



Honors Student Rowing Towards 2016 Olympics

For many students, graduation is circled on the calendar as the date when they can finally take a break from hard work... perhaps a trip to the beach to catch some waves and relax. For senior physics major **Ben Hefner**, graduation is circled for a very different reason: that's when he gets to start working hard again. And he will be in the water, quite often in fact, but not relaxing. Ben has been in competitive sprint canoeing since 2006, is currently a member of the U.S. National Canoe/Kayak Team, and has his eyes on the 2016 summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. After graduating in spring 2014 with his physics degree, Ben will get back to the grueling training regimen required of elite competitors, and will log over 3,000 training hours between



May and the ICF World Championships in summer 2015, which (along with the Pan-Am Games) will determine which countries land a spot in the Olympic events.

Ben was an Honors student and Georgia Merit Scholar in high

school at North Hall, all while excelling in flatwater competition. Ben dominated the U.S. Nationals in 2010, taking home seven gold medals. But after beginning college, he soon discovered that easy As were hard to come by. As Ben puts it, "I don't believe in doing anything halfway," but he realized he couldn't be an A student and a world champion canoeist at the same time. Knowing that his competitors (none of whom are trying to balance sports and school) might begin to beat him, Ben decided that his focus needed to be on school. As a result, he has made Dean's List every semester at UNG and will graduate either cum laude or magna cum laude. He has been working with Dr. Richard Prior on a research project with newly developed instructional technology. Their collaboration has explored the uses of the Teachspin earth's field NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) instrument, which they hope students will be able to use to identify objects by their magnetic properties. Ben hopes to present this research at a state or regional conference in the spring. After that, it's back on the water. And when the Olympics are behind him, Ben plans to return to school to pursue either a masters in medical physics or a Ph.D. in either astrophysics or nuclear physics.



Dr. Anastasia Turner Named Assistant Dean of Student Research and Scholarship

Dr. Anastasia Turner has accepted the newly created position of Assistant Dean of Student Research and Scholarship. The position, based on the Dahlonega campus, will serve to coordinate student research and prepare high-ability students for nationally competitive scholarships across the entire University. Honors Program students in particular stand to benefit from the heightened focus on research and scholarships.

Dr. Turner commented, "I am very excited about the ways in which this new position will help us to further support our outstanding students at UNG by identifying new scholarship and undergraduate research opportunities as well as extending and bolstering the initiatives already in place."

Dr. Turner, Assistant Professor of English, earned her Ph. D. at the University of Georgia; she earned a B.A. in English and B.S. in Chemistry from Wofford College. A former Fulbright Junior Scholar to Taiwan, Dr. Turner is fluent in Mandarin Chinese. This summer she completed the East-West Center's Asian Studies Development Program.

During the past year, Dr. Turner served as the Assistant Director of Honors for the Gainesville campus and the Faculty Fellow for Service-Learning for all campuses. Dr. Turner coordinated the Gainesville campus's undergraduate research conference (formerly CIRCA) in the spring, nearly doubling participation from the previous year. This summer she participated in UNG's FUSE (Faculty-Undergraduate Summer Engagement) program.

Dr. Turner received the 2013 Teaching Excellence Award for the Gainesville campus, a Presidential Professional Engagement award, and the Excellence in Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Honorable Mention Award. Dr. Eric Skipper, Dean of Honors, touts Dr. Turner's unique qualifications and work ethic: "We are confident that Dr. Turner will have a great impact on UNG's efforts to intensify student research and enhance students' pursuits of nationally competitive scholarships."

Pace Presents at International Crisis Intervention Team Conference

UNG-Gainesville student **Camden Pace** showcased his academic and professional acumen this semester at the International Crisis Intervention Team Conference (CIT) in Hartford, Connecticut. CIT training is a 40 hour Peace Officer Standards Training certified course for law enforcement. It helps officers understand how to respond to a situation where a person in a mental health crisis is involved. Camden has long been an advocate for the mentally ill in Georgia. Currently a third-year Psychology major, Camden also works full time as a consultant at the Georgia Department of Corrections where he educates probation officers on the proper ways to assess, support, and assist probationers struggling with mental illness.

