



# THE ROUND TABLE

THE HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



## Dean's Greetings

The 2021-2022 school year has once again been a year of innovation, updates, and success for the UNG Honors Program. We returned to the classroom and campus with a renewed vigor and eagerness that translated into an exciting year.



From our welcome picnics to our newly redeveloped Honors 1000 course and continuing student accolades, Honors students have again demonstrated that no matter the change or modality, our students are poised for success. Read on to learn more about what Honors students and alumni have been up to this year.



As always, be well and keep in touch!

*Anna Moller*

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# Meet the President:

## ANNA MOLLER ELECTED STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT

Honors student Anna Moller, a junior Psychology major from Copenhagen, Denmark, was elected to serve as only the second president of UNG's consolidated student government, serving students from all campuses. We sat down with Anna to ask her about the presidency, her plans, and how Honors has helped shape her trajectory:

### **What are you looking forward to in this new role?**

I'm very excited to hold the power and influence to really make a difference to better the student experience and give back to a community that have opened its arms for me as an international student and made me want to stay in the US long-term!

### **What are your specific goals?**

I have three main goals for my term: I want to facilitate more transparency and shared governance, growing SGA's presence and influence across the campuses and encouraging more students to get involved and excited about the power they hold as students.

I also want to address disparities and increased student stress focusing on the aftermath of the pandemic and how that has changed the student experience and increased the need for more flexibility and accessibility.

Lastly, I want to push for a more sustainable culture and initiate sustainable practices university-wide.



**In what ways will this position challenge you?**

It is the biggest leadership position I have ever held, so I do not doubt that I will experience unfamiliar situations where I'm the person that needs to act. This will at times be challenging, I'm sure. Having the courage to lead in uncertain times and take action even when there is no simple solution is something I have prepared myself through several experiences and involvement these past years.

**How have you prepared for the presidency?**

Joining the Honors Program helped me realize my potential both academically and leadership wise and supported me to go more outside my comfort zone and get involved on campus. This previous year I have led the Sustainability Club on campus, been an Multicultural Student Affairs Ambassador, done research on culture change, completed the co-curricular Cultural Competence Certificate and Leadership Certificate, and changed my minor to Leadership. These experiences have collectively prepared me to take on the SGA Presidency and lead by doing but with a foundation in current science.

**How are you spending the summer?**

This summer I will be going home to Denmark to see my family and finalize my research in culture change which will culminate in two second-author publications. The research is a 5-year action research project with the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, which I have been a part of for two years, using therapy to reveal the underlying mechanisms needed for transformational culture change in the workplace. Over the summer I will also prepare for the GRE as I will be applying for graduate school during my coming senior year.

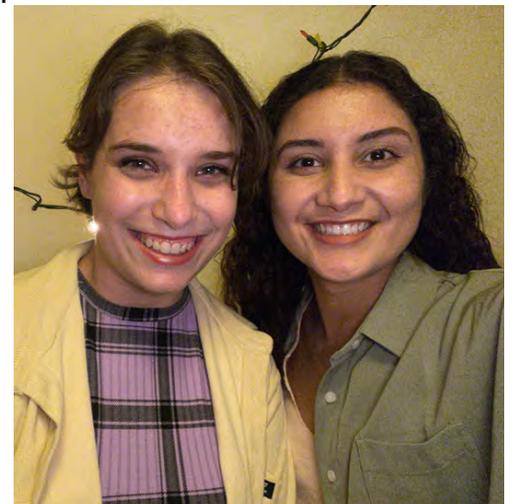


## ALUMNI DISPATCHES FROM TAIWAN

# ABIGAIL MEYERS & KAT TORRES

2021 Honors graduates Abigail Meyers and Kat Torres met for the first time halfway around the world in Taiwan, where both are currently serving as **Fulbright English Teaching Assistants**. The two have embraced life in Taiwan, thriving in their classrooms and enjoying weekends and holidays to explore. Meyers credits her UNG experience with preparing her to be adaptable: "UNG really excelled at motivating me to put my best foot forward in all circumstances ...using that in Taiwan has helped me take on challenges and not feel overwhelmed."

Torres agrees: "The UNG Honors program introduced me to academic, research, and study abroad opportunities, which solidified my interests in public service, international affairs, and cultural exchange. My experiences in the Honors program sharpened my soft skills in intercultural communication and adaptability, which prepared me for the Taiwan ETA and helped me earn a Pickering Fellowship."



