

FALL/WINTER 2022 | NO. 4

# CHC Alumni Newsletter

UPDATES FROM THE COOK HONORS COLLEGE

*3rd place winner (Publications), Northeast Regional Honors Council, 2022*

## Therefore, What Can We Do?

DR. CHAUNA CRAIG, CHC DIRECTOR

At the start of this academic year, we helped our new students think about their academic and personal goals, outlining all the ways we can help them work toward those aspirations. A student thanked me afterward then noted how that was a lot for a staff of only three to do. "What can we do to help you?" asked the student. That is the honors college community spirit I have come to love and deeply appreciate in this role.

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*Photo by  
Hannah Colen,  
CHC '21*

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## *Therefore, What Can We Do? (continued...)*

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CHC alumni have asked the same question. *What can we do to help?* If you're willing and able to [give financially](#) (even small amounts add up), we could truly use a boost to our [Achievement Fund](#). This year we're planning one big international CHC trip to Iceland [see article in this newsletter] and a spring break sailing trip around the Florida Keys led by Dr. Ken Sherwood. Such trips are out of reach for most of our students without assistance. In fact, in our first round of Achievement Fund applications, the total amount requested exceeded our annual budget, and we had to reduce awards even more. Our Achievement Fund truly sets our honors college apart, and as the pandemic wanes, more students are ready to explore opportunities beyond the local community. Any help in sustaining this Fund is always deeply appreciated.

We also need alumni to tell us what you're doing now and how your honors college experience contributed to who you are today. This is valuable for our current and prospective students to hear, and as the university undergoes revision to general education requirements, it's essential that our academic leaders understand how transformative the honors college and its approach is to any thoughtful student in any major. Dave Reed ('00) and Katy (Deason) Lucas ('13) both visited our students this fall to talk about their career journeys, and we are always looking for alumni willing to share their experiences and expertise in person, on Zoom, or through stories we can share on our website. Please email us at [honors@iup.edu](mailto:honors@iup.edu) with your stories and ideas. We love hearing from alumni!

Finally, if you have suggestions for articles and features you'd like to see, please let us know. This is your newsletter. I always love to shout out the good things happening in the CHC, but I also want the content to reflect your interests and needs as former (and I hope proud) CHC students.

Happiest of holidays to you and your families.





# Thesis Paper Pancake Night

## *A Time-Honored Tradition Lives On*

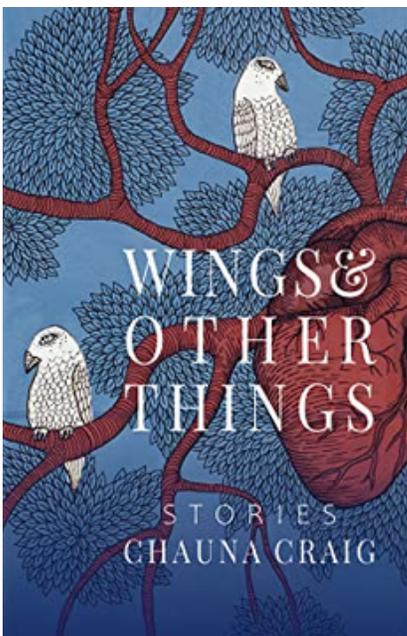
In keeping with a long tradition, CHC students recently completed a puzzle in the philosophy lounge, only to discover a missing piece. Maybe it looked good enough to eat? Current student Marie Smith said, "We are visibly heartbroken but wanted to say thank you for letting us borrow it."

There's no better combination than pancakes and papers - specifically, thesis papers written in the Great Hall while munching on stacks of delicious pancakes.

This fall, first-year Cook Honors College students experienced their first thesis paper pancake night on September 25 at 8 pm.

## Wings & Other Things

On September 27, CHC students gathered in the Great Hall to celebrate the release of Dr. Chauna Craig's new



book, *Wings & Other Things: Stories*. The book features characters who are all searching for the places that they truly belong. It is available now from Press 53.

The evening of pancakes, often lovingly referred to as Thesis Snack Night, is a way for upperclassmen to share delicious pancakes while passing on words of wisdom to younger students writing their first Honors Core thesis papers - a CHC rite of passage.





*Honors students Olivia Wanat and Ben Lawton on the water with IUP's Sailing Club. The Florida trip features a 41-foot sailboat on which students will live and sail together.*

# Honors Trips Are Back!

After years of pandemic-related uncertainty, we are reviving Cook Honors College trips in 2023. Over spring break Dr. Ken Sherwood will take students on a sailing excursion around the Florida Keys, where they will read related literature, keep journals, learn about the eco-system from area experts, and gain practical experience in the art of sailing and living communally on a boat.

