Lee Honors College News

8-2014

LHC Lines - August 2014

Lee Honors College

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It has been a terrific year in the Lee Honors College, thanks to a dedicated staff, wonderful alumni, and, of course, our outstanding students. We had over 700 students compete at the Medallion Competition in January and February, in spite of truly awful weather. Thank you to all who braved the cold to come and serve as group problem-solving observers. I hope that the winter will be a little more cooperative next year!

We have now finished the incredibly difficult task of selecting 22 scholars from the talented group of competitors.

We finished orientation this summer, and we look forward to the arrival of nearly 350 honors college freshmen in late August. Thanks to those who could join us in helping these new students to feel at home at Western Michigan University by participating in our Fall Welcome “Table Talk,” an evening of discussion focused on the university common read book, Life of Pi by Yann Martel. We also look forward to the author’s visit to campus on October 23.

Our Lyceum Lecture Series continues this fall, with the theme “Engaged Global Citizenship,” organized by Shaila Rao, Associate Professor of Special Education and Literacy Studies. The lectures are held every Wednesday at noon in the Lee Honors College lounge. They are free and open to anyone who would like to attend.

Please feel free to drop by the honors college when you are in Kalamazoo, or send us a note or email to let us know what you are up to.

Carla Koretsky, Dean

I am just completing my first eight months as associate dean of the Lee Honors College and what a superb and scintillating eight months they have been! The current honors students I have met are among the most engaging, curious and delightful young people with whom I have ever worked in my long career in education. They are carrying on your tradition of excellence in ways that would make you very proud.

Now that we are fully staffed in the honors college, we are in a better position to engage with you, and we encourage you to come back for a visit whenever you are near Kalamazoo. We recently held a reunion day for honors college students from the 1990s—filled with fun and frivolity for alums and their families. We’ve already been contacted by an alumus from the 2000s about planning an event for those alumni and their families for Summer 2015. And what you may not know is that I am an honors college alumna from the 1970s, so I am particularly interested in reconnecting with any alumni from that time period.

We welcome you at any of our events and encourage you to suggest ideas for how you would like to be reconnected with us.

You can also find us on Facebook with a brand new Lee Honors College Alumni group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/489465531188146/?fref=tnf and follow us on Twitter @LeeHonorsCol.

Hope to see you soon at one of our events!

Jane Baas, Associate Dean
CREATING A LEGACY

O’Melveny & Myers LLP has a long history of practicing law and has earned a strong reputation in one of the largest economy and leading technology states—California. In November 2014, a Western Michigan University graduate hopes to add to that history as he creates a legacy of his own.

**Matt Bahleda** (2011) is a graduate of WMU’s College of Arts and Sciences and the Lee Honors College. He graduated *summa cum laude* and studied political science and philosophy. Bahleda was initially interested in WMU because he wanted to follow in his brother’s footsteps, but made the decision to attend because of the wonderful opportunity WMU offered. At WMU he knew he could pursue an education in a great environment with professors that would help him achieve his goals.

Bahleda was accepted to the University of Michigan Law School and received his Juris Doctor degree in May 2014. Throughout law school, he focused heavily on his education and earned a position as an intern for the Department of Justice in Southern California for the summer of 2012. After his positive experiences on the West Coast, he applied strictly to law firms in California and has found a home as an associate with O’Melveny & Myers.

Bahleda credits the faculty and staff of Western Michigan University with making his success a possibility and now, a reality. (Adapted from wmu.edu)

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HONORS GRADUATE NAMED DISTINGUISHED WMU ALUMNUS

**Donald G. Southwell** (BA ’73), of Wayne, Ill., is currently chairman of the board of Kemper Corp. (former Unitrin), one of the nation’s leading financial services providers specializing in insurance for families and small businesses. He has been the director of the company since 2002, has served as Chairman of the Board since 2010, and has served as President and CEO since 2006. Southwell previously served as President of Prudential Insurance & Financial Services and Chairman of the Prudential Property and Casualty Company.

