

Honors students take their skills abroad

From the Great Wall of China to the fields of France, Honors students Emily McIntyre and Bridget McSorley are making the most of their international experiences.

Marketing, entrepreneurship student forges new relationships in China

Emily McIntyre had been at UMKC for barely a year when she hopped on a plane and traveled halfway around the world.

In October 2016, McIntyre and five other UMKC students spent a week in China as part of the Enactus China Project, which aims to foster business and cultural relationships between Kansas City and China.

Her journey, McIntyre says, would not have been possible without the support of the Honors College.

“My experience in the Honors College helped broaden my viewpoints and helped me be more accepting of other cultures.”

“Being in the Honors College is all about finding yourself through new experiences and becoming aware of the world around you,” she says.

During the trip to Beijing and Nanjing, McIntyre worked alongside her peers and UMKC faculty members to develop several new agreements between Kansas City and China, including the development of an exchange program with the UMKC School of Medicine and several exchange programs with the Henry W. Bloch School of Management.

This mission is especially important to McIntyre, who strongly believes in sharing ideas across cultures.

“The trip helped me to be more open and accepting,” she says. “I was able to be in a foreign country with no understanding of the language, and in the end, I realized that everyone was just a person — a

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Honors student Emily McIntyre visits the Great Wall of China during her week abroad through the Enactus China Project.

Meet the 2017 Linda H. and Thomas H. Talbott Scholarship recipients

The Linda H. and Thomas H. Talbott Scholarship is annually awarded to outstanding honors students of any major, in the hopes of making college more accessible.



Samantha Hays is a sophomore working toward bachelor's degrees in biology and chemistry, and a minor in German. She will serve as the Honors College Living/Learning Community academic assistant for the 2017-18 term. She was also recently named president of the UMKC Pride Alliance and is an active member of the UMKC Pre-Medical Society and College Democrats of America. This summer, Hays volunteered at the Hannibal Regional Hospital Children's Center, shadowing a gerontologist and pathologist. She plans to pursue a career in pediatric neurology.



Kathryn Smith is a sophomore pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in family studies. She eventually hopes to attend medical school to become a psychiatrist, with an emphasis in pediatrics. Her professional goal is to serve with Doctors Without Borders and to provide health care to those for whom it is not readily available. Smith is an active member of the UMKC Pre-Medical Society, Psychology Club, Alpha Lambda Delta and the Golden Key International Honor Society. She also participated in the Honors College Scotland Study Abroad Program.

Couples find love at the Honors College

Many students gain lifelong friendships through the Honors College. Some of them also find love! Check out these stories of former honors students who tied the knot.

Ashley French (B.A. '08) and Jacob Weston (B.A. '08) met in their first year at UMKC. Ashley was studying biology and chemistry, while Jacob studied philosophy and english with an emphasis in creative writing. The couple stayed together through graduate school at Mizzou, after which Ashley became a veterinarian at Weathered Rock Veterinary Clinic in Jefferson City, Missouri. Jacob works as a state attorney for the Missouri Public Service Commission. The two have been happily married for 13 years.



Ashley French and Jacob Weston

Jennifer (Kaminsky) Varon (J.D. '11) and Matthew Varon (M.D. '10) hit it off while moving into the Honors Living Learning Community. Matthew double-majored in chemistry and Spanish. Jennifer, who was a Trustees' Scholar, double-majored in criminal justice and criminology and political science. The two dated while Jennifer attended law school and Matthew attended medical school, and they married in 2012. Today, Jennifer is an attorney with Shook, Hardy & Bacon, and Matthew is a medical resident at the University of Kansas Medical Center. They are also the proud parents of a two-year-old daughter.



Jennifer and Matthew Varon with their two-year-old daughter

Sarah Peters Kernan (B.A. '07) and Thomas Kernan (B.M. '05) married shortly after Sarah received her bachelor's degree. Thomas, who majored in music performance at UMKC, completed his graduate work at the University of Cincinnati. He is now assistant professor of music history at Roosevelt University in Chicago. Sarah completed her Ph.D. in medieval history at Ohio State University last year. They live in Oswego, Illinois, with their son, Paul.



Sarah and Thomas Kernan with their son, Paul

Have your own story to share? Email us at honors@umkc.edu!

Student Spotlight: Medical student headed to the Navy

Hunter Faris is in his fifth year at UMKC, pursuing a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a six-year medical doctorate. Two years from earning his M.D., Faris has now spent 10 semesters in the Honors College. He cites it as a major motivating factor to his success.

"The Honors College allows you to try something new and different than what your focus will be for the next four years," he says. "It gives you the breadth to meet new people, find opportunities on campus and take advantage of a support system created with passionate and determined students in mind."

Faris served as treasurer of the Honors College Student Association (formerly Honors Student Advisory Council) and presented his Senior Honors Thesis at the Great Plains Honors Council. He has also played an active role in extracurricular organizations such as the Student Activity Fee Committee, Beta Theta Pi, Alternative Spring Break, and the College of Arts and Sciences Student Council, on which he served as president for two terms. Following graduation, Faris will serve in the Navy Residency Program.

One of the best things about the Honors College, Faris says, is its ability to connect people.

"Honors contracts facilitate relationships with educators and professionals who can become lifelong mentors. Participating in the Honors College has pushed me to explore all of my passions."

Outside the classroom, Faris enjoys hiking and snowboarding, as well as following Japanese anime and the HBO series *Game of Thrones*.



