Scholars Research Symposium 2021:** Katherine Correa, Kacie Dawson, Viviana Denova, Kyra Rost, Ryan Shugart, and Kadie Sloane. **O.U.R. Expo 2022 (clockwise, from top right):** Bethany Edwards, Shelby Graham, Arizbeth Lopez Garcia, David Matherne, Tyler Stuck, Shelby Williams, and Taliah Belcher.

Award-Winning Research

"Best Research Award," from Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and Upper Gulf Coast, HASBSEB 2021, given to English and Biology freshman **Claudia Cooper** for project: "Beaumont's Environmental Quality Needs Help."

"Best Master Level Oral Presentation," HASBSEB 2021, given to Reaud Honors alumnus and Ph.D. Candidate in Mechanical Engineering at Rice University **Tyler Martin** (Class of 2021, shown at right) for project: "Powering Soft Wearable Devices Using Body Heat."

"Best SURF Project" and "Most Interactive SURF Presenter," HASBSEB 2021, given to Speech and Hearing Sciences and Psychology junior **Chloe Smith** for project: "A Cross-Sectional Study of the Portrayal of Childhood Speech Sound Disorder Interventions in YouTube Videos."

"Third Place in Best In-Progress Research," HASBSEB 2021, given to Psychology junior **Kaylee Goodspeed** for project: "Economic Success, Cultural Assimilation, and Indigenous Peoples: A Comparative Analysis of Life Quality Measures in Indigenous Communities in the United States and Canada."

"Best Master Level Oral Presentation," Texas STEM 2021, given to Reaud Honors alumnus and Ph.D. Candidate in Mechanical Engineering at Rice University **Tyler Martin** (Class of 2021) for project: "Live-Cell 3D Super-Resolution Imaging."

"Second Place in Best Undergraduate Presentation in Non-OUR Sponsored Research," Texas STEM 2021, given to Biology Pre-Med junior **Vishal Mundodi** for project: "Targeted Plasmid Delivery Using Surface Displayed Adhesions," conducted at University of Texas Medical School-Houston.

"First Place in Best Poster: Advanced," O.U.R. Expo 2022, given to Nursing senior **Bethany Edwards** for project: "Effect of COVID-19 on the Nursing Profession in Texas."

"Third Place in Best Non-OUR Research Presentation: In-Progress," O.U.R. Expo 2022, given to English sophomore **Shelby Graham** for project: "Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v Pico: Constitutional Analysis of Literary Censorship."

LURA

Reaud Honors students who will represent Lamar's undergraduate researchers as leaders in O.U.R.'s Lamar University Undergraduate Research Association:

Zaid Mohammed, President
Hannah Norwood, Vice-President
David Matherne, Secretary
Tyler Stuck, Event Coordinator
Tomisin Egbewale, Recruitment Director
Morgan Luke, Communications Director

LOOKING AHEAD

Reaud Honors students conducting undergraduate research this summer who will present their findings in 2022-2023.

DAVID J. BECK FELLOW: Zaid Mohammed
Fellows receive up to \$10,000 in research support and academic scholarships covering tuition, books, fees, and on-campus room and board. A 1961 Lamar University graduate and 1999 Distinguished Alumnus, David J. Beck is a Port Arthur native and founding partner of the Beck Redden litigation firm in Houston.

PRESIDENTIAL FELLOW: Taliah Belcher
Fellows receive up to \$10,000 in research support.

O.U.R. SURF FELLOWS: David Matherne, Chloe Smith, and Lily Yoder. Fellows participate in 10 weeks of summer research and receive a \$2,000 stipend, \$1,000 in research support, and \$500 in travel support.

RONALD E. MCNAIR SCHOLARS: Taliah Belcher, Meikayla Mixon, and Jennyfer Zarate. Scholars participate in six weeks of summer research and receive a stipend of up to \$2,800.

Ever since my senior year of high school, "my goals were to graduate from LU, attend a top-tier law school, and work in a field of law that is most beneficial to Syrians and Palestinians around the world."

