

SPRING 2023 | NO. 5

CHC Alumni Newsletter

UPDATES FROM THE COOK HONORS COLLEGE

Full Circle

DR. CHAUNA CRAIG, CHC DIRECTOR

On May 5th, we will send another class of bright, diverse, multi-talented honors graduates into whatever their lives hold next—law school, graduate programs, first jobs. The class of 2023 is particularly special to me because in fall 2019 I was a brand-new director, and they were brand-new college students. As I gave my opening speech on how much their lives were about to change, none of us had any idea that a global pandemic was on its way, about to alter our lives in ways we never could have predicted.



*Photo by
Hannah Colen,
CHC '21*

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Full Circle (continued...)

We've returned to some sense of the old normal, as you'll see in this issue. Honors trips are back. Students are applying to and winning coveted spots in summer programs designed to aid their research and professional preparation. Alumni are again connecting at in-person events, and this fall Whitmyre Hall will be the residence of first year CHC students for the first time in four years. We also continue to move forward with new ideas and initiatives, assessing how to best maintain academic excellence with a robust curriculum and enhanced opportunities, while creating an honors community in which students of all backgrounds and identities feel they belong and can grow.

Enjoy this update, and have a wonderful summer.

Kind regards,



CHC Students Do Incredible Things

Renallan Neckles (Environmental Engineering, '23) was selected for a [National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship](#) that will provide three years of support for his graduate education.

Last summer, Renallan participated in an NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates at New Jersey Institute of Technology. His project, "Dioxane Degrading Propanotrophs Capable of Degrading Cooccurring Inhibitory Chlorinated Solvents," served as his honors experiential and was the foundation for his NSF fellowship application.

Renallan is a Cook Honors College student and a tutor at the Writing Center.



Victoria Alao

is a junior Cook Honors College student and a Promising Scholar.



Victoria was recently accepted into the Summer Premedical Academic Enrichment Program at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School.

The rigorous program involves seven weeks of MedBio and Med English courses covering topics in science, scientific writing, and public speaking. The program aims to support students who are part of groups typically underrepresented in the field of medicine.

For more information about the program, check out IUP's [news release about Victoria](#) or visit the [SPAEP website](#).

Caio Gomes

(PLSC, '24) is one of twenty students selected from a pool of 1500+ applicants for the 2023 [TRIALS program](#) at NYU.

TRIALS is a five-week summer residency program at New York University and co-sponsored by NYU Law School, Harvard Law, and Advantage Testing Foundation. The program is designed to support and help prepare students of underrepresented backgrounds be competitive for admission to top law schools.

In addition to his major in International Studies, Caio has two minors, Spanish and History. He is a Cook Honors College member, a Promising Scholar, an IUP Ambassador, and president of the Latino Student Organization.



The Northeast Regional Honors Council, a regional affiliate of the National Collegiate Honors Council, held its annual conference in Pittsburgh this year. The conference, held Mar. 30-Apr. 2, brought together hundreds of honors students from the U.S. (New England, Mid-Atlantic and Puerto Rican colleges and universities) and parts of Canada to share panel and poster presentations on the theme "Building Resilience from Tragedy: Understanding Hate, Violence, Loss, and Reconciliation."



Sarah Brandle and her mother at NRHC

CHC Sophomore **Sarah Brandle**, a double major in Theatre/Musical Theatre and History, presented a paper, "Mengele Twin Demonstrates the Power in Forgiving." Her panel included students from Hilbert College and Frederick Community College who also presented on aspects of the Holocaust.



Maddison Hendricks

(Music BSED/Spanish K-12 BSED, '21) was recently awarded a competitive Fulbright award to Spain as an English Teaching Assistant. Her study abroad to Spain was cut short by COVID in spring 2020, so we are especially thrilled to see her win this opportunity. ■



Alumni Networking

On March 31st, CHC alumni in the Pittsburgh area gathered at the Cinderlands Warehouse brewery for our first networking events since before the pandemic. Thirty-two honors alum from a range of graduation years joined the current CHC staff for an evening of laughter, reminiscing, good beer, and great raffle prizes. We plan to come to the D.C. area this fall, so if you're interested in suggesting locations or helping us plan the event, we'd love to hear from you!



Journey by Sail

ON THE GULF COAST

When five IUP students landed in Florida for Spring Break 2023, they didn't head straight for the beach but instead for the Dunedin Marina, where they boarded a 41-foot sailboat to begin their "Journey By Sail," an experiential learning opportunity supported in part by the Cook Honors College Achievement Fund.