In 2009, Southwell received the Department of Mathematics Outstanding Alumni Award. He is a member of the WMU President’s Circle, a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries, a Chartered Life Underwriter, and a Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter. He is also a loyal supporter of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Southwell holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from WMU and was a member of the Lee Honors College.
NEW ADVISOR ASHLEIGH WATSON

Ashleigh Watson is the newest advisor in the Lee Honors College. She received her BA from WMU and is currently pursuing an MA in Family and Consumer Sciences and a graduate certificate in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling. Prior to joining the honors college, she worked in International Admissions and Services at WMU as an admissions and retention counselor. Always an advocate for social change and inclusion, she was recently awarded a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment Grant in hopes to increase enrollment of minority and international students in the Lee Honors College.

Ashleigh resides in Kalamazoo, MI with her husband, Michael, their son, Miles and dog, Omega. She is an active member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Rho Theta Zeta Chapter. She enjoys cooking, shopping and relaxing at home.

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STAFF NEWS

KORETSKY WINS GEOCHEMICAL SOCIETY’S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Dr. Carla Koretsky, dean of the Lee Honors College and Professor of Geosciences at Western Michigan University, was awarded the Geochemical Society’s Distinguished Service Award. The award recognizes and documents outstanding service to the Geochemical Society and/or the geochemical community that greatly exceeds the normal expectations of voluntary service to the Society. Dr. Koretsky was recognized for her long-running contributions both as co-editor of Geochemical News from 2001-2008 and for her service to the Goldschmidt Student Travel Grant program. The award was presented in June 2014 at the Goldschmidt Conference—the prime forum for all recent developments in Geochemistry and related fields—in Sacramento, CA.

The Department of Geosciences at Western Michigan University is renowned nationally and internationally for scientific investigation and quality education. Dr. Koretsky, who earned her PhD from Johns Hopkins University, is a professor of aqueous geochemistry and biogeochemistry in addition to her role as dean of the Lee Honors College. Her scientific work seeks to integrate field, laboratory and modeling studies of mineral-water-biological interactions near the Earth’s surface. Recently, her student research team has worked to develop thermodynamic models to quantify metal adsorption on natural and mineral assemblages. Her research group also studies the influence of road salt on urban lake biogeochemistry.

Koretsky’s research has been supported by the American Chemical Society Petroleum Research Fund, the Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation and the Office of Naval Research.

“Winning this award was a complete surprise and a true honor,” Koretsky says.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

The Lee Honors College says goodbye to two of its graduate assistants this year. Precious Majors graduated with a master’s in Higher Education and Student Affairs after having served as an advising graduate assistant for the past two years. Becky De Oliveira, doctoral associate for communications who served the Lee Honors College for one year, is moving with her family to Boulder, CO where she will finish the last year of her PhD in English Education. We also welcome two new graduate assistants—Fareed Shalhout, who will work as an advising graduate assistant, and Devin Jordan, a PhD Counseling Psychology doctoral associate, who will take over communications.
Dr. Derrick McIver, assistant professor of management at Western Michigan University’s Haworth College of Business, believes in hands-on experiential learning. “I always think it is more effective to be a guide, and it is a better learning experience when students are forced to solve a problem and find an answer,” he says.

The twelve honors students who participated in this year’s Study in the States course “The Texas Tour,” had many opportunities to search for their own answers and to get involved in direct learning. “Look it up!” Dr. McIver repeatedly told students when they asked for background information on various companies they were planning to visit. “If we just provide answers all the time we are robbing students of a valuable learning experience,” he says.

McIver, a native of Canada, developed a passion for Texas while completing his MBA at Texas A&M in Corpus Christi, and his PhD at the University of Texas at San Antonio. “I thought showing students everything Texas has to offer—in terms of business, culture and service learning would be great,” he says. The trip—now undertaken for two years running—has proven popular with students. It combines business networking opportunities with professionals in the corporate world—primarily WMU alumni contacts—with cultural experiences and service learning opportunities.