—Ali Hamza, Presidential Fellow



Awards & Recognitions

PHI KAPPA PHI FELLOW & OUTSTANDING SENIOR WOMAN Tiffany Tran, Biology Pre-Dental Graduate:

Tran represented her honors community and Lamar University in numerous leadership roles, including as TSUS Regents' Student Scholar, senator of the Reaud Honors College, and president of the Student Government Association. In recognition of her exceptional undergraduate journey, Tran received the Bess Gentry Award for Outstanding Senior Woman, accompanied by \$1,000, from the Division of Student Engagement. Phi Kappa Phi also recognized her with an \$8,500 national fellowship. Tran aspires to be a dentist and will pursue a DDS at UT Health School of Dentistry.



OUTSTANDING SENIOR MAN Brendon Camp, Political Science and Criminal Justice Graduate:

Camp represented his honors community and Lamar University in numerous leadership roles, including as outstanding delegate at Model United Nations, president of the Moot Court Association, and Vice-President of the Pre-Law Society. In recognition of his exceptional undergraduate journey, Camp received the C. Robert Kemble Award for Outstanding Senior Man, accompanied by \$1,000, from the Division of Student Engagement. Camp aspires to work for the U.S. Department of Justice and will pursue a JD at Harvard Law School.



ANN SHAW LEADERSHIP AWARD Kelvin Elgar, Chemical Engineering Senior:

Earning a \$1,000 award for fostering a spirit of teamwork and excelling in leadership, Elgar served his Cardinal Community as president of the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE); peer mentoring co-chair of the Honors Student Association (HSA); as an undergraduate researcher, most notably as an O.U.R. Grant recipient; and as an LU Ambassador. His contributions are driven by a desire to keep diversity and inclusion at the forefront on campus by collaborating with student organizations and community partners.



Presidential Fellow

Ali Hamza, Political Science Graduate:

Ali Hamza spent Summer 2021 in Washington, D.C., interning at LB International Solutions and Citizens for a Secure and Safe America.

The highlights of his fellowship included: attending U.S. House Foreign Affairs committee meetings and congressional hearings; meeting with the U.S. Special Envoy to Syria to hear his take on current Syrian-American policies; and attending and reporting on the National Interest Foundation's event on "Syria Sanctions: The Caesar Act One Year Later."

As a Muslim Syrian-Palestinian American, Hamza aims to be a lawyer advocating for the legal rights of Syrians and Palestinians around the world.

SENIORS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Reaud Honors students recognized as 2022 Seniors of Significance: Lisseth Aguilar, Umera Ahmed, Taliah Belcher, Brendon Camp, Bethany Edwards, Menna Elsaka, Ali Hamza, Krystal Le, Aris Martinez, Thanh Nguyen, Ayo Oni, Cade Pellerin, Maissa Salibi, Tiffany Tran, and David Williams.



AICHe Donald F. Othmer
Sophomore Academic
Excellence Award
Annabelle Broussard,
Chemical Engineering
junior



AICHe Freshman
Recognition Award
Melody Youwakim,
Chemical Engineering
sophomore



Beck Fellow

After volunteering at an orphanage in Costa Rica in 2015, **Alexis Sturrock** (Social Work graduate) found herself exactly where she belonged: helping children in need. During her undergraduate exploration of her Social Work major at Lamar University, she developed an immense passion for foster children.

As a David J. Beck Fellow, mentored by Dr. Ginger Gummelt, Sturrock (shown above at the U.S. Capitol) researched “The Evolution of Childhood Violence” while coordinating with members of Congress, White House staff, and deans of HBCUs across the nation during her work as a marketing intern at the HBCU National Center in Washington, D.C.

Building on the work she researched as a Beck Fellow, Sturrock plans to pursue a Master of Social Work and begin the path to creating her own nonprofit for children in the foster care system.

