Dear Honors Alumni, Parents and Friends

On behalf of my fellow Honors students, I humbly offer to tell my story, in the hopes that your generous support for the UGA Honors Program never wavers.

My first steps on the grounds of UGA were full of apprehension; I felt a little lost, both literally and metaphorically. The sheer enormity of my surroundings and the mass of people were enough to leave me completely overwhelmed. Having come from a small town high school, how would I carve out my niche in such a vast ocean of abstract opportunities?

It was thanks to the Honors Program that I quickly found my way. From my first “Introduction to Honors” seminar, I knew that I had found the best of both worlds – the advantages of a large research university with an intimate community of 500 of the brightest and most motivated students that I have yet to meet. I became a regular at Alumni Connection events and Lunchbox Lectures and even went out on a limb by participating in a book discussion on an unfamiliar, but ultimately fascinating topic – complexity theory. At the end of my first year, I was even selected to teach the forthcoming generation of first-years in the very seminar that helped solidify my sense of belonging at this university.

As time went on, the Honors Program continued to invest in my personal and professional development, taking me beyond Athens and out to explore the world. During my second year, I studied and conducted research on youth perceptions of the European economic crisis for a semester in Valencia, Spain with the monetary support of the Honors International Scholarship Program. The subsequent summer, the stipend awarded to me by the Honors in Washington Program allowed me to intern at a think tank in the heart of Washington, DC where I met and interacted with high-level representatives from the U.S. State Department as well as other influential institutes and organizations.

Now as one of the five new Mid-Term Foundation Fellowship recipients, I am looking forward to the spring break trip of a lifetime: the opportunity to learn about the socio-economic impact of apartheid in the cities and townships of South Africa. And who knows what adventure Honors will take me on next? Will I end up spending next summer in a language immersion program in St. Petersburg or living with Buddhist monks in Tibet?

Regardless of what my future holds, I am no longer apprehensive about the rest of my college education; I have faith in the Honors community and trust in the guidance of the dedicated staff who took the time and saw the potential in an immigrant girl from an oft forgotten corner of Eastern Europe.

As the Honors Program has supported me, and countless numbers of my friends and colleagues, please support the Honors Program Annual Fund. You are what make these extraordinary opportunities possible and your generosity is appreciated by all who benefit from being part of one of the greatest collegiate honors programs in this country.

Sincerely,

Yuliya Bila ’14, international affairs, Russian & Spanish
The Honors Program Annual Fund provides a number of special opportunities for our students. It supports non-endowed internships, travel-study, and undergraduate research scholarships; undergraduate research conference travel stipends, numerous Honors special programs such as Lunchbox and Alumni Connection Lectures, and book discussion groups; civic engagement student projects such as the Thomas Lay Tutoring program; student groups such as Roosevelt, Corsair, mock trial, and student emergency needs.

“The Honors Program at UGA has created a community for me that brings together students and professors. Lunchbox Lectures and book discussion groups have brought me closer to professors I would never have met otherwise. They also raised my awareness of both global and campus-wide events and issues.”

—Olivia Gorbatkin ’13, biology
As the breeze flowed through the cab, I felt a momentary sense of serenity. The city streets felt safe and familiar. We sang loudly as a reggae cover of Enrique Iglesias’s “Hero” streamed over Ghanaian radio. I realized in that moment the simple truth that humanity is best when we borrow from each other—when we are humble enough to share and adopt other cultures and viewpoints and opinions. Because of my travels in Ghana, my worldview actually came to include a world other than my own. All of a sudden my world became bigger, but strangely conquerable at the same time.”

—Kathryn Back ’14, fashion merchandising
Honors International Scholars Program, Ghana

“... As the breeze flowed through the cab, I felt a momentary sense of serenity. The city streets felt safe and familiar. We sang loudly as a reggae cover of Enrique Iglesias’s “Hero” streamed over Ghanaian radio. I realized in that moment the simple truth that humanity is best when we borrow from each other—when we are humble enough to share and adopt other cultures and viewpoints and opinions. Because of my travels in Ghana, my worldview actually came to include a world other than my own. All of a sudden my world became bigger, but strangely conquerable at the same time.”

—Kathryn Back ’14, fashion merchandising
Honors International Scholars Program, Ghana

Honors Internship Program

Every summer, our Honors Internship Program places students in internships in Washington, DC, New York, and Savannah. In Washington, our students have worked in congressional offices, executive agencies, law firms, media companies, private corporations, think tanks, and nonprofit organizations. In New York, students learn in a public health internship at the Greater New York Hospital Association. In Savannah, students are placed in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Georgia.

An Honors internship stipend averages $4,000. An endowment of $100,000 will provide one internship award per year in perpetuity.

Honors International Scholars Program

Understanding that we live in an increasingly global society, the Honors Program encourages and facilitates meaningful cross-cultural study, work, and service for its students. Our merit-based travel awards provide opportunities including traditional, university-sponsored study abroad programs, intensive language training programs, business and internship programs, and public service projects. Following their transformative experiences abroad, students return to campus with a better understanding of our increasingly global society and plan ways to contribute to it. They also draw upon international experiences to guide their professional and personal development.