In addition to visits to the corporate headquarters of prominent Texas companies such as Dell, C.H. Guenther & Sons, USAA and Statoil, students also visited a Toyota assembly line, an H.E.B. grocery store and Capital Factory—a collective supporting Internet start-ups. The students offered service to the communities they visited, walking dogs for the Animal Defense League of Texas in San Antonio, and helping to complete the construction of a house for Habitat for Humanity in Austin. They also took a tour of Haven for Hope, a campus comprised of more than 70 organizations devoted to providing services to the homeless in San Antonio. While students worked hard, there were also numerous opportunities to enjoy the unique culture of Texas. They visited the Alamo and the Riverwalk in San Antonio, had a traditional Texas barbecue meal and spent an evening exploring Austin’s famous Sixth Street—even stopping to watch the bats fly out from under Congress Bridge at dusk!

Study in the States was first established by the Lee Honors College in the summer of 2012. Students enrolled in these courses complete an intensive 1-2 week travel experience with a small group of their peers and an expert WMU faculty member. Students are only required to pay the course tuition; the honors college has committed to paying all travel expenses (i.e., airfare, ground transportation, lodging, meals and incidentals) for every student enrolled in every Study in the States course. These courses can also be used to satisfy general education requirements. This summer, the honors college also offered Garbage in Gotham, taught by Dr. Sarah Hill (Anthropology & Environmental Studies) in New York City, and Vues d’Afrique, taught by Dr. Vincent Desroches (World Languages and Literatures) taught in Montreal at the African Film Festival.

Honors college doctoral associate Becky De Oliveira acted as a driver and chaperone on the Texas Tour trip. She notes, “I was so impressed with the level of planning Dr. McIver put into every aspect of this trip. We were on the go constantly—and it was wonderful! The students had so many opportunities to learn and experience new things, and so did I. I would have loved an opportunity like this when I was an undergraduate.”

Honors college student Matt Olivier agrees. “This trip was amazing. I had fun and I learned so much at the same time.”
KATHRYN DOCHERTY LAB RESEARCH

Sustainable advances in chemistry seek to improve the chemicals used in our everyday lives so that they pose less of a hazard to human and environmental health. In particular, designing novel chemicals that can easily be broken down by the microorganisms that reside in wastewater treatment facilities is of critical importance for preventing the release of emerging pollutants into the aquatic environment.

Dr. Kathryn Docherty, a microbial ecologist in WMU’s Department of Biological Sciences, is investigating the ability of the bacteria in the Kalamazoo Water Reclamation Plant to degrade a suite of chemicals that could be used as “greener” replacements for the more hazardous solvents traditionally used in industrial practices. Docherty’s research team for this project is unique because it consists entirely of undergraduate researchers preparing their honors theses for WMU’s Lee Honors College, as well as an interdisciplinary collaboration with Drs. Blair Szymczyzna and Andre Venter in the Department of Chemistry. Results of their experiments have shown that the microbial communities present in wastewater treatment aeration tanks vary based on the time of year that the sample is collected, as well as the geographical location of the plant. This variation can influence whether a newly engineered chemical will degrade, but can also be beneficial for isolating particular bacteria that are able to break down particular compounds.

A manuscript describing the scientific findings of this work is in preparation, and will include three WMU undergraduate co-authors: Barbara Buehler (WMU Class of 2013), Steven Aiello (WMU Class of 2014) and Katherine Walker (WMU Class of 2015).

MAURICE WASHINGTON NAMED NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW

Maurice Washington was recently named a 2014 Newman Civic Fellow. He was one of 197 community-engaged students hailing from 36 states, DC and Mexico to receive this honor. Nominated by college and university presidents, these student leaders represent the next generation of civic leaders. Through service, research and advocacy, Fellows are making the most of their college experiences to better understand themselves, the root causes of social issues, and effective mechanisms for creating lasting change. In addition to other activities, Maurice has made a real difference by sharing his experience of overcoming various barriers to success with middle school students.