STEPPING UP CIVIC LEADERS

Reaud Honors students who served as ex-officio members on the boards of local nonprofits through our service leadership initiative:

Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House:
Emily Alvarez (Advertising Communications junior)

Crime Stoppers of SETX:
Caitlyn Barlow (Mechanical Engineering & Math junior)

Leadership Southeast Texas:
Tomisin Egbewale (Computer Science freshman)

Communities in Schools of SETX:
Camille Fam (Biochemistry Pre-Med junior)

Legacy Community Health:
Arizbeth Lopez Garcia (Biology Pre-Med junior)

American Red Cross-SETX:
Amber Maredia (Biology Pre-Physician Assistant senior)

United Board of Missions:
Avery McLain (Nursing sophomore)

Gulf Coast Youth Soccer Club:
Zaid Mohammed (Biology Pre-Med sophomore)

TX Christian Professional Women Network:
Line Ydi Recinos (Biology Pre-Med junior)

Surviving Parents of SETX:
Saniya Shahzad (Psychology Pre-Med senior)

Augusta's Angels:
Jeri Wolfe (English sophomore)

Big Thicket Association:
Teri Wolfe (English junior)

Arc of Greater Beaumont:
Jennyfer Zarate (Biology Pre-Med sophomore)



CARDINAL ORIENTATION LEADERS

Sara Barboza (Interdisciplinary Studies freshman)

Stefany Rico (Psychology junior)

Kalan Bonnette (Math & Computer Science senior)

Angelie Bautista (Nursing sophomore)

David Williams (Mechanical Engineering graduate and Student Orientation Coordinator)

This summer, five Reaud Honors students joined their LU peers to welcome future Cardinals at summer orientations aimed at helping students transition to college life. As Cardinal Orientation leaders, they performed in skits, led small group sessions, informed students of campus resources and services, and assisted family members with questions. Go, Cardinal Nation!



Best New Student Org

Two Port Arthur brothers were inspired to get into crypto by their mother—and ended up founding LU's Blockchain Student Society (BSS), which earned the 2022 New Student Organization of the Year Award.

Reaud Honors students **Thanh Nguyen** (Chemical Engineering graduate) and **Tien Nguyen** (Computer Science junior) are excited about the community they have created—nearly 250 members so far. BSS not only allows everyone to gain a greater understanding of the good, the bad, and the ugly behind the crypto space, but also personally helps push the brothers to learn more about digital assets.

“BSS could potentially become a talent pool for recruiters and employers, since you know you aren't just a computer science, business, or art student,” Tien said. “You're a BSS member, and being part of an organization that focuses on cutting edge new technology could allow you to have an advantage over other people.”

HONORS PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR



Mr. O'Brien Stanley earned special student recognition as Honors Professor of the Year by the Honors Student Association.

Film and Popular Culture Professor of Communication in the College of Fine Arts and Communication since 1997, Stanley teaches Honors Film Appreciation and honors seminars, including “Marvel Cinematic Universe” this past fall semester.

His Reaud Honors students appreciate Stanley's passion for teaching, crediting him with creating an academic space that

allows for dialogue and for his inclusive teaching style that draws students in, even if they don't know the topic well.

Stanley holds an M.F.A. in film and video production from Ohio University and a B.A. in History and Political Science from Stephen F. Austin State University. He worked in corporate video production in West Virginia, then taught high school video production in Houston, Texas, before he accepted a position at Lamar University. In 2009, he returned to his narrative

filmmaking roots to work on projects with his youngest son.

Stanley's contributions to LU include helping direct the Southeast TX broadcast program, in which students videotape meetings of local and regional government entities; working on short science fiction films; and writing a book with other LU faculty members, titled *Martian Pictures: Analyzing the Cinema of the Red Planet*.

His research explores how films create a bridge to society and political science.

Imagine. Innovate. Impact. Inspire.

CHANGEMAKERS

2022 STUDENT ORG OF THE YEAR

LU's MedLife chapter was founded in 2020 by five Reaud Honors students:

President Amber Maredia, Vice-President Mackenzie Savage, Treasurer Bethany Edwards, Fundraising Officer Sindi Castillo, and Volunteer Officer Deidre Dages.

2022 PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

“Asian Night Market,” Vietnamese Students Association. Reaud Honors students who served as officers this year: Jennifer Tsan, Krystal Le, Thuy-Linh Nguyen, and Thanh Nguyen.

