Remember When . . .

From high school seniors writing their essays and filling out their applications, to college seniors telling themselves that if they just get through this set, they'll never have to take another final again, the four or so years between entering and leaving the Honors College can go by in a flash. It's easy for us to get caught up in our classes and projects only to look up and find that another semester has flown by. Soon enough, another semester turns into another year and before we are able to slow ourselves down, we find ourselves speeding through graduation straight into careers, families, and the rest of our lives.

While we don't have any say on how time decides to work, we can always take a moment to stop and look back to the memories of good times. Those of us currently in the program are living in the moments we will get to remember fondly in the future. This newsletter will help update you on the memories we are making; however, that's not all. We wanted to give some of those memories back to our predecessors as those future Honors College participants will hopefully do for us one day.
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On June 3rd, 2018, twenty-eight of the thirty incoming Honors College freshmen arrived on campus to take part in the annual Honors College Overnight Orientation. During the Overnight, students get a taste of life in residence halls, meet fellow Honors College members, and learn more about what it means to be a part of the Honors College.

That evening, students participated in team building activities, followed by information sessions, a trip to Tropical Sno, and the ‘Who Am I?’ presentations. ‘The Who Am I?’ presentations provide students the opportunity to share a talent or tell the others about themselves, so that they can get to know one another before classes begin. Examples of presentations from this year include PowerPoint slides about the members’ lives, cup stacking, and even a musical performance of a self-written song.

The Freshmen Honors College Dinner was then held later in the evening. Parents were invited to attend, and the freshmen were recognized by Dr. Howard Smith, the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success. Afterwards, students split up by major and met with Honors College upperclassmen in their same field to discuss enrollment for the upcoming semester. After the enrollment session was completed, Honors College members relaxed for a while. Lizzie Myers, a freshman majoring in Cellular and Molecular Biology, remembers the night well. “My favorite part of the Overnight was when we all just hung around and there were people playing board games, there were people just talking, and I got to know a lot of the people just from that.”

The next morning, students attended Pitt CARES, a program that all first-year Pitt State students attend to facilitate the transition from high school to college. After several information sessions and lunch, students were separated by majors and sent to the halls associated with their majors. While there, students met with professors in their department, and began enrollment for the fall semester.
Welcome Back Picnic

By Grace Haworth

On August 23, 2018, Honor College students were invited to attend the annual Welcome Back Picnic, held at the home of Honors College Director Dr. Craig Fuchs. Fuchs started the event nine years ago and made the decision seven years ago to move the event to his home in order to make it more hospitable for the students. This year, eighty-two hungry Honors students attended this event, making it one of the largest of the year. To accommodate for their appetites, each class was asked to bring either a dish or a drink. The freshman class was in charge of refreshments, the sophomores had side dishes, the juniors had desserts, and Dr. Fuchs provided hotdogs.

This is the first event held by the Honors College each academic year and students are highly encouraged to attend. It tends to help start out the year on a positive note. It is a great way for students to reconnect after summer, and it can also help spark new friendships.

“I think it is a great time for students who already know each other from their cohort or classes to reconnect after the summer and catch up,” Fuchs said. “I also think it is great for the freshman class to meet some upperclassmen and to see what the Honors College is about with regard to social interactions.”

“The Welcome Back Picnic was a great welcome, not only to college, but to the community of the Honors College,” according to Alli Gregg, a freshman majoring in psychology with a minor in adolescence. “As a freshman, it was so good to see my class come together and to be able to witness the bonds between the upperclassmen as we all came together to kick off another year of school!”
Lexington Peterson, a sophomore in the Honors College, is majoring in both Plastics Engineering Technology and Polymer Chemistry. During what became her first of many trips to the Kansas Technology Center, a professor showed her a bottle made in the plastics lab and she was hooked. Having always had an aptitude for math and science, Lexington hoped to find a career with meaning and was enthused by the many opportunities she could explore within this program.

As only a freshman, she grabbed hold of one such opportunity, applying to perform undergraduate research and was accepted to work with the National Science Foundation at Iowa State University. This past summer, she gained experience working with plastic machineries, welding equipment, and ultrasonics as well as biodegradable plastics. By creating plastics used for packaging, the undergraduate researchers were finding ways to make bioplastics as reliable as petroleum-based ones. Lexington appreciated the sustainability of these products, and her eyes were opened to how bioplastics could one day be part of a worthwhile career—one that, as she would say, “means something.”

