

HONORS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019

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LOVELETTER TO PITTSTATE'S HCA

Dozens of students from all different places, the kids of the Honors College range widely in personalities, hobbies, and dreams. We span multitudes of different majors. Our involvement ranges from student government to heads of Greek life. We are unique individuals who often find ourselves pushing to the front of the pack. In most circumstances, this could be rather difficult. However, through this organization, we have been brought together through our shared determination, intelligence, and drive to make the community better. We are supported by like-minded individuals who are not only associates, but friends, roommates, partners, and family. No matter what we go through in our individual collegiate journeys, we know there will always be people there to help. The Honors College has given us this opportunity, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

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Overnight Orientation- Edith Sigler

On June 2nd, 2019, almost all of the thirty incoming Honors College freshmen gathered on campus for the Honors College Overnight Orientation. The Overnight is put on annually by Dr. Craig Fuchs, the Honors College Association Director, and is a lasting memory for all involved. The Peer Mentors, current Honors College students selected to help the freshmen with the transition to college through a one-on-one pairing, were also at the Overnight.

During the afternoon and evening, the students participated in fun icebreakers, a trip to T-Sno, information sessions, and a “Who Am I?” show. The icebreakers were run by the Peer Mentors and included pantyhose bowling and name-learning activities like “Going on a picnic”. Emily Robertson, freshman in nursing, said “I remember the name games and how they were really daunting at first, but they were good ways to remember people. I still remember what some people are bringing to the picnic.” The “Who Am I?” show provided the incoming freshmen a chance to tell a little about themselves. This year’s presentations included anything from Power Points to a Boy Scout song to Kung Fu moves.

The parents of the freshmen were invited back for the Freshmen Honors College Dinner, at which the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Howard Smith, welcomed the new class to PSU. After dinner, the freshmen split into groups with peer mentors of their majors for help planning their class schedules. When finished, pizza was provided, and the rest of the night was downtime to talk, play games,



and try out the dorms for the night. Robertson enjoyed this part of the night and “liked how upperclassmen were welcoming and sat down to help us make schedules or play games”.

Bright and early the next morning, the freshmen attended Pitt CARES, a program for all incoming PSU freshmen that helps facilitate the transition to college. All the freshmen later split by department and met with professors of their major who enrolled them for the coming semester. All left with more knowledge of PSU and (hopefully) an eager anticipation for their first semester of college.

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Sand Volleyball- Aubri Piccini

On September 26, 2019, members of the Honors College Association met for the second social event of the school year. Taking advantage of the warm weather, some of the members of the HCA got together and played a few games of stress-free volleyball. For those who didn't want to participate in the sand volleyball games, there was a variety of snacks for them to eat, as well as for the players to fuel up in between matches. Dr. Fuchs was there just watching on the sidelines and talking with everybody. This was a great way for members to catch up with those they haven't seen in a while or to meet some of the new members of the freshmen class. Although it was a fairly small social event, with only about 40 members in attendance, sand volleyball was a great way for everyone to enjoy the beautiful Autumn weather, to socialize with each other, to enjoy many of the delicious finger-foods, and to compete in some fun and friendly games of volleyball!

HCA Halloween Party- Grace Hayworth

The annual Honors College Halloween Party took place on October 29, 2019. Dr. Craig Fuchs showed his kindness once again by allowing everyone to use his house. This year, we broke attendance records with 71 of our students getting involved. The party consisted of pizza, apple cider, and two spooky contests. The first was a costume



contest which was won by Josh Tegarden, a junior majoring in graphic design. Tegarden brought out all the stops with his headless horseman, where he used a real jack-o-lantern for a head. The second contest was pumpkin carving with two categories, best traditional and most artistic. Best traditional went to Allen Davis, a sophomore majoring in polymer chemistry. Davis' jack-o-lantern was a classic design that he made his own by using a green gourd. Most artistic pumpkin went to Tabitha Caruthers, a freshman majoring in biology and Spanish. She used a classic pumpkin to create a unique little cat. "It was fun! I got to see a bunch of creative costumes." Madison Reese, a freshman majoring in biology said. "It was nice to see people that I don't normally see in my classes."

