



Winter/Spring 2023 edition

# REFLECTIONS

A Marquette University Honors Program Publication

## From the Director's Desk

Greetings from Marquette Honors! This week in the Honors first-year experience class I'm co-teaching, 68% of our students said that mental health was a "significant" or "very significant" issue for college students right now, but 75% of them also put themselves on the "hopeful" or "very hopeful" end of the spectrum when asked about their attitudes toward the future. In this edition of our newsletter we focus on these first-year students, who come to us with sometimes grueling experiences of high school in the pandemic but also with impressive perseverance and hope.

A generous alumni gift allowed us to double the size of our Honors Peer Mentor Program in its second year, and last fall we also launched the new Honors first-year experience class I referred to above. Developed by a collaborative team of students and faculty, the new course focuses on Ignatian discernment, community-building on campus and off, and learning to stretch past safety to growth. Not only did current students have a majority role in developing the course, but every section includes student co-leaders. Students are also leading in our Honors admissions process, in which our fabulous team of 63 student interviewers individually meets with more than two thirds of the high school applicants to Honors – finding out what they want to bring to the program, but also serving as outstanding ambassadors to Marquette. And as always, we also owe a huge debt to our amazing Honors faculty, who in addition to developing new curriculum and offering more than 90 Honors sections this academic year, are also mentoring Honors students in internships, undergraduate research, study abroad, and in countless more informal ways.

This spring we are beginning the process of creating an Honors Alumni Board, to build connections between alumni and students and develop a stronger Honors network. We welcome alumni involvement of all kinds, so if you are interested, reach out anytime. You can also fill out the form at the bottom of this newsletter. With best wishes to all for a beautiful spring.

- Amelia Zurcher

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## NEAR WEST SIDE TRIP

The Near West Side Trip, led by older students, gives Honors first-years the opportunity to explore the Near West Side neighborhood surrounding Marquette, including the Kilbourn Reservoir Park, the 16th Street Bridge, Swing Park, and the Sherman Phoenix Marketplace.



First-year Honors student and Milwaukee native Paris Wooden found the trip especially insightful, noting that, "I was exposed to so much I wasn't even aware of in the place I've called home my entire life."

Students are also encouraged to reflect on Milwaukee's troubling history involving racism and how these issues are still prevalent today. First-years are paired with upperclassmen to share their first impressions of the neighborhood and how this experience might impact their time at Marquette. "After the trip, everyone realized not everything is as it appears or what we think it might be. It takes intentional behavior to learn something's history, seek a new outlook on things, and choose how to act on what has been revealed." The trip serves as a valuable introduction to Honors' required sophomore course, "Engaging the City", which focuses on citizenship in Milwaukee past and present.

**"It takes intentional behavior to learn something's history, seek a new outlook on things, and choose how to act on what has been revealed", says Paris.**



# PEER MENTORSHIP

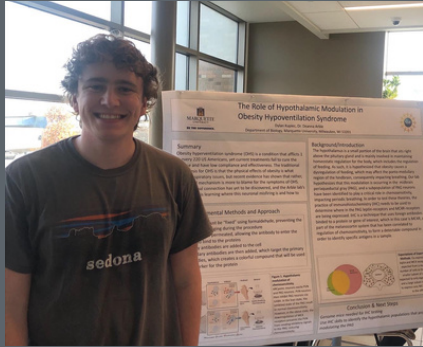
The Marquette Honors Peer Mentor Program, now in its second year, was created to acclimate Honors first-years to the Marquette and Milwaukee communities. Peer mentor groups meet weekly to discuss strategies for a successful and smooth first semester. This year, there has been a strong emphasis on getting out and learning all that the city has to offer.