GRADUATE ENCOURAGES WOMEN IN ENGINEERING

It may have taken Fernanda Pereira an extra year to earn her cap and gown, but the chemical engineering major made use of her time at Western Michigan University.

As an incoming freshman in the fall of 2009, Pereira started her college career at WMU as a member of the Lee Honors College.

The Medallion Scholar didn’t hesitate to jump into the college experience. She joined the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) her freshman year, and began by coordinating events with local Girl Scouts, such as Engineer for a Day.

“[Engineer for a Day] is where [younger girls] come in to the College of Engineering and we do activities with them to show them engineering’s not all about cars. There’s all these different kinds [of engineering], and it’s not just black-and-white or just for boys,” Pereira said. “It’s a lot of fun.”

In her sophomore year, Pereira became vice president of SWE and then president her junior year. For her senior year, Pereira has been helping the group as they pass on responsibilities to the incoming SWE leadership.

The Society of Women Engineers has two main goals. “Our first goal is to help girls have a support system in engineering so that they stick with it and see there’s other girls in it too, and it’s okay. The second is to encourage younger girls to get into engineering,” Pereira said.

In addition to the honors college and SWE, Pereira is also a member of Tau Beta Pi, an honor society for engineers. While at WMU, Pereira has dedicated a lot of time to internships. Her first internship was in 2011 with the Dow Chemical Company in Newark, DE. Pereira found this internship while at an SWE conference in Florida, where she had the chance to attend career fairs.

From there she interned at Perrigo as a production engineer from January to September of 2011. Pereira then took a year off school to continue her internships. She returned to the Dow Chemical Company, this time for internships in Pittsburg, PA, Freeport, TX and Midland, MI.

“The scariest part of graduating will be adjusting to a different type of life. Right now, you go to class, you work on projects, you know what’s expected of you to get an ‘A’. But in a job, what’s an ‘A’?” said Pereira.

Once she graduates, Pereira will be working at the Dow Chemical Company as a process engineer. (Erin White, News Reporter, Western Herald)
SECOND ANNUAL SCHOLAR SCAMPER

The honors college enjoyed a good turnout for the second annual Scholar Scamper which took place on a cold but sunny Saturday morning—April 5, 2014. The 5k run/walk raises money for honors college student-enrichment programs, Study Abroad and Study in the States, and is a fun and family-friendly event.

The third Lee Honors College-sponsored fun run will take place on November 1, 2014—and has been re-imagined as a Halloween-themed “Scholar Scare” (see accompanying ad for registration details). Participants are encouraged to wear Halloween costumes and prizes will be awarded for both traditional age-group and timed categories as well as costumes. Join us for a fun Saturday morning! “We hope to see lots of families!” says Carla Koretsky, dean.

CONGRATULATIONS 2014 GRADUATES!

On Friday, April 25, 2014, the Lee Honors College recognized and honored our academically high-achieving students who have distinguished themselves by completing all of the requirements of the honors college. State Representative Sean McCann, who delivered the keynote address, challenged graduates to take leadership in the world, and to give younger students the same kind of support they’ve received during their academic careers. Four students received trophies for best thesis presentations. These were: Talal Almaghlouth, Civil Engineering; Emily Diekema, Speech Pathology & Audiology; Hilary Kerkstra, Aviation Maintenance; and Katie Bajorek, Nursing.

The staff of the Lee Honors College wishes our students continued great success in all of their future endeavors. Congratulations, graduates!

LAUREATE LAUNCH

Editor of the 2014 Laureate, Nichole Burchette (above, second from right), with sponsor Becky Cooper (right), as well as staff and contributors, celebrated the launch of the 13th edition. The celebration was held in the honors college lounge on Monday, April 14 with public readings and recognition of all contributors. This is the first year that the Laureate, a literary journal for undergraduates of all majors sponsored by the Lee Honors College, has been published online. You can check it out at: tinyurl.com/laureate2014
You better run . . . fast!