Lucerna Symposium celebrates creativity in all its forms

At UMKC, research opportunities aren't just for expert faculty — they're for undergraduate students, as well. That's the idea behind *Lucerna*, UMKC's only interdisciplinary undergraduate research journal.

In February, the journal celebrated its 11th edition at the 2017 Spring Symposium. In his welcoming remarks, UMKC Chancellor Leo E. Morton explained the importance of a publication like *Lucerna*. "Undergraduate research is especially valuable because it enables students to expand the current boundaries of knowledge, and make original discoveries," he says.

The peer-reviewed journal is solely managed and edited by UMKC Honors College students. This year's edition published research from 11 students. Reflecting the diversity of majors within the Honors College, symposium presenters discussed topics ranging from urban studies to cinema.

At the symposium, honors student and *Lucerna* board member Anthony Gilyard presented his research on video games as art. The great thing about *Lucerna*, he said, is the individuality of each submission.

"We receive so many unique and interesting essays, and many of them explore topics that previously would never be touched on or thought about," Gilyard explained.

Other presenters included:

- Claire Godfrey: "Race, Language and the Urban Landscape: On Material Effects of Racialized Identity Formations"
- Madison Lackey: "Existence of Racism in High School History Classes"
- Sydney Harvey: "Cinema and the Subjective Reality"
- Alexander Peuser: "AIDS and the Artist's Call to Action"

In his remarks, Morton noted that published research is one of the highest achievements to which any student can aspire.

"Having one's work published in *Lucerna* is a notable accomplishment for any undergraduate," Morton says. "Not only does this publication endorse one's findings, but it often marks the early phase of a promising and successful professional career."

Gilyard encouraged his fellow students to submit their research — no matter where their particular passion may lie.

"*Lucerna* isn't just about publishing research on a topic, it's about generating new ideas and thoughts that can inspire intellectual creativity and engagement within our community."

Want to submit an article for next year's edition of *Lucerna*? Send a message to honors@umkc.edu.



Lucerna editor-in-chief Morgan Robertson speaks at the 2017 Spring Symposium.



New assistant teaching professor drawn to diversity at UMKC

The Honors College is excited to welcome our newest faculty member, Jessica Magaña, Ph.D., who joins our team as an assistant teaching professor.

Magaña earned her Ph.D. in integrative biology at Oklahoma State University. Her doctoral research focused on lizards and their hormonal, reproductive and behavioral responses to territorial conflicts.

When undergoing any project, Magaña says, academic encouragement is crucial.

"The process involved a lot of problem solving and trial and error," says Magaña. "I always had supportive mentors and other graduate students to bounce ideas off of."

Magaña will teach honors courses in disciplines such as anchor and biology. She says she looks forward to sharing her varying teaching styles with honors students.

"Everyone learns in their own way, so I incorporate a range of activities," she says. "Problem-solving, small-group discussions and lots of feedback from teachers and peers are especially important."

One of the things that drew her to UMKC was its diversity.

"I'm excited to work with highly motivated students in a wide range of majors," says Magaña, who also mentioned the benefit of having a multi-disciplinary faculty in the Honors College.

Magaña grew up in Kansas City and is eager to return home. In her spare time, she enjoys cheering on her favorite hockey teams and caring for her pet snakes.



Honors College student Bridget McSorley (top left) with friends during her semester abroad.

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person who wanted to get to know me as much as I wanted to get to know them.”

McIntyre, who most recently participated in the Honors College Study Abroad trip to Scotland, encourages other honors students to pursue travel opportunities, but with one caveat.

“Traveling has helped me to grow as a person and opened many doors. But be advised, once you get the travel bug, you can’t go back!”

Student excels in rigorous French study

Senior Bridget McSorley may have spent a year studying in Lyon, France, but she made sure to get a truly global experience.

“I learned silly Spanish songs, ate gelato outside the Pantheon, made friends from Finland and Kyrgyzstan, and visited Scottish battlefields,” she says.

While in France, McSorley studied at Université Lumière Lyon 2. During the fall semester, she attended intensive French classes for more than 20 hours a week. The coursework, however, never felt like a burden.

“I was truly lucky to have such a great team of teachers, as well as a fun and interactive group of classmates,” McSorley said. “We all made a lot of progress together, and very rarely did it feel as though I was having to do work.”

This rigorous program helped prepare her for the spring semester, during which she attended classes with native French students.

“Two of my teachers taught in French, while the third taught in English. They were all understanding of the special challenges facing international students,” McSorley explained. “It was a very rewarding experience.”

McSorley says her classes at the Honors College and the UMKC French department helped her prepare for such advanced study.

“While the first months were difficult, I was able to adapt and make a lot of progress with my language skills mainly because I had a strong foundation from my studies at home.”

Want to help other honors students make study abroad a reality? To learn how you can donate to our Honors College Study Abroad Scholarships Fund, visit honors.umkc.edu/give.

Join Honors College students and faculty on a study abroad trip to Ireland!

July 2018

Spend four weeks with professors John Herron and Diane Mutti Burke studying Irish history, from the medieval period to the present. Students will take several trips to the Irish countryside and to the sea, with several days in the capital city of Dublin and a short excursion to Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Earn up to six honors credits on the trip, with in-state tuition available for all students. Contact our office to learn how you can earn a \$2,000 Honors College Study Abroad Scholarship.

For more information, visit honors.umkc.edu/study-abroad.