In July, CHC director Dr. Craig and volcanologist Dr. Nick Deardorff (Geoscience) will lead twelve students on a two-week journey through Iceland. Students will learn about Icelandic sagas and folklore, volcanoes and glaciers, and sustainability initiatives unique to the country.

Students planning to join these trips are eligible for support through the Cook Achievement Fund. Many of them have never been abroad or even taken a flight on a plane before. In keeping with the purpose of the Fund, we are giving CHC students new experiences that will no doubt change their lives in ways they can't yet know. Stay tuned for updates and photos from these adventures. In the meantime, please consider helping to support the Achievement Fund to keep these dreams alive for future students. (On [IUP's giving page](#), just designate Fund #224748). ■

## Honors College Students Center Community and Belonging in Dallas

This year's theme at the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference in Dallas, Texas was "Centering Community," and four Cook Honor College students in attendance lived that theme through their scholarship and service activities.

Milady Lagunas (junior, political science), Magali Ortiz-Ayllon (junior, early childhood/special education), Estefani Sánchez Fonseca (senior, political science), and Jorge Tapia Becerril (senior, political science) presented a panel on student perspectives on the recruitment and retention of Latinx students. The well-attended event was moderated by CHC director Dr. Chauna Craig.

Three of the students also opted to join an NCHC sponsored service event at Kirkpatrick Middle School in Fort Worth helping middle school children paint a mural around the theme of immigration and belonging. Milady Lagunas, in an interview televised by KXAS-TV, the NBC affiliate in Fort Worth, described how important it was for her to model to the children that they have a place in higher education. In 2020-21 just over sixty percent of Kirkpatrick Middle School students were enrolled in bilingual and English education programs, many of whom are considered at high risk of dropping out of school.



*Milady on KXAS-TV*

## *Honors College Students Center Community and Belonging in Dallas (continued...)*

“Since the loosening of pandemic restrictions, we’ve taken students to two honors conferences, one regional and one national,” said Dr. Craig. “In Philadelphia, conference organizers told me how amazing our group was, and in Dallas, a student came up after the panel to say that she wished she were in our honors college. I could not be any prouder of how well these students represent Cook Honors College.”

Milady Lagunas felt the conference was the experience of a lifetime. "I not only got the opportunity to represent the CHC with pride, but I was also able to visit a new city with my closest friends. We learned so much from each other and from the experience, and we will definitely remember this as one of our highlights of our time at IUP. We are also thankful for the achievement fund, which made this trip possible!" she said. ■



*From left to right: Estefani, Magali, Jorge, and Milady*



# Whitmyre Hall Returns

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Everyone has a favorite memory of Whitmyre, whether it's thesis paper pancakes, an especially meaningful Core class, late-night shenanigans with your roommate, or Nerd Prom. For the past few years, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cook Honors College students have spent their first year living in Stephenson or Wallwork Hall, leaving them without the chance to experience living and learning in one truly unique building: Whitmyre.

At the start of the next academic year, Fall 2023, first-year Honors College students will return to living in Whitmyre for their freshman year (and beyond, if they choose). For the past three years, Whitmyre has continued to be an important part of life at IUP for Honors College students. From Core classes to the Masquerade Ball (formerly Nerd Prom) and Spookfest Halloween Party, the Great Hall and newly-renovated classrooms have been put to excellent use. Starting next year, however, the upper floors of Whitmyre will once again house excited first-year students finding their way through their first semester of college at IUP.

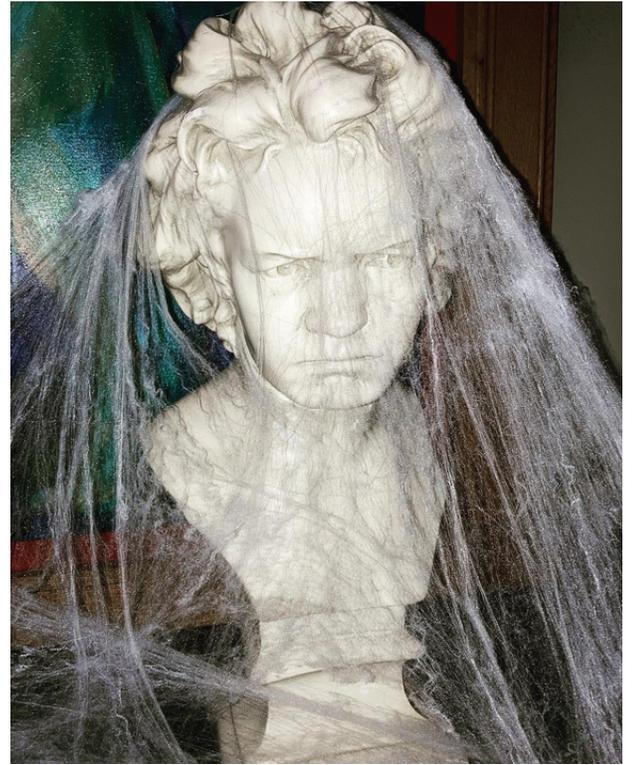
With Whit fully back up and running, events like Thesis Snack Night will be even more special. Friends will be down the hall day and night for video game tournaments, homework sessions, Dungeons and Dragons campaigns, and--of course--thesis paper writing marathons.

