

SHINE & RISE

2015 ANNUAL REPORT







Student Success that lasts a lifetime.



UH
HOUSTON



In the fall of 2011, things big and small were happening at the Honors College and the University of Houston. The University had just received Tier One Research status from the Carnegie Foundation, and the UH football team, led by Case Keenum, was ranked 6th in the nation. The Leadership Studies program had just launched as the fifth Honors minor. Club Theater was beginning to be a staple organization in the minds of Honors students. And I stepped in to the Honors College for the first time. That night, at the High School Senior Open House, faculty, staff and Honors Ambassadors showcased the vibrant community and incredible opportunities the College has to offer. Before I knew it, I had fallen under the Honors spell.

The second floor of the M.D. Anderson Library would soon be my home away from home. Honors offered me friends, mentors and challenges unlike any I had ever experienced. And I began to ask myself what I had to offer Honors. I answered that by quickly increasing my involvement. During my time in Honors I have been able to produce, write and direct student-run theater, collaborate on events and engagement, serve as a Student Governing Board officer and a teaching assistant—all the while recruiting more future Cougars as an Honors Ambassador and holding positions in the front office of the College. Honors has defined my college career, and I am forever grateful to be a part of this College's storied history.

What Honors did for me is just an example. The Honors College is a place that fosters the involvement and achievement of its students, whatever they want to be. Success is multi-faceted in Honors, and from day one it is clear that students are surrounded by individuals who care about their experience on a multitude of levels. We foster success with peer mentors and incredible instructors. We challenge students to think beyond their fields and always remember the big questions. We focus on their future endeavors and always strive to make them not only better engineers, professionals, doctors, or teachers, but also better people. On top of that, we never forget to stop and smell the roses, or savor the championship trophies.

Four and a half years after I first stepped foot into the College, big and small things are still happening for Honors and the University of Houston. I can think of no better place for future generations to live, to learn, and to grow. I hope you enjoy this snapshot of the Honors community during 2015. As you can see, it truly is the best of both worlds.

—John Hounihan '16

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



Honors Retreat

Student success that lasts a lifetime begins before the first day of class. Events such as the Tier One Scholars Invitational and the renowned Honors Retreat welcome freshmen not just to a college, but also to a community.

When the academic year does get under way, new students and Human Situation instructors exchange ideas in discussion class and break bread together at Dinner with the Professors.

Peer mentors help freshmen get serious about critical writing and get rowdy as Bleacher Creatures.



Coffeehouse

For centuries, the café has been one of the great cultural institutions, a place to hear new ideas and new sounds. Twice a year, volunteers transform the Commons, our community space, into an indie-style coffeehouse where Honors students can showcase their musical talents. From folk to soul, rap to classical, Coffeehouse is a night of great voices and grand performances.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Grand Challenges Forum

At the Grand Challenges Forum, provocative speakers point to the world beyond the hedgerows. Throughout their Honors College career, students can explore many pathways that lead to success in their personal and professional lives.





Club Theater

You don't have to be a theater major to be a talented playwright, actor, or director—and Honors students involved in Club Theater prove this every semester by producing energetic and imaginative original works.