# "WELCOME HOME": CONNECTING HONORS TO THE COMMUNITY

As a current or former Honors student, one of your earliest experiences in the Honors Program likely occurred in HNRS 1000: Introduction to Honors Academic Inquiry. HNRS 1000 is offered to all first-year students in the fall semester. This course is designed to build community among new Honors students and teach research and academic writing skills. During the Fall 2021 semester, HNRS 1000 was revamped, taking the meaning of "community" to the next level.

Themed "Welcome Home," the updated HNRS 1000 course on the Dahlonega campus fostered connections between first-year students and their new community. In partnership with UNG's Appalachian Studies Center (ASC), HNRS 1000 students participated in community service opportunities within Lumpkin County and engaged in research projects related to their volunteer work. Students became immersed in their new community through visiting sites like the historic Vickery House, the Mount Hope Cemetery, and the 1884 Lumpkin County Jail and Museum. Visiting these sites was a chance for Dahlonega campus students to learn the history of the place they now call home.

In early fall, a panel of volunteer coordinators introduced students to the many service opportunities available through the ASC including work with the Hometown Harvest community garden, UNG food pantry, Lumpkin County Schools, or Mount Hope Cemetery. Students eagerly began their service-learning research projects and gained a variety of skills, from restoring headstones to harvesting





vegetables. Students used their service projects as springboards for their research projects; for instance, one group of students volunteering at Mount Hope explored Southern funerary art, while a group serving at the food pantry investigated the impact of hunger on college-age students.

The Mount Hope volunteers were involved in one particularly special project: They assisted with placing over 250 aluminum grave markers on the previously unmarked gravesites of Lumpkin County's African American citizens.

The HNRS 1000 research projects culminated in a paper, a public deliverable, and an academic poster session presented to the campus community. Their posters reached an even wider audience when students were invited to display their work at Dahlonega City Hall between January and March of this year.

Notably, the students' efforts were recognized in April when the Honors Program was awarded a **Certificate of Appreciation from the Lumpkin County Historical Society**.

Society president Chris Worick, who mentored the Mount Hope volunteers, said, "The Honors Program students were instrumental in helping accomplish more in one semester than we had hoped for, and we look forward to working with a new class of students again in the future." The new iteration of HNRS 1000 was a successful and rewarding experience for students.



*We are eager to "welcome home" the next group of first-year students joining us this fall. - Dr. Danielle Hartsfield*



**HONORS  
PROGRAM  
CELEBRATES  
25 YEARS @  
PARENT-ALUMNI  
WEEKEND**



*Join us next year!*



# TWO HONORS STUDENTS SELECTED AS GOLDWATER SCHOLARS



Sophomores Anna Cronan and Alisha Paul, both Honors Biology majors from the Dahlonega and Gainesville campuses respectively, were named Goldwater scholars in April 2022. The Goldwater is the most prestigious undergraduate STEM Award in the United States. Cronan and Paul were two of only 417 sophomores and juniors selected across the nation. Cronan plans to pursue a PhD in wildlife biology, while Paul plans to complete a Ph.D. in marine biology. Both have been active in research and the Honors program on their respective campuses.



*"You never know  
The potential  
you have until you  
start giving yourself  
opportunities to show it."*

- Alisha Paul,  
UNG '24





**Kyala Shabani (Pre-pharmacy, 2025)** joined the Honors program this past fall eager to challenge herself. Read on to hear more about her first year experience!

***What are your long-term goals?***

I plan to go to pharmacy school and hope to work on Pharmacovigilance. I have been motivated by the opioid epidemic—I watch documentaries about how lives are destroyed and families suffer, and I really want to help. I hope to work with drug testing to determine side effects of drugs.

***What has your Honors experience been like?***

Last year, I took Honors English Composition I and II with Dr. Jessica Walker and Dr. Joe Seale. Dr. Walker had us work on a semester-long project, and we could be as creative as we wanted, which was fun. Dr. Seale was so passionate about his subject! I loved being in small classes with other students who were all in the program.

I also did a Biology upgrade with Dr. Neal Lin, which allowed me to pursue research on desensitization of Opioid receptors.

***What are your summer plans?***

The research I completed with Dr. Lin really helped me to get accepted into the REU this summer at Georgia Southern. I am working with Dr. Eric Gato in his lab on causes of pancreatic cancer, investigating how toxins and other environmental contaminants contribute to insulin resistance. I am excited about how this research will build on the research I did with Dr. Lin.