Turn to article on p. 3

Turn to article on p. 21

Reaud Honors College
Alumni Advisory Council

Chair Alisa Hicklin-Fryar **2002**;
Jenny Achilles **2003**; Bethany Aiena **2011**;
Carolina Ramirez Cardenas **2010**;
Danny Chand **2002**; Josh Daspit **2004**;
Stephanie Cryer **2005**; Daniel Grooms **2002**;
Joshua Davis 2011; Christine Felix **2011**;
Valerie Juarez **2011**; **Wesley Smith 2011**;
Lindsey Cauthen **2007**; Kristeen Reynolds **2016**;
Kayleigh Romero **2013**; Brittany Ross **2011**;
and Brandan Still **2006**.

Hearty welcome to Joshua Davis and
Wesley Smith, our newest Alumni
Advisory Council members!

Daniel Grooms, 2002: Contributed to honors
community in an Alum Chat, “Careers
in Chemical Engineering: From Process
Engineer to Technology Leader,” promoted
to Pilot Plant Technology Leader at the
Celanese Clear Lake Plant in Pasadena.

Alisa Hicklin-Fryar, 2002: Promoted to
Department Chair for the Department
of Political Science at the University of
Oklahoma-Norman.

Jenny Achilles, 2003: Promoted to Senior
Director and Chief Program Officer at the
Trellis Foundation in Round Rock.

Carine Ghosn, 2003: Hired as Workday
Manager at McGill University in Montreal,
Quebec, Canada.

Josh Daspit, 2004: Promoted to Associate
Professor of Management and named Dean
Paul R. Gowens Excellence Professor in
Business at Texas State University in San
Marcos. As part of his professorship, he plans
to devote time to the SCALEUP initiative
and launch a student entrepreneurship
research group. SCALEUP is helping
answer the question of why minority-owned
businesses don’t grow to full potential.

Mason Tschappat, 2005: Promoted to
Regional Capital Manager-Texas at
Nouryon in Houston.

Blake Windhorst, 2008: Promoted to
Director of Production-Research Tax
Credits and Incentives at ABGi USA
in Houston.

Raul Ponce, 2010: Hired as Director of
Product Management at MeridianLink
(formerly StreetShares Platform)
headquartered in Costa Mesa, California.

Joshua Davis, 2011: Contributed to honors
community in an Alum Chat, “Nonprofits



The Houston Area LU Alumni Party was held at Saint Arnold Brewing Company in May. Guests included Reaud Honors alumni (back row, third from left) **Aaron Lavergne** (Class of 2017), **Luke Nguyen** (Class of 2022), **Marcus Rodgers** (Class of 2020), and **Ryan Sherer** (Class of 2018). They were joined by current Reaud Honors students in the front row: Annabelle Broussard (second) and Sindi Castillo (far right).

PHOTO COURTESY LAMAR UNIVERSITY AMBASSADORS

& You: How You Can Benefit from the
5th Largest Economy in the World”; is a
Senior Director of Major Gifts at Legacy
Community Health; joined the Reaud
Honors College Alumni Advisory Council.

Thaddeaus Green, 2011: Hired as
Development Officer at Housing Authority of
Prince George’s County in Largo, Maryland.

Wesley Smith, 2011: Hired as Assistant
Professor of Pediatric Hematology and
Oncology at the University of Kentucky;
joined the Reaud Honors College Alumni
Advisory Council.

Drew Colvin, 2012: Hired as Project Manager
at Olson Engineering-Chevron Phillips
Chemical in Port Arthur.

Brandon Roberts, 2012: Founded Steadfast
Health & Wellness in Port Arthur.

Brett Bertles, 2013: Hired as SIS Engineer at
BASF in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Rachel Binagia, 2013: Hired as Senior Brand
Designer for ZofTrain in Denver, Colorado.

Bryan Deagle, 2013: Hired as Security
Technical Program Manager at Amazon Web
Services in Austin.

Elizabeth Files, 2013: Promoted to Inside
Sales Representative at Forcepoint in Austin.

Gwendolyn Mumford, 2013: Promoted to
Graphic Design and Content Manager at
AIG in Houston.

Long Nguyen, 2013: Hired as Project Engineer
at Eastman in Kingsport, Tennessee.

Kayleigh Romero, 2013: Awarded the
Mustang Recognition Award for her teaching
excellence at Magnolia ISD.

Jennifer Torry, 2013: Hired as Student Life
and Leadership Coordinator at Selwyn House
School in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Kathleen Broussard, 2014: Hired as Associate
Financial Services Professional at Charles
Schwab in Fort Worth.