General Race Information
- Wear your Halloween costume!
- Start in front of the Lee Honors College.
- 1K Fun Run 9:30 am (FREE for ages 10 and under).
- 5K Run/Walk 10:00 am.
- Awards for best costumes!
- Awards ceremony immediately following the race.
- For the safety of all participants, please no pets.

Registration Information
- Pre-register by October 30, 2014 at 5:00pm
  WMU Students $10/Public $20.
- Race day registration: November 1, 2014
  from 8:00 am to 9:15 am: WMU students
  $15/Public $25.
  *A reduction of $2 per registration will
  be made for members of the Kalamazoo
  Area Runners.

Online registration: tinyurl.com/scholarscare
LEE HONORS COLLEGE WISH LIST
Contributions of time and funds from our friends and alumni help us support and expand new opportunities for our talented honors students. If you would like to provide financial support, here are some of our top priorities:

- **Student Travel Scholarships:** We would like to create an endowment ($10K or more) to support students who travel to national or international venues to present scholarly and creative work. Costs on average range from $500 to $2,500 per student for travel, registration and lodging.

- **Study in the States:** We would like to create an endowment ($10K or more) to support our Study in the States program. The per student cost is approximately $1,000-2,000 for each trip.

We also welcome contributions for honors student study abroad, Medallion Scholarships and the Laureate. To make a contribution, visit mywmich.com and make sure to designate your gift to the Lee Honors College. In addition, we welcome in-kind contributions. If you can help our students by providing mentoring, internship or employment opportunities, or by volunteering (e.g. at the Medallion Competition, the Scholar Scare 5K, or the Thesis Celebration) please let us know!

MEDALLION SCHOLARS REUNION 2014
On Friday, April 4, 2014, the Lee Honors College hosted the first ever all Medallion reunion event. All current and alumni Medallion Scholars were invited to a fun evening of socializing, reminiscing and meeting one another in the beautiful Lee Honors College lounge. President Dunn, Provost Greene, Dr. Koretsky and Dr. Andreadis (emeritus honors college dean) were all in attendance. Alumni Medallion Scholar Todd Hufford gave heartfelt remarks regarding his experiences as a Medallion Scholar and challenged the more than 400 Medallion Scholar alumni to raise $400,000 to endow a new Medallions’ Medallion Scholarship. Dr. Koretsky commented that “the event was an incredible opportunity for current students to meet and get to know former Medallion Scholars, and, of course, it was a great time for alumni Medallion Scholars to return to the honors college.” We look forward to another all Medallion reunion to be held in spring 2015.

23 INCOMING STUDENTS WIN $50,000 MEDALLION SCHOLARSHIPS
Twenty-three freshmen have won coveted Medallion Scholarships to begin their studies at Western Michigan University this fall. Valued at $50,000 each over four years, Medallion Scholarships provide a significant merit-based award for students starting college, and competition is fierce.

Some of this year’s incoming scholars received a WMU Presidential Medallion Scholarship, a WMU Foundation Medallion Scholarship or a Dean’s Medallion Scholarship, while others received awards that bear the names of their scholarships’ donors or the individuals for whom the scholarships were established.

The 2014 recipients were announced in June. The students were selected after competing for the awards in the 31st annual Medallion Scholarship Program Competition held during January and February sessions at WML. Invitations to compete were based on a combination of high grade point averages and ACT scores, and were extended to students who had applied to WMU by Dec. 6, 2013.

A total of 738 seniors from across Michigan and the United States participated in this year’s competition. The daylong event included essay writing and a group problem-solving activity for the students as well as activities for the participants’ parents.

The 51 top-performing competitors returned to campus and were interviewed as finalists for the Medallion Scholarship, with 23 ultimately being selected to receive the honor.

In addition to the $50,000 monetary award, Medallion Scholars become members of WMU’s Lee Honors College. The college, one of the oldest honors programs in the nation, enhances the undergraduate learning experience by providing such benefits as smaller class sizes, individualized academic advising and a freshman mentoring program.