***What are you looking forward to next year in Honors?***

I could not have had a better first year in college—it was great, but I was very focused on my studies. Next year, I am excited about getting out in the community more and volunteering.

## Honors Spotlights:

# First Year and 9 Years Out

**John Hayes (Chemistry, 2013)** is currently serving a Head Distiller at Cotton & Reed, a rum distillery in Washington, DC. Since joining the distillery in 2019, Cotton & Reed has earned two golds and one silver medal at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition. John also led his company in producing over 7000 gallons of hand sanitizer throughout the pandemic. John was recently featured on the alumni speaker series - hear more about his experience by scanning the QR Code.



**#UNGL**eads

# HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Update

In the past year, the Honors Advisory Council (HAC) continued our work in support of the Honors Program through several events and fundraising efforts.

In fall 2021, the HAC hosted a pizza night fundraiser at Your Pie Dahlonge. The event, held on Thursday, November 4, provided an opportunity for alumni, students, HAC members, and HP administrators to socialize over dinner. Your Pie donated 20% of all its profits from the evening's sales to the Honors Program.

In spring, the HAC hosted our annual career workshop. While this event was held in person in 2019 and 2020, it was fully virtual in 2021. In 2022, we tried a new hybrid approach. On Friday, February 25, students and some alumni gathered in person in the Convocation Center at the Dahlonge campus and engaged online with alumni professionals across the country.

Most recently, HAC members volunteered at the HP tent during Parent-Alumni Weekend's REUNITE event held on the Price Memorial Hall patio on Saturday, April 23. It was a beautiful day and many alumni stopped by to chat. We are looking forward to participating in this event again next year!

Also in April, the UNG Foundation launched its #ONEUNG fundraising campaign, which featured the Honors Program as one of its projects. Funds raised through the platform go to support student research and attendance at academic conferences. If you'd like to contribute, you may do so at [UNGgive.org/oneung](https://unggive.org/oneung).

Finally, the Honors Advisory Council has had a few changes of our own. We are pleased to welcome new members Steve Smith (former HP director), John Dees (Gainesville alum), and Eavan Thomas (Gainesville alum).

If you have any questions about the HAC, about our work, or are interested in getting involved, please contact the HAC president Amy Burger by email:  
[amyburger@gmail.com](mailto:amyburger@gmail.com).

# Want to make a difference?

## Donate to the UNG Honors Program



Your donation supports Honors students in completing and presenting their research at conferences across the country. Consider supporting current and future Honors students today!

**[UNGgive.org/oneung](https://unggive.org/oneung)**

# ALUMNI UPDATES

2020

## **Dana Robison**

*Dana Robison has been working at Horst Shewmaker Personal Injury Attorneys for the last 1.5 years. She works as their paralegal! A fun fact about Dana is that she currently works alongside two other honors alumni, Madison Hill and Sharon Jackson. They have a lot of fun at the office. Dana still volunteers regularly with Lumpkin County Family Connection, even though she graduated. It's her sixth year!*

2019

## **Hannah Coltrain**

*Hannah Coltrain has just finished her second semester of graduate school at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, in progress to become a Pathologists' Assistant. Not only studying but also having the opportunity to see so many macroscopic presentations of diseases is as cool as she thought it would be. While the bulk of their academics is in surgical pathology, Hannah chose this program because of its unique emphasis of forensics and autopsy pathology. The whole process of PA school is challenging, but is already so rewarding for her. In addition to being a student, Hannah is also serving as the Class President and works part time at the WSU Climbing Wall. Hannah is looking forward to visiting home soon, and to her last semester of the didactic year!*

## **Shannon Truax**

*Shannon Truax is now back working for UNG as an Upward Bound Advisor on the Gainesville campus. She happily married to her college sweetheart, Seth Truax. Shannon and Seth recently bought a new house in Buford, GA and also recently became a cat foster for Planned Pethood of Georgia.*

# ALUMNI UPDATES

2019

## **Kiera Chan**

*Kiera Chan is graduating with her Masters in Global Health and will be working as a researcher in the School of Medicine at Emory University.*



## **Shaelyn Machemehl**

*Shaelyn Machemehl recently started a new job as a Processing Analyst in the finance department at a software company called Blackbaud! She is specializing in international projects and help disburse funds and donations from corporations to charities and non profits.*

2018

## **Matt Caudell**

*Matt Caudell recently graduated from UGA Law and am now an associate attorney at Smith, Gilliam, Williams & Miles in Gainesville, GA.*

## **Yannik Glasser**

*Yannik Glasser finished his MS in Computer Science in 2020 and has since graduated into the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Computer Science PhD program.*