At the conference, Camden presented on mental illness as a physical disease process and how to recognize the symptoms of mental illness. In his talk, he emphasized the importance of avoiding deadly force when there are proven alternatives to resolving the crisis in a manner that provides for officer safety and life-saving treatment for the suffering individual.

For Camden, “the critical importance of my presentation was to inform the audience that CIT saves lives, recovery is real and there is hope of a life with meaning and purpose for the person suffering from a mental illness if they are given access to mental health care treatment.”

Camden was only one of a handful of presenters and speakers at the conference without a higher education degree. He sat on a panel discussion with Dr. Michael Compton, M.D., one of the most renowned experts and published researchers in the field of Crisis Intervention Team Training, and had dinner with Samuel Dakana, the Commandant of National Police Training for the Republic of Liberia. After such an exciting fall semester, what could possibly next for Camden? No rest, only more action: “I plan to speak to Governor Deal's Joint Study Committee for Mental Health Access on HB 205 for the Psychiatric Advanced Directive in the upcoming legislative session of the Georgia General Assembly.”



Dees Wins Sustainability Scholarship

John Dees, a junior majoring in Applied Environmental and Spatial Analysis, recently won a scholarship sponsored by the Hall County Soil and Water Conservation Scholarship District, a group made up of local farmers and other agricultural companies whose goal is to establish, increase, and maintain conservation practices in the Hall County Area. The \$1,000 competitive scholarship is given annually to a promising student for his or her work towards conservation practices. Students must be nominated for the award and must pass an interview with the District in order to win the scholarship.

Community Service Highlights

- (Gainesville) Fifteen Honors students participated in a trail clean-up with the Redbud Project at Linwood Nature Preserve on November 2nd. To commemorate the event and the hard work of the group, the Redbud Project volunteers planted a native sapling in honor of UNG.
- (Gainesville) Students participated in the Hall County Read-a-thon to benefit the Gainesville/Hall County Alliance for Literacy.
- (Gainesville) Students served at the local Georgia Mountain Food Bank.
- (Dahlonega) Students made several trips to the Lumpkin County Animal Shelter to love on the cats and dogs.
- (Dahlonega) Students hosted a LifeSouth blood drive and helped bring in over 150 units.
- (Dahlonega) Three different teams represented the Honors Program at the annual Shantytown fundraiser in October to benefit Habitat for Humanity.
- (Dahlonega) Students assisted with set up at the Habitat Store Surplus Sale.
- (Dahlonega) The Relay for Life team raised over \$700 selling sodas at Gold Rush to benefit Relay for Life.
- (Dahlonega) Sponsored a study abroad showcase in conjunction with the Center for Global Engagement. Honors students shared stories and food from the Dominican Republic, Russia, Spain, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia.
- (Oconee) Students served at the Oconee chapter of Habitat for Humanity and the Athens Humane Society.
- (Oconee) Students participated in the History on the Lawn celebration.
- (Oconee) Students organized and packed food boxes for Action, Inc. They also decorated for their Christmas party. Action, Inc. assists elderly, low-income citizens.

History on the Lawn Celebration

On November 10, 2013, Honors students at UNG Oconee participated in a "History on the Lawn Celebration" sponsored by the Oconee County Historical Society. This collaboration began last summer when Dr. George Justice began to help the Oconee Historical Society plan for the event. "Our campus immediately recognized a golden opportunity for UNG to establish stronger ties to the community here in Oconee County and to the support our mission for greater public engagement," states Justice. "In addition, our American Democracy Project committee also found this as a way to promote student civic participation in the county."

The primary objectives were to begin an archive of old photographs that depicted the people and places throughout the county, begin catalogue of oral histories taken from residents willing to tell their stories, and generate greater interest in preserving the history of Oconee County. Over the course of a few short weeks, Justice and his students generated widespread support across all campuses to bring the necessary resources required for this project, including enough video and audio equipment to conduct the oral interviews, as well as scanners and computers to document the photographs. Justice and his students plan to develop a presentation on student civic engagement and local histories.