Paige Hoyt, 2014: Promoted to Feedstock
Supply Manager at INEOS in League City.

Sarah Saucedo, 2014: Hired as Corporate
Counsel at AMD in Austin.

Chase Engman, 2015: Hired as Attorney for
the City of Beaumont.

Jordan King, 2015: Promoted to Program
Engineer at TotalEnergies and transferred to
Brussels, Belgium.

Jacqueline Benavides, 2016: Hired as Junior
Compliance Consultant at Loren D. Stark
Company in Houston. Since 2021, she has
also served as board member for the Children’s
Transplant Initiative.

Lindsey Darby, 2016: Hired as Campaign
Manager at First Page Sage SEO
headquartered in San Francisco.

Christopher Hagner, 2016: Promoted to
Manager of Business Intelligence at the
Oklahoma City Thunder NBA team.

Lauren Leshikar, 2016: Hired as Network
Optimization Analyst at Phillips 66
in Houston.

Jacob Martin, 2016: Recognized among the
NFT 100 by NFTNow as the “community’s
most approachable source for NFT-related
legal counsel on subjects ranging from
intellectual property, copyright law, litigation,
and entity creation.”

Emily McMillon, 2016: Graduated with
Ph.D. in Mathematics from University of
Nebraska-Lincoln.

Shelby Murphy, 2016: Promoted to
Student Program Coordinator, UT
for Me-Powered by Dell Scholars, at
University of Texas-Austin.

Kristeen Reynolds, 2016: Cofounded
Drinkicks, the world’s first sneaker-themed
beverage company.

Sarah Toben, 2016: Hired as Associate
Attorney at Aspirion in Dallas.

Zach Townley-Smith, 2016: Graduated with
MFE from Stevens Institute of Technology.

Julia Gros, 2017: Hired as Tier 1 Customer
Support Specialist at Bonterra in Austin.

Aaron Lavergne, 2017: Founded the Black
Alumni Network, chartered in June 2021, at
Lamar University.

Lukas Moravits, 2017: Promoted to Sales
Engineer at Dashiell Corporation in Houston.

Noah Roberson, 2017: Promoted to Nuclear
Shift Test Engineer at Newport News
Shipbuilding, a division of Huntington Ingalls
Industries, in Newport News, Virginia.

Jamie Stafford, 2017: Awarded the Dan E.
Wells Outstanding Dissertation Award when
she graduated with her Ph.D. in Physics at
University of Houston. Stafford’s research
contributed to activities in nuclear and high-
energy physics by using a particular first-
principles computational method to interpret
experimental results obtained at CERN and
Brookhaven National Laboratory.

Kinney VanDevender, 2017: Graduated
with M.Ed. in Marriage and Family Therapy/
Counseling from Lamar University.

Apol Joy Bodiongan, 2018: Hired as Account
Representative for Baker Hughes in Chicago.

Carlos Caballero, 2018: Hired as
Commissioning Engineer at Amazon Web
Services headquartered in Seattle.

Progga Chirontoni, 2018: Named Young
Professionals Co-Chair & Green Team
Chair-San Antonio at HDR, where she works
as Water/Wastewater EIT.

Reagan Ficken, 2018: Hired as Pipeline
Engineer at CHS in McPherson, Kansas.

Laura Fiedler, 2018: Graduated with M.B.A.
in Human Resources Management from
LSU Shreveport; hired as HR Business
Partner at Infoblox headquartered in Santa
Clara, California.

Ryan Sherer, 2018: Hired as Associate
Attorney at Daws Law Firm in Beaumont.

Nasim Abedelwahab, 2019: Hired as
Mechanical Engineer II at Blue Origin
in Seattle.

Hannah Carlson, 2019: Hired as Head of
Design at Brave Books in Conroe.

Madison Demel, 2019: Graduated with
M.S. in Chemical Engineering from North
Carolina State University-Raleigh.

Sakurah Fisher, 2019: Graduated with M.A.
in International Studies, International Peace,
and Security from Korea University in Seoul,
South Korea.

Alexus Locke, 2019: Graduated with M.S.
in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
from Cornell University; hired as Clinical
Research Coordinator at Children’s
Healthcare of Atlanta.