# ALUMNI UPDATES

## **Mitchell Fariss**

*Mitchell Fariss is happy to share that he was recently named a Finalist for the Presidential Management Fellows Program! This directly contributes towards his goal of pursuing American public service through diplomacy and is very grateful for the opportunity. Mitchell is also in his second and final year of his Master's program in German and European Studies in the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, and is on track to graduate in May 2022. During his time at Georgetown, Mitchell has served as an executive producer for his program's entirely student-led podcast, titled "The Europe Desk." Give it a listen wherever you get your podcasts!*

2017

## **Lacey Dickens Preston**

*After Lacey graduated in 2017 she went to Augusta University and completed her Masters Degree and became a certified Physician Assistant. Lacey started her first job as a hospitalist at August University Hospital in the heat of the COVID spike in Dec 2020 and treated COVID patients for about 8 months. Lacey is now working in neurology at Neurological Associates of Augusta. Her husband, Matthew Preston, was also a Honors student (2018 grad) and he is also pursuing his masters to become a PA at Augusta University and is set to graduate in August 2022.*



# ALUMNI UPDATES

## Heather Perona

*Heather is a PA at Grady Memorial Hospital in the trauma/surgical ICU!*

## Rachel Glazer

*Last year, Rachel was promoted to Assistant Director of Education at the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, where she has worked since graduation. In August, a neighborhood stray chose Rachel to be his family; Loki has adapted to life as an indoor cat quite nicely. If you're ever passing through Jackson, MS, Rachel is happy to show you the best spots in town, including her partner's urban farm!*



2016

## Sid Patel

*After working at a consulting firm (ALL4) and then the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD - Brownfield Unit), Sid Patel has now accepted a position at EPA Headquarters in D.C. Sid is working in the climate change division/greenhouse gas reporting program where he oversees data collection for oil & gas and chemical facilities across the United States. He will be moving to D.C. in January but have the opportunity to work on important environmental topics such as rulemaking for certain sectors, environmental justice, and helping maintain data for the greenhouse gas inventory.*

# ALUMNI UPDATES

## **Sarah Orr**

*Sarah Orr just successfully defended her PhD in Toxicology at NC State University! Sarah will graduate in May and move to Atlanta, GA to start a postdoctoral position at Georgia Tech with Dr. Mike Goodisman. She will be studying the genetic basis of phenotypic diversity in social insects like ants, bees, and wasps.*

## **Ashley Hollinshead**

*This past year Ashley Hollinshead accepted a promotion to Tour Supervisor in the education and visitor programs department at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Charlottesville, VA. In July 2021, Ashley also published her Master's Thesis as a contributing chapter in the book, Challenging History: Race, Equity, and the Practice of Public History.*

## **Kaylee Todd**

*In the last year, Kaylee graduated with a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Florida, accepted a "doctor's sword" forged by her dad, bought a house and began her teaching career where it all started - at UNG in Dahlonega. Running 5Ks and going to trivia with college pals, plus being "that chemistry professor" at church, make life fun these days. Being back brings waves of nostalgia and excitement for what is to come during this next chapter of life.*



## **Rachel Perez-Udall**

*Rachel Perez-Udall is a Nighthawk again! She has been offered a Lecturer position by the Biology department starting Fall 2022!!*

# ALUMNI UPDATES

## Amy Rogers

*Last fall, Amy Rogers moved to Washington, D.C. and began a new role as Senior Content Strategist at kglobal, a full-service creative and communications agency. She also recently joined the UNG Young Alumni Board, so reach out to her if you'd like to get more involved with UNG alumni events and support!*

## Joshua McCausland

*Joshua McCausland is wrapping up his PhD with an expected graduation date in July. Joshua's thesis is on the spatiotemporal dynamics of bacterial cell wall synthesis enzymes. He will then start a post doc in September studying the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. There, Joshua's research will focus on a membrane protein implicated in virulence.*

## Jacob Dietrich

*Within the last two years, Jacob and his wife Haley were delighted to welcome two healthy baby boys to the family, Remington in Oct. 2020 and Conrad in Nov. 2021. While they've certainly got their hands full, their hearts are fuller with the sound of little feet running in the house. They also purchased their first house this past December and are enjoying making their permanent home in Kentucky. After completing a 2-year tour at the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka at the end of 2021, they are very excited to start their next 2-year assignment at the U.S. Consulate in Amsterdam this June.*