RESEARCH & EXPLORATION



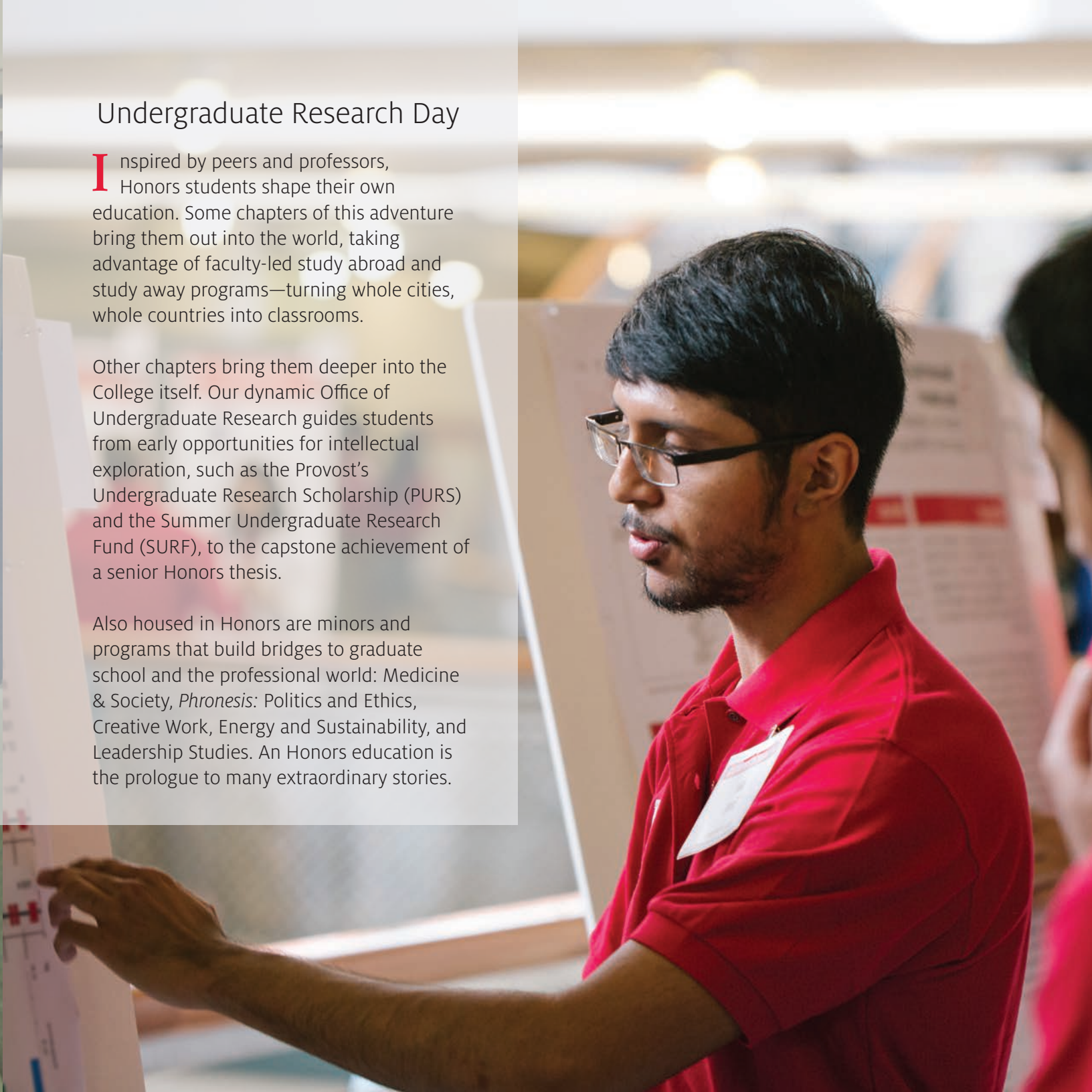
In the spring, the Center for Creative Work's "Artists and Their Regions: The Anatomical Theater" class discovered a fascinating region just miles from the College—The Texas Medical Center, especially Methodist Hospital. Guided by the hospital's Center for Performing Arts, our students considered the artistry of everything from anatomical illustrations to the surgeon's steady eye and hand.

Undergraduate Research Day

Inspired by peers and professors, Honors students shape their own education. Some chapters of this adventure bring them out into the world, taking advantage of faculty-led study abroad and study away programs—turning whole cities, whole countries into classrooms.

Other chapters bring them deeper into the College itself. Our dynamic Office of Undergraduate Research guides students from early opportunities for intellectual exploration, such as the Provost's Undergraduate Research Scholarship (PURS) and the Summer Undergraduate Research Fund (SURF), to the capstone achievement of a senior Honors thesis.

Also housed in Honors are minors and programs that build bridges to graduate school and the professional world: Medicine & Society, *Phronesis*: Politics and Ethics, Creative Work, Energy and Sustainability, and Leadership Studies. An Honors education is the prologue to many extraordinary stories.



RESEARCH & EXPLORATION

Scotland and Northern England Study Abroad Trip

In May, Honors students on the trip, led by Dr. Jonathan Zecher, enjoyed a panoramic view of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, from the peak known as Arthur's Seat. Participants also absorbed the culture of the storied English cities of London and York, and hiked in Scotland's glorious Highlands.