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HCA Homecoming- Amanda Trout

Fall Homecoming at Pittsburg State University was a time for members of the PSU Honors College to shine this year. Along with several HCA students being candidates for king and queen, the HCA representation for the Gorilla Games proceeded to take home the third place prize. For anyone reading who may not know, the Gorilla Games consist of a boat race across the University Lake (or the Weede Pool, in the event of inclement weather). The catch is that any organization that enters has to design and construct their own boat to ride in. For this Gorilla Games, the boat designers and brave sailors on the boat were Josh Tegarden (Junior) and Zoey Rankin (Sophomore). It takes a lot of time and ingenuity to design a boat capable of carrying two people to the other side of University Lake. In regards to his experience as creator and captain, Tegarden has just one thing to say: “Wet cardboard is heavy.” As HCA participates in the Gorilla Games every year, we hope that the next competition will be just as fun and exciting as this one.

While the Honors College Association could only nominate two candidates (one male, one female) for the homecoming court, several members managed to secure spots as finalists. HCA members considered for king and queen included Audrey Dainty (Junior), Riley Gordon (Senior), Heather Culbertson (Junior), Piper Misse (Senior) and Dylan Gruver (Junior). Member Tyson Roderique (Senior) went on to win the crown as 2019 Homecoming King. In an interview with Amanda Trout—the writer of this article—candidate Riley Gordon told of her view of the homecoming experience. “The Homecoming Queen Candidate experience was one-of-a-kind,” says Gordon. “Being selected as a top 12 candidate and standing on the field during coronation was an honor. As I am a person of faith, I saw the process as one filled with opportunity to share the love of Christ with

others. Oddly enough, this experience just as much lifted me up as I felt support and love from my family and friends. Homecoming is such a unique American tradition and it was an honor to get to be a part of it at Pitt State!” On behalf of all of us in HCA, congratulations candidates and King Tyson. This year’s homecoming was a great experience for the PSU Honors College. We are already looking forward to next year!



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NCHC Conference- Abby Weaver

Every year, our HCA executive team has the opportunity to travel to the National Collegiate Honors Council conference. This year the group, along with director Craig Fuchs, journeyed to New Orleans, breaking from classes for a few days to help improve our program. Junior Kara Torgler described the event. “The NCHC conference is a wonderful time for us to come together as a team with the sole purpose to further serve our organization which has given us so much. It also allows us to continue to make the Honors College better and more prosperous. The conference is an accumulation of different Honors Colleges from all over the nation. Each program is different and the conferences allows for us all to gather and discuss what works or hasn’t worked back at our respective schools and also communicate new ideas to bring back home.”

The team had the opportunity to attend several presentations about how other honors colleges are run around the country. Maggie Murray, A junior executive, had this to say about what she discovered. “I learned just how special our community is. Some honors programs have thousands of students. We are very tight-knit and involved, and that’s why I love us so much.”

Sophomore Travis Linn felt similar when describing what he found great about the Pittsburg State Honors College. “The community of Honors student is, without a doubt, the greatest part of Pitt State’s Honors College. Being surrounded by like-minded students that eventually become family is extremely important, and I do not know what I would do without them.”

Along with learning what other Honors Colleges do, the conference is a good place for the executive team to figure out new ways to improve our program. President Audrey Daintey spoke about some of the new ideas the executive team came up with, and how they plan to implement them in the near future. “We have a handful of ideas that we are excited to implement and are in the process of planning already. These ideas include the implementation of wellness awareness, programs to encourage upperclassmen engagement, increased honors class credits/seminars, improved meeting structure and content, and more.”

This conference is an excellent opportunity that gives us a once a year chance to solely focus on improving our program. It is exciting, education, and gives an incentive for students to become a part of the executive team. We are excited for the improvements to come, and hope that next years conference will be just as beneficial.