Thomas Norris, 2019: Hired as Software
Engineer at Gnostech in Warminster,
Pennsylvania.

David Quispe, 2019: Graduated with M.S. in
Innovation and Venture Development from
Arizona State University-Tempe; awarded
ARCS Phoenix Foundation Scholar.

Natalie Sfeir, 2019: Graduated with M.A.
in Speech-Language Pathology from
the University of Texas-Austin; hired as
Speech Language Pathologist at Methodist
Healthcare System in San Antonio.

Emmalee Calvert, 2020: Graduated with
M.S. in Dietetic Systems Leadership from
Montana State University-Bozeman.

Edward Doan, 2020: Hired as Materials,
Process, and Delivery Engineer at Procter &
Gamble in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Bra’ah Hamdan, 2020: Hired as Industrial
Engineer at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth.

Govin Kaggal, 2020: Named Editor-in-Chief
of the *Alabama Law Review* at the University
of Alabama School of Law for the 2022-2023
academic year.

Raegan Minaldi, 2020: Named to the Board of
Advocates for the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law
Center for 2022-2023.

Casey Smith, 2020: Hired as Associate
Director of Human Resources at the
Diocese of Beaumont.

Kennedy Smith, 2020: Hired as
Communications Specialist at Entergy
in Houston.

Katelynn Maxwell, 2021: Promoted to
VIPER Project Engineer at Aerodyne
Industries in Houston.

Trinity Morris, 2021: Hired as Machinery
Engineer at ExxonMobil in Beaumont.

Todd “T.J.” Senters, 2021: Graduated
with M.S. in Biomedical Sciences from
the University of Mississippi Medical
Center-Jackson.

Erin Taylor, 2021: Hired as Intensive Care
Nurse at Memorial Hermann Health System
in Houston.



Dr. Delvin Seawright surprised his mentee
at graduation in Fort Worth, texting her
a copy of the program from his seat with
“Congratulations!” She was so touched, she
invited Dr. Seawright to meet her family and
friends after the ceremony. **Victoria LaFleur**
(Class of 2019) graduated from Texas
A&M University School of Law this May.
Congratulations, #FutureAggieLawyer!

PHOTO COURTESY DR. DELVIN SEAWRIGHT

2021 – FALL GRADUATES



Kacie Dawson



Kyra Rost



Alexis Sturrock



Erin Taylor



Gregory Twing



2022 – SPRING GRADUATES



Lisseth Aguilar



Umera Ahmed



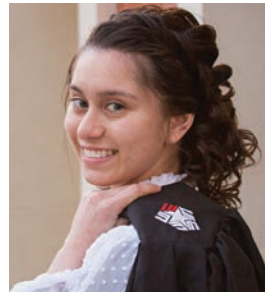
Austin Alexander



Brendon Camp



César Delgado



Viviana Denova



Bethany Edwards



Menna Elsaka



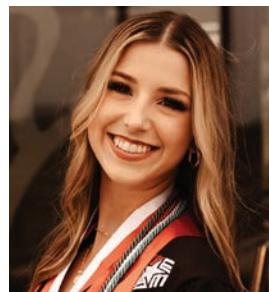
Victoria Freeze



Noah Furrh



David Garcia



Rylie George



Ali Hamza



Adelin Hernandez



Daniel Iles



Josef Kalathra



Krystal Le



Reagan Lee



Robert "Wesley" Lewis



Aris Martinez



Nicholas Mugleston



Luke Nguyen



Thanh Nguyen



Ayokunle Oni



Cade Pellerin



Cindy Rodriguez



Mackenzie Savage



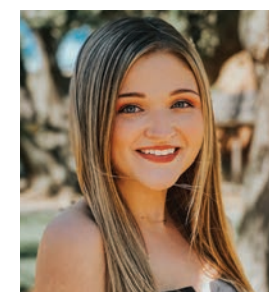
Nyah Sciarrilla



Tiffany Tran



Judith Vega



Avery White

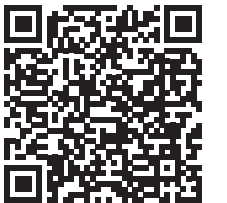


David Williams



Andrew Zinck

Celebrations of our **Fall 2021** and **Spring 2022** Reaud Honors College Graduates are available as biography albums on RHC's Facebook:



To view each album: click on "Photos" and "See All" (mobile) or click on "Photos" and "Albums" (desktop).