The festival was a great success. UNG students scanned photographs, interviewed residents, and manned information tables. They participated in ways that taught them how such collaborations can produce the best rewards. The Historical Society was most appreciative and complimentary of UNG's support and presence at the festival. This was truly a model for demonstrating the ways in which UNG can make meaningful contributions to the communities it serves and for teaching students about civic responsibilities.

SUPPORT THE HONORS PROGRAM!

Student research opportunities, scholarships, and study abroad funding are largely dependent on the support of UNG's donor base. If you would like to make a contribution or discuss ideas for an innovative gift to the Honors Program, please contact Dr. Skipper, Dean of Honors.

eric.skipper@ung.edu

678-717-3698

Dr. Skipper is also seeking dynamic individuals to serve on the Honors Advisory Board. Please contact him if you are interested in serving.

ALUMNI NEWS

Class of 2002

Donna (Christensen) Bennett is now working for the Clay County (NC) Dept. of Social Services and gained certification to do drug screens. The one class she took in photography at North Georgia is paying off, as she has done some work as a photographer, but she is still mostly a full time mom.

Mary Beth (Loughridge) Cole recently opened her own medical practice, *Dalton Dermatology and Day Spa*. www.daltonderm.com.

Iryna Ivashchuk was recently named to the board of governors of the



Iryna Ivashchuk

Ukrainian-American Bar Association, a national bar association whose members are U.S. judges, attorneys and law students of Ukrainian descent. Iryna practices international, real estate, and corporate law for Berger Singerman, LLP of Fort Lauderdale.



Cason Partin

Class of 2003

Lori (Digby) Partin had her third child, Cason James, on August 1.

Class of 2004

Heidi Newkirk is living/practicing medicine in New England, specializing in limb salvage and reconstruction at Parkland's Center for Wounds and Hyperbarics in Derry, NH. She also belongs to the Boston Snow Dogs, a group of northern breed dog owners. Who knows, says Heidi, "maybe one day North Georgia will have an alum win the Iditarod."

Class of 2005

Ginger (Grantham) Collins married Ryan Collins in June, with fellow Honors alum **Kim (Dempsey) Colbert** serving as maid of honor.

Jan Hrabovsky and wife Sarah have a new son, Victor Piers Hrabovsky, born on December 14. All are well and first son Alec is excited to be a big brother.



Victor Hrabovsky

Class of 2006

Jordan Hembree is in his second command with HHC/1-36 Infantry at Fort Bliss, TX. He returned from Afghanistan about four months ago, and is starting the MBA program at Arizona State University in January. His wife, Tinsley, is currently the Assistant Dean of Students at New Mexico State University.

Leah Kilpatrick just finished her Masters of Library Science and got promoted to Staff Sergeant. She is working as a Special Operations Planner with Central Command.

Class of 2007

Patricia (Faulkner) Hall will finish her residency in Family Medicine in Greenwood (SC) in June 2014. She and her husband had their first child, James Caleb, in September. After wrapping up in Greenwood, they are coming back to Thomas-ton, GA where Trish has landed a job.

Annie (Sanders) Mendenhall and husband Shaun just bought their first house in Savannah, GA. Annie joined the English department at Armstrong Atlantic State University in August.



James Hall



Lauren (Foust) Petro

Lauren (Foust) Petro is living in Winder with her husband Adam (a police officer and Army Reservist) and their 18 month old daughter Kahlan. She is currently a stay at home mom. She also makes and sells a variety of stuff on etsy.com including artwork, handbags, and diaper cakes.

Class of 2008

Kristin Davis was recently promoted to full time office manager at the Care and Counseling Center of Georgia, a non-profit counseling group in Atlanta.

June Koehler was recently promoted to Assistant Curator for the Arts of the Americas and Europe at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art on the University of Oregon campus. She was married on December 13, to Carson Black, so she's now June Black.

Meghan (Lott) Caldwell recently became a mom, as Aubrey Lane Caldwell was born on December 13.



Aubrey Caldwell

Jordan Hoffman has been working at Advantage BHS in Walton County and is now the Child & Adolescent Therapist for the clinic. She's also officially trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing as of November 2013.