Galápagos Islands and Ecuador Study Abroad Trip

While their colleagues were climbing Scottish mountains, Honors students from Dr. Andrew Hamilton's and Dr. Tony Frankino's "Galápagos Evolving" class were diving into the waters and the wonders of the islands made famous by Charles Darwin's research. Participants also explored Andean villages and the city of Quito.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Bonner Leaders Program

Honors students think not just about their futures, but also the future of others. Their sense of community extends from the University of Houston's campus and neighborhood to countries far away.

Our award-winning Bonner Leaders Program provides Houstonians with meals from its Campus Kitchen project and academic support through its tutoring programs.

Future healthcare professionals both serve in and learn from rural communities in places like Honduras and Haiti.



“Through our efforts and with the support of the Honors College, we’re building a Tier One culture of service and community engagement.”

- Brinda Penmetsa (center),
UH Campus Kitchen Project Leader

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The Great Conversation

Friends of the Honors College, including Advisory Board members and the UH community, gather for the College's annual fundraiser, The Great Conversation. In its 23rd year, the event combines "town and gown" as UH faculty lead table conversations on topics ranging from politics to travel and technology to wine tasting. All proceeds from the event provide scholarships for Honors College students.



Honduras Study Abroad Medical Trip

A two-week medical mission trip to the underserved rural area of Santa Ana, Honduras was co-sponsored by the Houston Shoulder to Shoulder Foundation, Baylor College of Medicine, and the Honors College's Medicine & Society Program. Among other endeavors, participants held classes for local children on nutrition and hygiene. In turn, Honors students learned a great deal from the people of Santa Ana.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Dionysia

Each spring, the Center for Creative Work presents this festival of arts and ideas. By staging a classic Greek text and discussing its contemporary resonances, Dionysia helps the Honors College fulfill its motto of “Great Books, Grand Challenges.” In 2015, Chanelle Benz directed “The City at War: A Possession for All Time,” Dr. John Harvey’s adaptation of Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The production inspired memorable panel discussions on how the humanities, medicine, and the energy sector respond to war, loss, and shortage. [N](#)



Martin Luther King Day of Service

All year round, Honors students in the burgeoning Bonner Leaders Program win victories for the people of Houston by serving the community; their Campus Kitchen nourishes the body, and their tutoring program nourishes the mind. In January, as leaders and participants in UH's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, they helped some of our neighbors in the Third Ward by mowing and cleaning yards, as well as assisting with painting and small repair jobs.



STUDENT SUCCESS



Student success lasts a lifetime and it is recognized early in the Honors College. In mid-January, talented high school seniors are invited to campus to participate in the Tier One Invitational. Each year, the Tier One Invitational welcomes more than 350 prospective students and their guests to the Honors College to learn more about both the UH and the Honors College, meet with professors in their major, tour the campus and student residence halls, and interview with faculty for the prestigious Tier One Scholarship.



The academic year that begins with Convocation ends with the glittering prizes of the Honors Graduation Banquet, where we get a chance to applaud our graduating seniors and announce the winners of the Best Senior Thesis awards. Of course, we know that graduation is just the beginning of achievement and mastery for these exceptional students. From competitive national scholarships to leadership positions in non-profit, corporate, and government organizations, Honors alumni excel. They take on the Grand Challenges in numerous fields, including law, medicine, energy, engineering, business, and the arts. And often they come home to the College to inspire the next generations of Honors students with these commencement stories of success.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Model Arab League

A moment of truth from February. Delegates are voting in the regional Model Arab League competition held here in the College. The event was co-hosted by the Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce. Later in the spring, eighteen delegates represented the University at the national MAL conference in Washington D.C., where Keri Myrick and Dr. Jesse Rainbow led the delegation.





Honors Graduation Banquet

The banquet is a night of recognitions—Senior Thesis awards, Areté awards, and graduation medallions—but also an evening of realizations: that you have had amazing experiences over the last four years, and made some amazing friends; that you have discovered your own excellence, and the excellence of others; that you have explored many paths, and oriented yourself to the right one; that as an Honors College student, you have embarked on a journey of success that lasts a lifetime.



UNIVERSITY of
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THE HONORS COLLEGE

A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dear Colleagues, Alumni, and Friends,

The life of Honors students, like the life of the College itself, is both routine and extraordinary. On any given day during the academic year, students have that Human Situation paper to revise, that Advanced Calculus homework to complete, a Club Theater rehearsal to direct, perhaps a little Honors dodgeball to play.