Across the country, Honors College junior Kylie DeClue was participating in her undergraduate research at Virginia Tech. Kylie, also a Plastics Engineering Technology major, spent three months helping a graduate student of the Macromolecules Innovation Institute study ceramics. Her research was combining titanium dioxide with the cellulose found in plant cell walls, to control the porosity of titanium dioxide. Kylie enjoyed that these resources were all found in nature, making it an ecofriendly and biodegradable way of filtering our air and water.

This sort of research was new to Kylie as she typically works in the machine shop instead of the chemistry lab. She worried she asked too many questions; however, the graduate assistant and professor that she worked under were very knowledgeable and happy to offer their guidance. In light of the experience, Kylie has determined that the research aspect of plastics is not for her. Regardless, she says that this summer was a good experience—she learned a lot about dealing with professionals and presenting scientific information. Additionally, she enjoyed weekends either hiking, tubing, playing volleyball, or simply eating with the other undergraduate researchers.

All in all, this was an enlightening summer for both plastic fanatics. One discovered a passion for an ecofriendly application of her studies, and both gained more insight into the conduct of research which will continue to impact the plastics industry.
For any classical musician, Austria is a hotspot which is precisely why Honors College senior Hannah Overbey chose to study Music Appreciation for a month at the University of Salzburg this past summer. “It’s a music place; it’s a country that has an appreciation for classical music,” she said. As such, it’s not hard to find a musical performance in Salzburg. “There’s a lot of accordions,” Hannah said, laughing. Whether indoor or outdoor, a classical music concert can be found every night.

Prior to studying in Austria, Hannah liked that this country spoke German, had a thriving musical culture, and was the setting for The Sound of Music. She also found Austria “off-the-beaten-path.” She was able to go on many day-long excursions, avoiding tourist traps by choosing to explore many of the natural wonders. Hannah bought a bicycle, “the best investment [she made],” and biked about thirty miles one day. “One weekend I took myself to a national park in Germany, and I went hiking in the Alps. Another day, I took a trip to Hallstätter See.” The crystal clear lake was cold, but that didn’t stop Hannah from a refreshing swim and a drink of the cool water.

Another of Hannah’s favorite memories was attending her first live performance of Mozart’s opera The Magic Flute. Fondly she recounted, “That was just surreal to me; I thought, ‘This is the first time I’m seeing The Magic Flute, I’m seeing a professional group do it, and I’m in Vienna. I’m here where it all happened.’” Other music-related highlights include a visit to Mozart’s house, seeing the filming locations of The Sound of Music, and the morbid yet noteworthy view from her window—settled behind St. Sebastian’s church, which was connected to her hostel, was a cemetery with the graves of famous archbishops as well as Constanze and Leopold Mozart.

On a more lively note, many European countries are known for their delicious food, and Austria is no exception. Hannah raved about the sausage stands, especially the cheese-filled sausage Käsekrainer. She also enjoyed Spinatknödel and wiener schnitzel comparing the latter to chicken fried steak. “Café culture in Austria is a big deal.” Not only are cafés a good place to eat and socialize, but as Hannah found out after a rainstorm, are also good weather.
indicators. “When you see the umbrellas come down from the cafés, you know you need to run.”

Hannah also spent time in London, Munich, and Vienna on her way to Salzburg. “London was cool; I saw the rehearsal of the Trooping of the Colours, which was awesome. They had a marching band come through, but the marching band wasn’t a marching band—they rode horses and played, which was wild!”

Hannah thoroughly enjoyed her study abroad trip to this gorgeous Alpine country, and felt that her immersion in Austrian culture enriched her deep appreciation of classical music.

Trash Bags, Duct Tape, and Ingenuity: Gorilla Games

By Shelby Thompson

This year marked the 35th annual Gorilla Games, a longstanding Pitt State Homecoming tradition. Once again, competing organizations were challenged to construct functional rafts, using only materials specified by the Homecoming Committee; rafts were put to the test in a heated raft race! On October 16th, sophomore Andrew Chesney and freshman Zoey Rankin, ventured out onto the University Lake in the raft they assembled alongside their team of Honors College peers.

Sam Eddington, freshman, said that when considering the design of the boat, the team focused on size and speed. It was important that both Andrew and Zoey would fit comfortably inside the raft. “We wanted pointed ends to help with speed,” Eddington said. “We also wanted to make sure it was water-proof which is why it was covered in trash bags and duct tape.”

Lexi Houser, a sophomore studying graphic communication, led the team that was mostly comprised of biology and chemistry majors, having no prospective engineers. She said, “As an organization, we value learning inside and outside of the classroom… doing the math and research to make a cardboard canoe was a learning opportunity none of us ever expected to have!” The final product was shaped similarly to a canoe and was assembled using cardboard, trash bags, duct tape, and plenty of ingenuity!