# ALUMNI UPDATES

2014

## Katie Powell

*Katie Powell is currently still living in Dahlonega and is an Assistant Principal at Lumpkin County High School!*

2013

## Taylor Vandiver

*Taylor and her husband are loving life as a family of three! Dax is almost two and a half and he is quite the rambunctious little guy! Taylor is currently teaching second grade and love working with my students!*



2011

## Helen Davies Kern

*On December 17, 2021, Helen will graduate from Dallas Baptist University with a Masters in Children's Ministry & Discipleship. She will also be starting a new job as the Preschool and Childrens Pastor at Central Baptist Church in Johnson City, TN.*

2008



## Sara Brusco

*Professionally: Sara has been selected to join the National Clinician Advisory Board for the company she works for.*

*Personally: Sara and her husband, Ryan, just welcomed their baby boy, Ryder Michael, on 3/14 (Pi day baby!)*

# *In memoriam*

The Honors Program expresses its deep sympathy on the passing of **Dr. Jennifer Lund Smith**, UNG history professor and wife of Dr. Steve Smith. Jen worked unofficially alongside Steve at many Honors events over the years. Selfless and kind, Jen loved Steve and her son Charlie endlessly. She was a warm light in the world, and she will be sorely missed.



You can learn more about Dr. Smith as well as where to donate funds in her memory here:

<https://www.andersonunderwood.com/obituary/jennifer-smith>



# KUDOS & CONFERENCES

## National Awards:

- **Kat Torres** – Pickering Fellow
- **Zoe Rumbaugh** – Boren Scholar
- **Thorin Beard** - Boren Scholar
- **Caleb Petersen** - Boren Scholar, Gilman scholar
- **Alisha Paul** - Goldwater scholar
- **Anna Cronan** - Goldwater scholar
- **Haley Menees** - Gilman Scholar
- **Hannah Menees** - Gilman Scholar
- **Anna Moller** - Youth 2030 Delegate

## UNG Campus-Wide Awards:

- **Cole Parker** - Rachel Ford Springer Award
- **Jessica Cisernos-Lerma** - Gainesville Campus Outstanding Honors student
- **Betsy Wilcauskas** - Paul M. Hutcherson Outstanding Student Award; Female Student Leadership Award
- **Madison Ammon** - H. Michael Hyams Jr. Leadership Award
- **Cathryn Allen** - Best Oral Presentation, UNG Annual Research Conference; 3rd Place Annual Research Pitch
- **Mark Cordovado** - Olmstead Foundation grant to support internship at NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany

## REUs: competitive, paid summer research:

- **Chloe Allen**, California Academy of Science
- **Anna Cronan**, University of Michigan Biological Station
- **AnaLeena Hansen**, Mississippi State University
- **Haley Menees**, University of Minnesota
- **Kate Monheim**, Georgia State University
- **Kyala Shabani**, Georgia Southern University

# KUDOS & CONFERENCES

## Southern Regional Honors Conference:

**Alexandria Hatten** - "When Love Hurts: How Romance Depictions in Film Contribute to Relationship Abuse"

**Jared Oenick** - "Novel Technique for the Isolation of Bacteriophage from Environmental Samples"

**Kathryn Monheim**- "Changing Electron Donating Groups to Shift Maximum Absorption of Caged Compounds"

## Georgia Collegiate Honors Conference:

**Cathryn Allen** - "What you See is Not What you Know: Deepfake Image Manipulation"

**Chloe Allen** - "Human Disturbance Effects on White Blood Cell Profiles of *Anazyrus Americanus* in Northern Georgia"

**Bailey Bullard** - "Testing of Engineered Biochar for the Removal of Phosphorous in Stormwater Runoff"

**Alexandria Hatten** - "When Love Hurts: How Romance Depictions in Film Contribute to Relationship Abuse"

**Anna Marie Moller** - "Eco-Anxiety and Climate Change Threat Perceptions Among College Students"

**Jami Nakan** - "Using Precision Agriculture to Assess Optimal Tomato Growing Conditions in Lumpkin County, Georgia"

**Jared Oenick** - "Novel Technique for the Isolation of Bacteriophage from Environmental Samples"

**Autumn Sniffen and Emily Mattison** - "Traditional Virtues of the University of North Georgia"



*Spring 2022 Graduates*



# Let's keep in touch!

Did you relocate? Change your email address? Exciting new updates?

*We would love to know it all!*

Scan the QR code to update your contact information and/or update us on where you are and what you're doing!



**@UNGHONORS**