Robert Richardson passed the Georgia Bar and is now a public defender in the South Georgia Judicial Circuit.

Class of 2010

Noelle Conneely is living in Corvallis, Oregon and running a urine toxicology lab for a doctor's office.

Jason Davis and Kristi Jones were married on November 2 at the Cavender Castle in Dahlonega.

Winolee Furtney won Teacher of the Year at Lilburn Middle School, and earned her ESOL certification in May. She plans on finishing her Master's degree at UNG this summer.

Kerry Griffith was married on November 26 to Wesley Baptiste.

Amy Kelley is enrolled in discipleship training school through the Youth With A Mission program. She spent three months in Herrnhut, Germany, is currently in Asia, will be back in Germany this month, and finally back in the U.S. in March.

Courtney Wilson is still living in Winston-Salem, NC. In May, she moved from Senior Financial Analyst in BB&T's Financial Management group to a new role as a Portfolio Risk Officer with BB&T Capital Markets. In her new job, she manages the REIT and Financial Services portfolio of large corporate clients.



June (Koehler) Black



Jason Davis



Kerry Griffith

Class of 2011

Chelsea Gibson finished her Master's in History at Binghamton University in May, and got engaged to Alex Jablonski in December.

Class of 2012

After leaving UNG, **Jill Bowen** enrolled in English Education at UGA. She is currently student teaching at Peachtree Ridge High School and will graduate Summa Cum Laude in May.

Nicole (Bronsted) Wagner married John Wagner in July, with Honors alum Christie Hightower as her maid of honor. She is working for UNG in the Advancement Office.

Lindsay (Chitwood) Martin just completed her fourth semester at the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, TN. In June she married Jeffery Martin, who is currently serving in the Army at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.



Lindsay (Chitwood) Martin



Dugger's new home

Brittani (Crain) Dugger is working as a teacher at Creekland Middle School in Gwinnett County and starting her Master's degree. She got married last year, and along with husband Andy recently bought her first house.

Hillary Doyle recently began working on a PR campaign for the Atlanta Brain Bee, a neuroscience trivia competition for high school students (and part of a larger international competition).

Heather Galanis will finish her Master's in Psychology in two semesters and is working as an ABA Therapist. She shares a house at Fort Bragg with her cat, as husband **Michael** is currently deployed.

Whit Hays and wife Kathleen and are living in Hillsboro, Oregon. He is working on growing his own financial consulting business.

Ashley Marie Huerd is a second year medical student at Ross University School of Medicine in Dominica. She hopes to go into pediatrics, and will start her clinical rotations in October.

Helen (Davies) Kern got a new job as the Children's and Youth Assistant at First Baptist Church of Kingsport (TN).

Kaitlyn Klucznik has been traveling around the southeast learning how to lindy hop and blues dance. She has entered several competitions and reached the finals multiple times, but is still looking for her first trophy.

Gail Remillard is working for PCG molecular in Dahlonega. She's getting married to Ryan van der Want on May 10 and is hoping to get into the Masters of Anesthesiology program at Emory.



Jacob Kelly

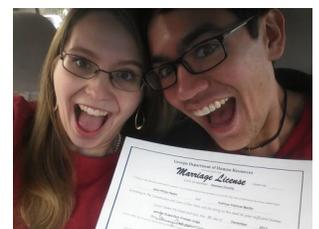
Class of 2013

Jacob Kelly became engaged to Margaret Kellum on Dec. 15, having just completed his second semester in the DPT program at UNG.

Kate Martin and **John Hayes** got engaged on November 2 (wedding on March 1, 2014) and survived their first round of grad school final exams at Vanderbilt; as did classmate **James Dodds**.

Orion Silas (f.k.a. Starlett Jenkins) is working at Best Buy and going to grad school in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at UNG.

Haylee Wadsworth recently arrived home from Moscow, Russia after living there for four months. She completed an internship teaching English to adults and volunteering at a school as an English helper, and reports that it was a wonderful cultural experience.



Kate Martin