We are thrilled to welcome next year's Honors College freshman class to experience all that Whitmyre has to offer and make new memories there. ■

*Written by Amy Kukula*



# SPOOKFEST 2022



CHC students got in the Halloween spirit for Spookfest, hosted in the Great Hall on Friday, October 28. Food, music, dancing, crafts, and (of course) a costume contest made it a night to remember.

## Updates from CHC Alumni

B. Rose (Huber) Kelly ('07) earned a master's degree in creative writing & publishing arts from the University of Baltimore in 2010. She was recently promoted from public relations specialist/writer for Princeton University to head of communications for Princeton University's Physics Plasma Laboratory.

Patrick Kalie ('17) works as a senior marketing manager for Maven Clinic.

Adam Santavy ('14, '18) earned a master's degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education from IUP. He works as an accessibility coordinator for Kent State University.

Miriam Krause earned a master's degree in early childhood education from Towson University in 2013. She works as the early childhood STEM coordinator for Whitaker Center for Science and the Arts, which advocates for and builds capacity within out-of-school programs across Pennsylvania.

Sarah (Finnegan) Harring ('15) earned a master's degree in restorative justice leadership and facilitation from Ball State University in 2021. She works as a Title IX case manager & hearing administrator for The George Washington University.

Thank you to Rebecca Mir and to Melissa King ('14) for reaching out to the CHC and updating their contact information.

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## → Share Your Experiences to Inspire the Next Generation

2013 CHC alumna Kathryn (Deason) Lucas presented to first year students as part of the Wednesday Workshop series in October. She is a Senior Consultant at Strata Information Group. Katy discussed the value of her CHC education to the work she does and encouraged honors students to access all of the opportunities available to them in the CHC. If you would like to lead a workshop or participate on an alumni panel discussion with current students next fall (2023), please email Kevin Berezansky at [kevinb@iup.edu](mailto:kevinb@iup.edu).

## *Alumni Updates (continued...)*

Dr. Carina Heckert ('06, '09) earned a PhD in anthropology from Southern Methodist University in 2015. Dr. Heckert works as an associate professor of anthropology at University of Texas at El Paso.

William Harder ('07) earned a master's degree and a PhD, both in political science, from American University in 2012 and 2017, respectively. He works as the director of the Center for the Advancement of Scholarship & Teaching at Goucher College.

Kelly Belovesick works as a researcher for Abis Group.

Kayla Good ('18) earned a master's degree in public policy from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2020.

Brandie George-Milford works as a program director for UPMC-WPIC.

Dr. Jessica (Walton) Baum earned a PhD in physical chemistry from the University of Pittsburgh and works as a chemistry instructor for Monterey Peninsula College.

Zoe Thorkildsen works as a senior research scientist for CNA Financial Corporation.

Krista (Shumaker) Deemer ('11) completed a certificate program in massage therapy in 2012 through HACC and works as a licensed massage therapist for Active Life Chiropractic.

Dr. Jennifer Robinette ('01) earned a master's degree in English from Northern Michigan University in 2005 and a PhD in English from the University of North Dakota in 2012. She works as a full-time English faculty member for Erie County Community College of Pennsylvania.

Ignacio Alarcon ('13) earned a master's degree in 2015 from Bowling Green State University. Alarcon works as the director of grants & strategic initiatives for Seattle Colleges. ■



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**Want your update included in an upcoming issue of the official CHC Alumni Newsletter? Fill out this form (linked below) to let us know any news you want to share--career, promotion, or personal achievement.**

**We'd love to hear from you!**

**[www.alumni.iup.edu/chcalumnicontract](http://www.alumni.iup.edu/chcalumnicontract)**