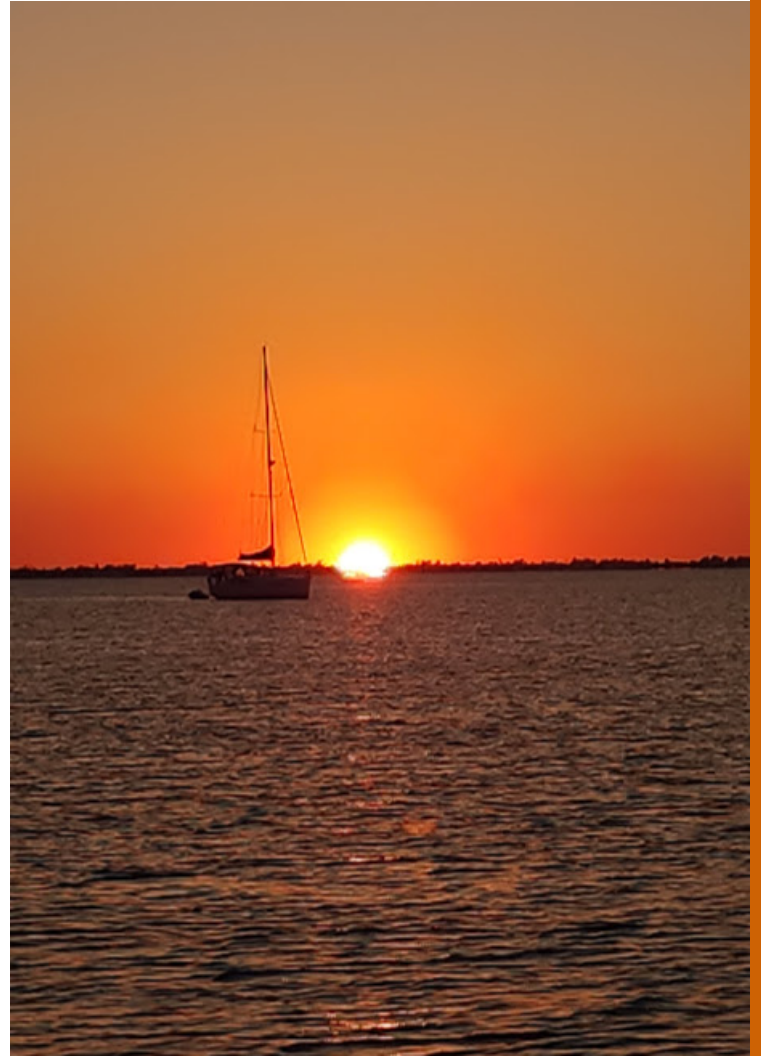
The goals of the non-credit experience were nautical and social. The journey involved personal and team-building challenges – working with peers to operate the boat (hoisting sails, navigating, keeping a watch schedule, and cooking on board) – and immersion in the maritime history and ecology of the Florida Gulf Coast.

Participants literally "learned the ropes" as they lived aboard the SV Wind Star, captained by retired teacher and charter operator Harry Matheus. Asher Skyles '24 (Physics/Pre-Engineering - Elderton) says, "I loved being given the ability to do the first hand duties as a crew such as steering the vessel, or raising the sails" adding that "experiencing what it is like to be a true sailor at sea for a week was a unique opportunity . . . [that] I will remember for the rest of my life."

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Journey by Sail (continued...)

One afternoon, the sailors launched kayaks to go ashore at the Desoto National Memorial which marks the "1539 expedition of the Spanish Conquistador Hernando de Soto and his impact on the American Indian societies of the Southeast." Exploring the Anclote Key Preserve and Shell Key, the students found spotting sea birds was a major attraction. Over two-dozen birds were identified by Isabel Allerheiligen '26 (Pre-medical Biology - State College), whom the group came to identify as the unofficial naturalist; Izzy was especially keen to add the American Oystercatcher to her life-list.



On night anchor watch, rotating pairs of students made sure the boat was safe and enjoyed observing constellations and watching a sunrise. Dolphins chased the boat and cavorted in its wake, as well as visiting at anchor during sunset and after, the sound of blows signaling their presence even in the dark. Students also saw evidence of a Red Tide bloom (*Karenia brevis*), discovering a sea turtle carcass which they reported to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Stepping on board a sailboat for the first time, James Saylor '25 (Computer Science/Cybersecurity - State College) enjoyed learning to sail and kayaking. Another sailing novice, Angel Flores '24 (Economics - Gettysburg) worked diligently to provide his crewmates the "surf" component for a surf and turf dinner. One of two students who came to the trip with prior sailing experience, Ben Swanson '24 (Economics - Kittanning) began learning to sail with the IUP Sailing Club as a first year student and is now club president. One of his trip highlights was learning to steer a cruising ketch with two masts and three sails - a more complex boat than the dinghies he sails at Yellow Creek State Park in Indiana.

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Journey by Sail (continued...)