An Honors travel award stipend is $4,000. An endowment of $100,000 will provide one travel award per year in perpetuity.
Donald and Louise Hollowell
CURO Honors Scholar
Dervin Cunningham

“No matter how high the IQ is of a man, he will still be only as successful as his support group. Coming to a school as large and as well-respected as the University of Georgia, it is easy to feel like the little fish in a big pond. However, the CURO Honors Scholarship provided me with a caring family within an unknown and challenging environment. I can honestly say that it is because of this support group that many golden doors of opportunities from personal spotlights to summer programs at Yale Medical School have been opened for me.”

—Dervin Cunningham ’14, biological sciences

A.N. and Sylvia Hutchinson
CURO Honors Scholar
Maria Cox

“In my opinion, the greatest strength of the CURO Honors Scholarship is our emphasis on the mentor-mentee relationship. For undergraduate students new to research, having a strong relationship with the mentor is paramount. My mentor not only taught me the basics of research in my field, but also helped me acclimate to the University and its academic community. Dr. Fran Teague continues to challenge and push me in new directions with my work, developing not only my research and writing skills, but also improving my work through presentations and speaking engagements. Her passion for her research on Shakespeare continually inspires me in my work with children’s literature, as she encourages me to think creatively and helps my research evolve. I am grateful to the CURO Honors Scholarship for guiding me through the mentor selection process.”

—Maria Cox ’15, English

Ten first-year students were awarded the CURO Honors Scholarship. The CURO Honors Scholars program offers academically talented students a unique opportunity for “hands-on” learning. Incoming first-year CURO Honors Scholars are paired with faculty mentors. Over a two-year period, these students engage in cutting-edge research with their mentors while refining their critical thinking and communication skills. In addition, they are building awareness of national and international issues and potential career avenues.

The success of the CURO Honors Scholars program has drawn widespread attention and praise. Since 2000, CURO Honors Scholars have won a total of eight Goldwater, one Gates Cambridge, one Udall and three Merage scholarships. On an individual basis, CURO Honors Scholars have found that their extensive research experience helps them gain a crucial competitive advantage when applying for top graduate and professional schools.

First-year CURO Honors Scholars:

Noah Boswell  Marietta, GA
Megan Chesne  Dacula, GA
Taylor Chishom  Alpharetta, GA
Melissa Jennings  Buford, GA
Anjali Kumar  Lawrenceville, GA
Mary Nuttall  Decatur, GA
Anthony Reyna  Marietta, GA
Marco Roca  Dunwoody, GA
Emily Vermillion  Simpsonville, SC
Elizabeth Wilkins  Athens, GA
Cameron Zahedi – From CURO Honors Scholar to Foundation Fellow

As a high school senior from Milton, GA, Cameron was first introduced to UGA’s undergraduate research opportunities when he attended the CURO Symposium as a CURO Promising Scholar. Selected to receive the CURO Honors Scholarship, Cameron started his undergraduate research work with UGA physics and astronomy professor Craig Wiegert. He is researching how introductory physics students’ mathematical abilities influence their success in physics courses. He creates sequenced online problems that are introduced to students in their physics classes as an additional assignment, designed to allow students to practice their pure mathematical abilities as well as demonstrate to students how the math transitions to a physics conceptual setting. Cameron is a triple major in physics, mathematics, and economics.

In addition, Cameron’s extracurricular participation includes leadership roles with UGA club sports as a member and officer of the men’s rugby team, assisting with managing the team’s budget, travel, and schedules. He also serves on the club sports executive committee, helping officers of other club sports more effectively manage their own clubs. He leads an Introduction to Honors seminar for first-year students as an Honors Teaching Assistant and is serving as a CURO Teaching Assistant for this year’s CURO Honors Scholars. Cameron volunteers for the MATHCOUNTS program, teaching math to middle school students in the Athens area. He would like to become a physics researcher and professor, and also hopes to work in policy and help make changes to benefit the American education system.

Due to the strong combination of his 4.0 GPA during his first four semesters, his undergraduate research project, and his exemplary extracurricular activities, Cameron was rewarded with the Mid-Term Foundation Fellowship. Receiving this scholarship provided him the opportunity this summer to study Farsi in Tajikistan. The Farsi language is an important way for Cameron to connect with his paternal roots in Iran. Ultimately, Cameron would also like to speak fluent Arabic to work as a scientist and leader in the Middle East to help bridge the societal gap between the two worlds he grew up in.
Paula Langston was the friendly face in the Foundation Fellowship office for 23 years. Upon her retirement an Honors travel fund was created in her name. This scholarship allows an Honors student to participate in travel-study on any continent that Paula traveled to with the Foundation Fellowship during her tenure. The Paula Langston Honors Travel Fund has reached the $25,000 mark, but another $50,000 is still needed to establish a $3,000 stipend in perpetuity for this named scholarship. This fund continues to be a wonderful opportunity to donate generously and help create a program that will permanently mark Paula’s dedication to the Honors Program and the Foundation Fellowship.