In the end, the Honors College won their heat and came in 3rd place overall—good job team!
Pumpkin Carving
By Lauren Bryan

On October 30, 2018, Honors College members were invited to attend the annual pumpkin carving contest and Halloween party held at Honors College Director Dr. Craig Fuchs’ home. Despite the rainy weather, the celebration continued with plenty of delicious snacks, creative costumes, and spooky jack-o’-lanterns. With pizzas galore and a variety of cookies and sweet treats, the event was already off to a great start. As more and more students arrived, a wide range of costumes could be seen, from the famous artist Frida Kahlo to the crime-solving pup Scooby Doo. These students competed in the first ever competition for Best Costume, and in the end, freshman Allen Davis won the title. More noteworthy, however, was the long-running pumpkin carving contest. This year’s contest is most significant as it marks the first time in history that the town of Pittsburg ran out of pumpkins. “I went to both Walmarts near campus and couldn’t find any pumpkins, so when I saw a butternut squash, I thought, ‘Hey this will work!’” laughed freshman Grace Haworth. “I also thought about carving a watermelon, but I thought the squash was more fitting. It was surprisingly easy to carve into!” For those who were lucky enough to snag a pumpkin before the shortage, traditional carving continued. Sophomores Josh Tegarden and Edith Sigler were awarded the honors of Scariest and Most Creative Pumpkins respectively. Overall, this annual event creates a great opportunity for students to come together and celebrate Halloween with their peers.

Building Experience in Florida
By Emerson Cochran

As a triple major, Honors College sophomore Chris Wernimont could probably use a vacation; however, the Architectural Manufacturing Management Technology (AMMT), Marketing, and Management major’s trip to North Port, Florida this past summer was anything but. From May to August, Chris gained work experience as an intern for Adams Group, a company specializing in the manufacturing
and installation of interior architectural casework.

As an intern, Chris began in manufacturing. Here, he spent a few weeks in custom fabrication, working on creative projects such as one-of-a-kind desks. Afterwards, he served as a machine operator, working with the kinds machines he’ll continuously use throughout his career. Chris also got to experience work on the corporate side, shadowing drafters and engineers as well as project and installation managers. Having been trained in drafting techniques, he helped work on a high-profile baseball stadium contracted with Adam's Group.

Prior to the internship, Chris says his professional goals were to start his own residential wood product manufacturing business, although his time with Adams Group raised his awareness of their successful and fulfilling industry. Having benefited from this new perspective, his advice to other students considering internships is to just do it. Whether it involves a temporary move to a different state or local work experience in a field of interest, internships can give students a realistic viewpoint on the work environment. As Chris put it, “Being able to see what your future job is like for an extended amount of time is something you simply can’t find in a classroom setting.”

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**Homecoming:**

**Honors College in Court**

*By Sarah Case*

After a week of festivities, Pittsburg State's annual football homecoming game took place on October 20th. Two days prior, the Honors College Association got to celebrate two of its members being voted into the Homecoming Court: Ryan Asauskas, representing the Honors College, and Maddy Beasley, an Honors College member representing Sigma Alpha Iota.

This year, the Honors College Association nominated Ryan as well as Shelby Thompson, a senior majoring in psychology. Shelby said, “I was shocked to be nominated, but I felt very honored and humbled.” Once nominated, homecoming candidates go through a rigorous process: they must submit short essays, answering questions such as why they believe they should be King or Queen and why they value Pittsburg State, and they must create resumes pertaining to their leadership, community service, and awards. Based off these submissions, they are all individually scored, and the top twenty-four candidates
The Pitt Project 2018: Outstanding Community Impact

By Gretchen Reed

On Saturday, October 26th, Honors College students alongside a variety of students from all over campus, gathered to participate in the Pitt Project. The Pitt Project is an annual event hosted by the Honors College that encourages students to team up to give back to the Pittsburg community by assisting residents with various housework and yard work tasks that they might not otherwise be able to complete. Audrey Dainty, an Honors College junior in Graphic Design, explains that the Pitt Project “is a great way for the Honors College to be involved with the community to not only let them know more about this organization, but also to serve the people who are so engaged with Pittsburg and the university.”

Since its inception six years ago, this project has positively impacted Honors College students in a variety of ways. Allie Evans, an Honors College sophomore in nursing, has been particularly affected by her experiences with the project saying, “I have done the Pitt Project for two years now, and it is always rewarding and fun for both parties involved because when the people we help are so nice, it doesn’t even feel like work.”