Trip organizer Dr. Kenneth Sherwood (English) regularly teaches in the honors college and joined the students aboard. He wants to remind everyone in the IUP community that the Sailing Club teaches new members to sail every Sunday, weather permitting, during Spring and Fall semesters at nearby Yellow Creek State Park. Club information can be found at <https://iblog.iup.edu/iupsailing/> as well as Facebook, Instagram, and Crimson Connect. Visitors to the Tampa area might get a taste of gulf sailing with a sunset cruise on <https://www.windstarsailingdunedin.com/>. ■

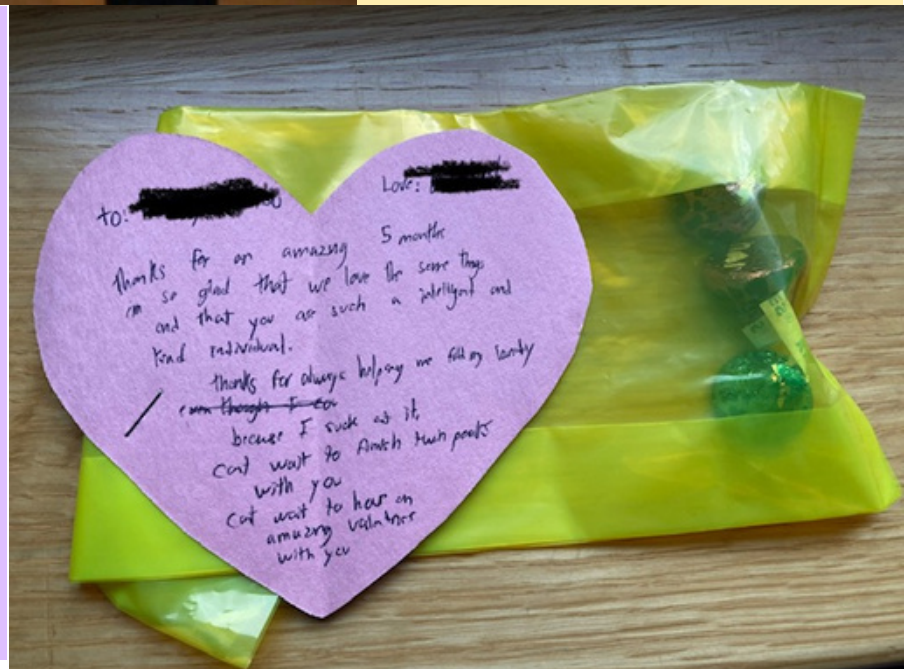


Lost and Found in Whitmyre: Love



Leslie (Folino) Canterbury, '23 chose to get married in the Great Hall in January. We know many of our honors students found lasting love in Whitmyre Hall, but this is the first wedding we know of.

When Whitmyre Hall was abandoned in March 2020 due to COVID, so were the student mailboxes. During spring cleaning, as we prepare for students to return in fall, we discovered this sweet valentine and chocolate kisses lost for three years.



Updates from CHC Alumni

Carrie Edwards ('01) received a master's degree in organizational management from Misericordia University and works as a Clinical Informations Specialist for Metz Culinary Management.

Miriam Krause received a master's degree in early childhood education from Towson University and works as an out-of-school-time professional learning & instruction coordinator for the PA Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network.

Erin Campbell ('16) received a master's degree in speech language pathology from Slippery Rock in 2018 and a certificate in Autism Endorsement in 2020. Erin works as a speech language pathologist in PA.

Heather Newlin currently holds the position of Bibliographic Assistant II at Temple University.

Sarah (Finnegan) Haring ('15) received a master's degree from Ball State University and now works as a Title IX Case Manager & Hearing Administrator at The George Washington University.

Matthew Genchur holds the position of Regulatory Specialist II at Resource Environmental Solutions, LLC.

Brandon Weller ('19, '21) works as a scheduling coordinator for Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company.

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→ Student Scholars

Several CHC students were honored this semester with awards for their research across many disciplines.

Five undergraduate CHC students received recognition for their work, as well as six graduate-level students.

Senior CHC student Alyssa Carne actually received two separate awards for her projects, entitled "The Effect of Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Other Influences on State DUI Rates" and "How Medical Malpractice affects Health Insurance Rates."

Wyatt Skaugen, a CHC student still in his first year at IUP, received the Undergraduate Dean's Award in the College of Arts and Humanities for his research titled, "Modern Theism: An Investigation Into the Existence of a Universal Creator Entity, Moral Laws, and the Consequences of the Existence of Such Things."

Many students participate each year in research, providing them with a strong foundation for their continuing studies and future careers.

The CHC wants to extend a huge congratulations to these students and all others who conducted research, participated in other unique experiences, and were honored with awards and scholarships this year.

Alumni Updates (continued...)

Brandie Glessner ('02) received a master's degree in Instructional Design/Tech - eLearning from the University of Central Florida and works as a virtual instructor for Brevard Virtual School and Imagine Learning.

Nicole Battestilli ('12) received a master's degree in Arts Administration from Drexel University and works as the Marketing Director for City Theatre.

Kristen Kalp works as a writer & business coach for Kristen Kalp International.

Anthony Maticic ('19) works as a senior consultant for Gleason.

Holly (Hursh) Wirt ('00) works as a Human Resources Generalist for I.B. Abel Inc.

Zoë Thorkildsen ('07) was promoted into the leadership team in the Center for Justice Research and Innovation at CNA, where she now serves as Director of Development Initiatives. She also bought a house last summer and fosters kittens for a local shelter with her new space. ■



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

Layout by Amy Kukula