Dear Ms. Langston,

I truly do not have the words to thank you for the incredible opportunity you gave me. Thanks to your very generous support, I was able to travel the entire country of Croatia and learn about its rich heritage. In every region, we examined a different aspect of healthcare. We went to urban, rural, and remote areas. We also analyzed the health of populations on remote islands, tourist destinations, and places of war. This experience changed my life and will always impact my future ambitions. Thank you for giving me this experience.

—Chase Staub ’13, biology and psychology
Great Ways You Can Help Support Honors Program Students

1. Give generously to the Honors Program Annual Fund. Scan this QR code or go to honors.uga.edu and click on “Donate Now.”

2. Consider an endowment to support Honors students in perpetuity for undergraduate research, travel-study abroad, or our internship program.

3. Consider including the Honors Program in your will or estate planning.

4. Become a mentor for Honors Students. The Honors Program Alumni and Friends Mentoring Network was created with you in mind. Go to honors.uga.edu/alumni-mentors and create your profile (make sure you keep it updated over time). Honors students in good standing can search this database for mentors.

5. Alumni Connections are another way our alumni can give back to the program. If you are interested in giving current Honors Program students a glimpse inside your field of work, come and make a presentation.

6. You can host fellow Honors Program alumni or an event for high school students who are eager to hear more about what the Honors Program can offer them.

7. Participate in Super Friday. This yearly event is a chance for our alumni to share their post-graduation experiences with our current Honors students. We have tremendously successful alumni, and we would love to share your experience and knowledge with students who are eager to make their own impression on the world.

For questions regarding any of these options, contact the Honors Development Office

Dorothe Otemann 706.583.0698 dotemann@uga.edu
Chelsea Smith 706.542.2649 cms315@uga.edu

As I boarded my first flight bound for France on May 25, I honestly did not know what to expect the next time I would stand on the ground. I had the many stereotypes of the French people firmly in mind, as my relatively untraveled family had emphasized them to me repeatedly over the course of my last two weeks at home. According to my mother, I was in for a summer of gluttony and love, my father predicted two months of elitism and disparagement, and my WWII-veteran grandparents imagined anti-Americanism. I knew all of these couldn’t be true, but how could I be sure?

During my eight weeks in Europe, the stereotypes I originally carried with me to France were continuously refuted. This, more than anything else, is what has stuck with me from my travel-study time. I came to see Americans and the French, despite the obvious gulf between their nations’ international policies, as having more similarities than differences.

Based on the American media’s portrayal of the Islamic world, I had carried my own preconceptions about the lives that Muslims in Europe and the Middle East lead. These were shattered in one of the most memorable experiences I have ever had. Late one night while I was waiting alone for the Montpellier tram, a large group of Arab women and children joined me. A nearly completely veiled woman seated herself beside me, and I then offered my own seat to a young woman with a baby. The veiled woman beside me proceeded to jabber at me in her Algerian Arabic-tinged French. I asked her to slow down and she was surprised to learn that I was from America and not France. She then gushed to me about how much she wanted to visit the U.S. and engaged me in a conversation about American culture. Prior to this encounter, I would have found it difficult to believe that such a heavily veiled and religious Muslim woman could be so “liberated” and Western in her actions. My friend Fatima exposed my bias and exemplified for me all of the beautiful dichotomies that make each of us human.

So, while my French language skills certainly have improved to a very proficient level, I think the most valuable take-away from my travel-study has been the personal growth I experienced while in Europe. From my encounter with Fatima to conversations with French university students on the banks of the Seine, my biases were continuously challenged and broken down. This has brought me to an intriguing place, both personally and intellectually. Rather than concentrating on what I think that I know or reasoning in stark terms, now I can better appreciate ambiguous realities. Whether we are French or American, agnostic or Muslim, liberal or conservative, we are all just people. And I can’t think of anything more beautiful.

—Cody Knapp ’13, international affairs and anthropology
Honors Points of Pride

The Honors Program at UGA recruits intellectually curious, motivated students and assists them in meeting and exceeding their academic goals. Honors students enjoy small, enriching courses taught by the finest instructors. They also extend their learning experiences beyond the classroom with travel-study, internship, undergraduate research, and civic engagement opportunities. The new class of 560 students that joined the Honors Program this fall has an impressive record of achievement, with an average SAT of 1466 and an average weighted high school GPA of 4.04.

In 2011-2012, Honors students once again were highly successful in national and international scholarship programs. Our students were awarded Fulbright, Goldwater, Udall, Marshall, NSEP-Boren, and NSF scholarships, among others.

National Comparison

- UGA was one of four universities with the maximum of four Goldwater Scholars
- One of only four universities with at least five Boren Scholars
- One of only two universities with three Udall Scholars

Goldwater and Udall winners (L-R): Victoria DeLeo, Marianne Ligon, Heather Hatzenbuhler, Theresa Stratmann, Malavika Rajeev, and Buck Trible