The specific houses that participants are assigned to assist are almost always alumni of the university or outstanding community members and all are especially grateful and kind people. They are also often people who take great pride in their homes and yards but can no longer maintain the level of care that they had previously. Katie Compton, an Honors College sophomore in Pre-Veterinary Science, explains that “[this experience] felt really rewarding because [our community] was so appreciative of what we did for them. One woman didn’t have anyone else to help her with her beloved garden, so it was nice to be able to help her. Also, she gave us cookies which is always a plus!”

This year’s Pitt Project was definitely a positive and impactful experience for members of the Honors College, other students of the university, and the Pittsburg community as a whole, and our members are already excited to see what we can offer the community when the next Pitt Project comes around.
Sand Volleyball Social

By Camille Wallace

On September 20, 2018, the Honors College Association (HCA) gathered for our second social event of the semester. The Events Team took advantage of the prolonged summer weather, organizing a sand volleyball get-together at Schlanger Park, with assorted food (for those less athletically inclined to munch on as they spectated). Throughout the evening, exactly half of the HCA attended, making this event one of the largest yet this year! Gretchen Reed, a senior who still attends as many social events as she can, explained her experience saying, “It was nice to see everyone before our schedules got busy!”

Part of the group enjoyed snacking on wontons, chips, and other finger foods while watching peers dive for and volley the ball back and forth. Dr. Fuchs himself chose to watch the game from a folding chair and take the time to catch up with students. Aside from volleyball, cornhole and Frisbee also kept people involved and on their feet!

Overall, the event successfully gathered a large number of HCA students together, providing a great opportunity for everyone to just relax and mingle!

Honors College Student Finds Self and Santa Clause on Trip to Finland

By Amanda Trout

Where can you go to experience not only a winter wonderland, but also an adventure? Look no further than the city of Oulu, Finland—a town of over 200,000 people with, as Honors College junior Riley Gordon would say, “a feel like the town of Pittsburg.” This is one of the factors that made Oulu the perfect place for Riley to travel to as part of a Pitt State study abroad exchange program.

While in Finland, Gordon was able to take many classes within her major (Elementary Education), including “Early Childhood Care in Finland and Other Countries” as well as “Teaching and Educational Interactions.”

“Both were packed with information, but they were starkly different from each other,” Gordon tells us. “In Early Childhood, each series was taught by a different professor, while Teaching and Education was taught by one professor through discussion, lecture, and textbook readings.”
Gordon also participated in many “non-traditional credit” programs while in Finland, volunteering at the Asylum Seekers Reception Center in Oulu and spending a total of fifty-seven hours practicing with a middle school teacher at the only English-speaking school in the area. She claims the latter volunteer opportunity as an experience that was most beneficial to her education studies.

During free time, Gordon made sure to travel to many of the countries surrounding Finland, including Sweden, Norway, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Germany, and The Netherlands. She also brushed up on her cooking and baking skills while in her living quarters and hung out with her new international friends. Her group also participated in many Finnish daily activities like ice hole fishing and swimming, skiing, sledding, sauna-time, and coffee drinking.

“All of these things I did once or twice,” says Gordon, “with the exception of the sauna and coffee—I did those two things as much as possible!”

In her travels, Gordon saw the Northern Lights, the real Santa Claus, hundreds of reindeer, Lapland, and a unique Finnish custom known as Polar Bear Pitching, which consists of entrepreneurs presenting business ideas while swimming in an ice hole and wearing a swimsuit.

“I think Polar Bear Pitching is a good representation of the Finnish culture to persist and be tough,” Gordon explains. “It’s a great example of Finnish Sisu, an attribute claimed by Finnish society meaning, ‘stoic determination, tenacity of purpose, grit, bravery, resilience and hardiness. I see this as awe-inspiring and find it amazing that the Finnish hold themselves to such a standard.’

When asked to name her biggest takeaway from the trip, Gordon became very excited to share her answer. “My biggest takeaway from my semester abroad was self-empowerment. Going out on your own and immersing yourself in a new culture for five months teaches you a lot about your identity. My experience changed my global outlook and opened my eyes to the extreme diversity within our world.”

For this college student, traveling to Finland helped her to find herself while giving her experiences that she will remember for a lifetime. Gordon ended our interview with a message for students that are thinking about studying abroad in the future:

“Now is the time to take these opportunities. Your four years of college go quick. Don’t miss your shot, go abroad and find yourself!”