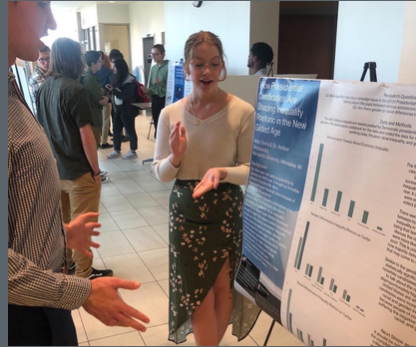
Will Eikenbary (pictured above with their mentee group), a second-year peer mentor, says "I loved seeing the city in my free time, but I never felt like I was able to get off campus and get those experiences from someone who knows what they're doing. People have this perception that just because it's a big city means you can't get to places that aren't tourist-y. That's why I'm really passionate about getting the peer mentees out and around." Will has taken their group to the Oriental Theater (pictured above), Saint Kate Art Museum, Anodyne Coffee, and a local record store.

Isaiah, a first-year peer mentee, has really enjoyed having a reason to venture beyond "the Marquette bubble" each week. "It's made me more comfortable going out on my own. The other day, I went down to the lakefront, and I don't think I would've done that if I hadn't already gone out with my peer mentor group", he says of his experience. "It's hard to make good friends when your only activity is going to chemistry, but my peer mentor group has formed a close bond from experiencing things together."

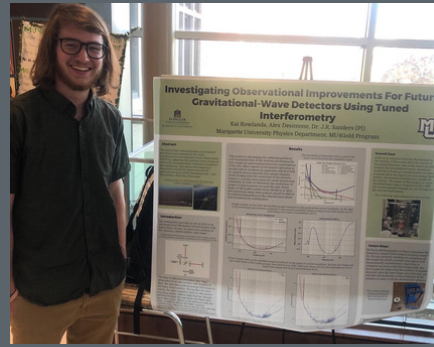
# RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



Dylan Kupiec, Biology



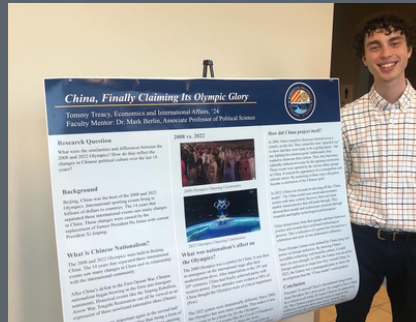
Abby Doria, Political Science



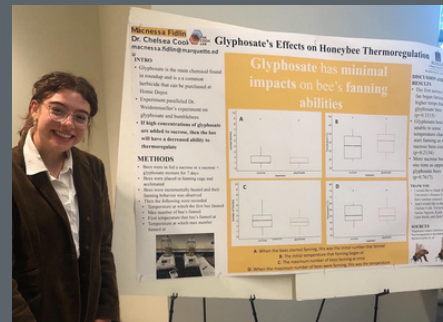
Kai Rowlands, Physics



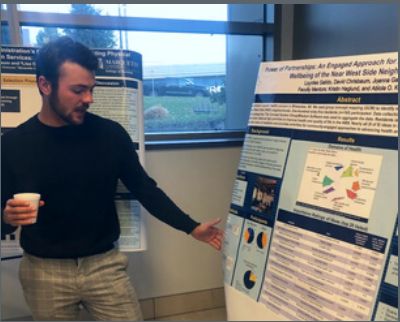
Johnnie Brooker III, Journalism



Tom Treacy, Political Science



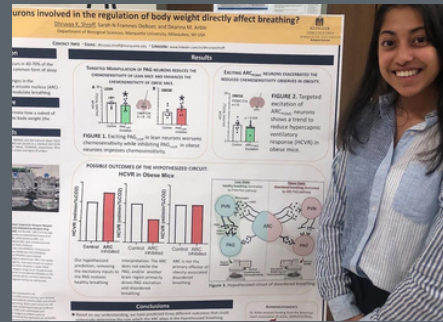
Macnessa Fidlin, Biology



David Chrisbaum, Community Health



Liz Wiltgen, Nursing



Dhruva K. Shroff, Biology

In summer 2022, Honors student research rebounded to and in fact surpassed its pre-COVID levels, as we supported more than 35 students working directly on research projects in departments across the University. Research is valuable not only for students headed to graduate school but for all students, at all levels; we know that the skills it develops and the relationships it builds the ideal building blocks for success both in college and afterward.