Routine, yes, but that paper he is revising is on Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*, and the novel has ignited in his mind a great conversation between the arts and the sciences, one that will last his lifetime. Routine, yes, but this morning she signed up for next summer's study abroad to Greece, which features an itinerary that will bring to life scenes she's read about in Plato and Thucydides. Elsewhere in the College, an office meeting with a faculty mentor has helped her put the finishing touches on the presentation she's been preparing for Undergraduate Research Day; she's feeling more confident about making that project the foundation of a Senior Honors Thesis in biomedical engineering. And he just noticed something on the Honors listserv about an upcoming service-learning opportunity; starting next semester, his time with a local non-profit will lead to a legal aid internship and ultimately to a calling and a career.

In other words, our hypothetical Honors students embody a truth about the College: we are not just in the education business, we are also in the transformation business. During 2015—the banner year for Honors captured in the preceding pages—we received a powerful confirmation that this is indeed the *métier* of the men and women who work and study in the College: Phi Beta Kappa (PBK), the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society, granted the University of Houston the right to shelter a chapter.

The installation of our chapter and the induction of the University's first class of Phi Beta Kappa members will surely be one of the highlights of 2016.

Having achieved the PBK milestone, we are looking to the next big thing, an initiative that we are calling the CUE, the Collaborative for University Engagement. Our experience during the past 30 years tells us that academic achievement and student success are founded on engagement, and this connection has been confirmed by dozens of national studies. Engagement not only increases retention and graduation rates, but also develops empathy, motivation, and deep, contextual learning, thus supporting our ultimate goal as a public university, student success that lasts a lifetime.

With engagement programming such as service learning, undergraduate research, study abroad and away, and our weekly Grand Challenges Forum, we are in the process of extending what we have learned about engagement in the Honors College to the entire campus, our neighborhood, our city, and beyond. We are already gathering partners for the CUE, and we hope that you will join us.

Warmest Regards,

William Monroe
O'Connor Abendshein Professor
Dean, The Honors College

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John and Julie King, advisory board members and co-chairs of the 2015 Great Conversation, are pictured with Dean Monroe.

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THE LIFE OF THE COLLEGE

MINORS

Creative Work

Energy & Sustainability

Leadership Studies

Medicine & Society

Phronesis: Politics & Ethics

CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

3+2 Honors Undergraduate/Nursing

Dual Degree Program (with UT)

3+3 Honors Undergraduate/Law

Dual Degree Program (with UH Law)

3+4 Honors BS/MD Dual Degree Program

(with UT Health and UTMB, Galveston)

The Honors Program in the Health Professions/

Honors Biomedical Sciences

The Houston Premedical Academy

(with Baylor College of Medicine)

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Bonner Leaders Program

Collaborative for University Engagement

- *ePortfolio Program*
- *Global Studies Certificate*
- *Grand Challenges Forums*
- *Study Abroad and Study Away Program*
- *Service Learning Program*

Data Analytics in Student Hands (DASH)

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- *Nationally Competitive Scholarships*
- *Provost's Undergraduate Research Scholarship*
- *Senior Honors Thesis*
- *Summer Undergraduate Research Fund-UH*

Speech and Debate Program

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Common Ground Teachers Institute

Cougar Junior Scholars Summer Camp

Phi Beta Kappa Summer Academy

THE LIFE OF THE COLLEGE

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Phi Beta Kappa

Phi Kappa Phi

Omicron Delta Kappa

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Bleacher Creatures

Club Theater

Great Conversation Decorations Committee

Honors Advocates

Honors Ambassadors

Honors College Mentorship Program

Honors Dodgeball

Honors in Community Health

Model Arab League

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Faber-Economon European Travel Scholarships

Honors College Scholarships

National Merit Scholars

Terry Scholars

Tier One Scholars Program

Provost's Service Learning Scholarships



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The cover photo is from the Honors College/Medicine & Society Program 2015 Medical Service-Learning trip to Honduras. The location is a scenic spot near the border with El Salvador. Led by Ricardo Nuila, M.D., the group worked at the Houston Shoulder to Shoulder Foundation's clinic in Santa Ana, Honduras.

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