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.

Southeast Texas Legend Scholars



Through the Beaumont Foundation of America, young people of exceptional promise and critical financial need are empowered to reach their full potential at Lamar University through generous full-tuition scholarships as Southeast Texas Legend Scholars. The Reaud Honors College is privileged to include 13 scholars as part of our honors community.

Southeast Texas Legend Scholars (among other scholarship recipients): Austin Havard, Catherine Twing, Jule Nguyen, Christine Osborne, Jennyfer Zarate, Ailinh Tran, Seth Kees, Lexus Wilkerson, Dakota Emerson, Campbell Fuller, Tanner Weir, and Sergio Mendez (not shown, Reese Bonin).

COURTESY BEAUMONT FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

Imagine • Innovate • Impact • Inspire

HELLO

from our Dean



Reflecting Back

The 2021-2022 academic year has been an outstanding one in the Reaud Honors College!

Over the past year, the Reaud Honors College partnered with the McNair Scholars Program and Office of Undergraduate Research to promote research and scholarship amongst Honors students at Lamar University. We worked with O.U.R. Director Dr. Cristian Bahrim, McNair Director Pamela Comer, and Associate Provost for Research and Sponsored Programs Dr. Jerry Lin on a grant to support the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. The U.S. Department of Education renewed the program at LU, awarding nearly \$1.3 million over the next five years. On the undergraduate level, the program helps first-generation, low-income students participate in undergraduate research.

Another triumph of the honors college this past year was building community through the Stepping Up: Service Leadership Initiative. We had our largest group of student board members in our program history! Students served at 13 nonprofits that included Legacy Community Health, Augusta's Angels, Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House, United Board of Missions, and Leadership Southeast Texas.

This was also our inaugural year to kick off the Alumni Mentor Program (AMP). We have approximately eight mentees and alumni mentors involved in the program. We also encouraged connections between honors alumni by replacing our Facebook alumni group with a LinkedIn alumni group. We already see more professional updates and engagement than we ever did in the Facebook group!

We launched a brand-new website, lamar.edu/honors, to create a more dynamic, user-friendly, and navigable resource for students and alumni. This replaces the hard copy guidebook some of you may remember with searchable content, including a "guidebook" that links all content in one place, that you can access online from anywhere—your laptop *and* your phone!

Looking Ahead

The upcoming year will bring some exciting changes to the Reaud Honors College as we continue to strive toward our goal of becoming the best honors college in the state of Texas.

We look forward to sending students to Dallas next year to present their experiences in Stepping Up and Partners in the Parks, and to Austin, for Texas Model United Nations (TexMUN). Our biggest community event of the year will be a brand new one for our college—Honors Scholars Day. This event aims to help our community partners and LU students and faculty learn more about honors college-hosted events, honors-in-major, and honors student-hosted events. Honors college students will share their participation in undergraduate research, study abroad, and student-led organizations.

We will continue to work with our Alumni Advisory Council on programs that mutually benefit our alumni and our current students; create creative academic pathways for our students; and share our experiences with our honors colleagues in the National Collegiate Honors Council for years to come.

We look forward to continuing our collegial partnerships with the academic colleges here at Lamar University, collaborating with our industry partners and corporate relations, and connecting with our Reaud Honors College students and alumni.

Join our RHC
Alumni Group
on LinkedIn!



-Dr. Tilisa Thibodeaux, Ed.D.

Dean, Reaud Honors College & Texas Academy
Associate Professor, Department of Educational Leadership,
College of Education & Human Development



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LAMAR UNIVERSITY

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Summer Reads for Reaud Honors



BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH BOOKS

Every year, current and incoming Reaud Honors College students are invited to participate in our Summer Reading program. Students select from a list of books chosen by Lamar University faculty to read over the summer. The reading clubs meet to discuss the books during the Fall semester, and students also share their perspectives about the books and the club discussions in their ePortfolios. The above books were read by students in this summer's book clubs.