The students in the top row are our youngest researchers, all part of the MU4Gold Research Scholars Program, a selective freshman-entry program in which students are paired with faculty mentors in their first semester on campus and funded through their sophomore year. Some of the students in the second and third rows are members of our Honors in the Majors programs, and others are independent winners of our Honors summer research fellowships.

# HONORS + INTERCHANGE THEATER CO-OP IMPROV COMEDY WORKSHOP

## Taking Healthy Risks

HONORS CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

This year, Honors created various co-curricular opportunities to encourage Honors students, specifically first-years, to build a deeper community, explore all corners of campus, and get to know our city. For some students, this meant experimenting with activities they might not have ever considered before and learning how to take healthy risks. A group of Honors first-years participated in an improv comedy workshop held by the Interchange Theater Co-op and led by professional improvisers C.J. Guzan & Kristin Althoff. The Interchange Theater is Milwaukee's only theater co-operative and is located next to Straz Tower. Honors alumnus Pedro Hernandez '14, a performer and Community Director at the theater, helped facilitate this workshop. Pictured below is a group of students with performer and Corporate Education Director C.J. Guzan.



Erin Cavender, Honors first-year Theater Arts major, shared her thoughts about participating in the workshop: "My favorite activity was when we circled up, and one person would start by asking a question to the person on their right accompanied by a gesture to go along with the question. The next person would have to then copy the exact mannerisms of the previous person, and we went around the circle like that several times. It was hilarious when a person would laugh, and then the laugh would be sent around the circle. It was a very welcoming environment, and I felt as if all my ideas were embraced by the workshop leaders and the other workshop participants. Overall, it was an enjoyable experience, and I look forward to similar Honors events in the future!"

# Changemakers 2022

## HONORS + CENTER FOR PEACEMAKING

Changemakers is an annual alumni career panel that started through a partnership with Marquette's Honors Program and the College of Arts and Sciences' Center for Peacemaking. It features Marquette alumni in diverse career paths that allow them to live out their Marquette-informed justice-centered values. This event is open to all students at the university.



Changemakers 2022 featured Marquette alumni Sofia Ascorbe, Colleen Ross, Curtis Taylor, and Kathleen Shay. The panel was hosted by Shayla Beaulieu and Anatheia Kordosky. If you're interested in participating in future Changemakers panels, please let us know by filling out the form at the end of our newsletter.



## Reflections on a Semester

This month marks my second year working at Marquette, but perhaps more importantly, this is my twelfth year being part of the Marquette community—first as a student, then as an alumna, and now as Assistant Director of the Honors Program. As a former Marquette Honors student, I've enjoyed connecting with current students who are hopeful and curious about the world that awaits them at Marquette and beyond.

I've also stepped into a newer role within Honors. I co-taught our new Honors First-Year Experience course this past fall. Teaching for the first time mirrored much of the Marquette Honors experience, as it was a practice in expanding my own comfort zone by exploring new, and at times uneven terrain, cultivating a space for community-building, and finding joy in unexpected places. I'm reminded of some favorite classroom moments--a lively discussion on housing rights that left our whiteboard full of student ideas, occasional classroom meditations led by my co-instructor, Dr. Jacob Riyeff, as a way of returning to the peace and quiet that our minds and bodies so often need, and a reflection on Robin Wall Kimmerer's essay "Asters and Goldenrod" from her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Kimmerer, a botanist, reflects on her own college experience, reconciling her indigenous learning method of relating to the natural world with her university's lens of science. The essay reminds us to honor our own ways of relating to nature, ourselves, and each other, as this creates a more authentic understanding of any material we encounter within classroom walls and beyond, much in the same way that Kimmerer's relationship to native plants informed her that asters and goldenrod indeed grow better together, creating a beautiful vibrancy that attracts more pollinators than if they grew separately. As we step into this new season, we look forward to hearing from you, Honors alumni, across different regions, years, and experiences to continue interweaving our expansive Honors community.

-Sofia Ascorbe

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Honors Program  
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