The finalists not awarded Medallion Scholarships were offered a top-tier scholarship worth $6,000 over two years, and all of the remaining competitors were offered a one-time scholarship worth $3,000.

This year’s Medallion Scholars have an average ACT score of 31 and an average grade point of 4.23; eight of them come from underrepresented or minority groups. They will begin their studies at WMU in the fall and are scheduled to graduate during the 2017-18 academic year.

For more information about the Medallion Scholarship Program, visit wmich.edu/medallion or contact WMU’s Christopher Voss at christopher.voss@wmich.edu or (269) 387-2051.

Read your copy of Life of Pi by Yann Martel over the summer. Participate in a lively discussion of the book during Fall Welcome. MONDAY AUGUST 25, 2014 (8-10PM). Bernhard Center Ballroom. Make new friends and enjoy refreshments!

Yann Martel will visit WMU on October 23, 2014 to present a talk titled, “Healing Journeys: Crossing the Pacific, Dealing With Trauma” at Miller Auditorium.
**KEEP IN TOUCH**

We would love to know where you are and what you have been doing since graduation. Please take a moment to provide the following information and return it to us by mail—or complete a short survey online at [https://wmich.edu/honors/alumni/update/](https://wmich.edu/honors/alumni/update/)

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Recent accomplishments/professional activities/personal milestones

Are you willing to be contacted via email by current honors students who are interested in your career path? **Yes/No**

If yes, what topics/areas are you comfortable discussing?
HOMECOMING OPEN HOUSE
Are you returning to campus for WMU’s Homecoming October 24-26?

Plan to stop by the Lee Honors College for a visit any time between 3 and 5 pm on Friday, October 24. We’ll have refreshments on hand, as well as staff and current students to greet you and provide facility tours, including a guided tour of our new Leni Sinclair photography exhibit by Faculty Specialist Scott Friesner.

Come by to see what’s new, and what is just as you remember it. We’d love to see you, hear your latest news and be part of your Homecoming plans!

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

September 10, 2014 (12-1pm)
How Did I Become an Engaged Global Citizen?
Said M. Abubakr, PhD, Chemical and Paper Engineering.

September 17, 2014 (12-1pm)
The Need for Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Family and Human Service Programs.
Bryce Dicky, MS, Family and Consumer Sciences.

September 24, 2014 (12-1pm)
Music as an Instrument of Diversity.
Gwendolynn Rose, DMA, School of Music.

October 1, 2014 (12-1pm)
Challenges of Promoting Academic Diversity and Inclusiveness for Global Citizens of the 21st Century
Sisay Asefa, PhD, Department of Economics.

October 8, 2014 (12-1pm)
Divided Societies: Roots of Conflict and Pathways to Peace.
James Butterfield, PhD, Political Science.

October 15, 2014 (12-1pm)
 Culturally Responsive and Globally Engaged Health Services in a Diverse World
Yvette D. Hyte, PhD, Speech Pathology and Audiology.

October 22, 2014 (12-1pm)
Queer Theory in Practice: What is it and How Does it Work?
Jill Hermann-Wilmarth, PhD, Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies.

October 29, 2014 (12-1pm)
An Invitation to Question Whiteness and Privilege.
Susan V. Piazza, PhD, Special Education and Literacy Studies.

November 5, 2014 (12-1pm)
Learning With the World: Why International and Domestic Students Make Good Bedfellows. Michelle Metro-Roland, PhD, Haenicke Institute for Global Education.

November 12, 2014 (12-1pm)
Reading Diverse Texts: Exposure to Diverse Perspectives
Maria Selena Protacio, PhD, Special Education and Literacy Studies.

November 19, 2014 (12-1pm)
Dual Citizenship from a Potawatomi Perspective
Jodie Palmer, MA, Teaching, Learning and Educational Studies.

December 3, 2014 (12-1pm)
Disability, Handicap, Disorder, Impairment: Global Perspectives
Shaila M. Rao, PhD, Special Education and Literacy Studies.
“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.” —John Muir