

The HonorRoll

UP HONORS NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2024

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Welcome to the second issue of our newly minted Honors Newsletter, the HonorRoll.

The fall semester is always a busy and exciting time in Honors as we welcome new students into the program and embark on a journey of collective and interdisciplinary learning during colloquium. We also celebrated some exciting changes to Honors as we began our new lateral entry program welcoming, for the first time, some amazing sophomores into Honors.

We're excited to share good news, catch up on old friends, and offer a glimpse into what's going down in Honors these days in this issue.

As always, we welcome news and ideas from our alumni and community members. Please get in touch at honors@up.edu with any suggestions and updates about your life.

Enjoy this and future HonorRoll newsletters!

In this newsletter
you can read
updates about:

Honors Colloquium:
City as Text

A Stealthy Game of
Honors Espionage

The 2023 Honors
Cohort

Honorable Mentions

Honors Alum:
Dr. Sami Brancato

Peer
Mentor/Mentee
Convos

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cara Hersh'.

Cara Hersh
UP Program Director



Honors Colloquium: City as Text

For the last two years, Honors students have participated in a new, exciting iteration of colloquium called “City as Text.” Based on a program developed by the National Collegiate Honors Council, this is an active learning experience that allows our first-year and lateral entry students to explore and learn about Portland. Honors students move on to campus a week early in August, and spend six days in small, rotating teams investigating and “reading” contested areas and issues in our urban environment. In addition to daily “walkabouts” around the city, students read about the

history and issues of Portland, meet and talk with faculty whose research interests intersect with local issues, and complete daily reflections and analysis. “City as Text” fosters critical inquiry and integrative learning across disciplines. It is also an amazing way for our students to get to know one another as they navigate buses, maps, and urban wanderings together. Students then choose local topics to research over the semester and present their findings at our final Honors gathering in December.

Honors Espionage

This Fall, one of our senior Honors students and Honors Student Advisory Board members, Liam Rogan, organized a thrilling game of “Honors Espionage.” All students (and Dr. Hersh) were instructed to hang a bandana off their bag and assigned a “target.” Everyone was given a week to steal the bandana of their victim. There was much strategizing, lots of screaming, and several chases around campus as students were eliminated one by one. Cam Wilder ('25) was this year's champion of Honors Espionage and we are excited to make this an Honors tradition.



2023-2024 Cohort!

We were so excited to welcome 29 students into the UP Honors program this August. Twenty first-year students joined us as well as 9 lateral entry, sophomore students. Students came to us from near and far this year including Illinois, Minnesota, Idaho, Colorado, and even Vietnam. These students are runners, rowers, researchers, and readers and we can't wait to see what they contribute to the Bluff!



Honorable Mentions: Celebrating UP Honors Students

- Theresa Wunderlich ('27) spent the summer working for the Oregon Department of Justice as a Bias Response and Sanctuary Promise Program intern
 - Emma Beadle ('25) interned with the International Rescue Committee in DC
 - Anna Singley ('26) is currently interning at the Los Alamos National Laboratory
 - Camille Kuroiwa-Lewis ('26) was selected to be an Associate Editor of the National Collegiate Honours Council's (NCHC) undergraduate research journal, *UReCA*
 - Ainsley Henry ('27) and Will Merritt ('26) were awarded Sigma Xi Audience Choice Awards for their research posters at the Fall 2024 University of Portland Undergraduate Research and Internship Symposium
 - Camille Kuroiwa-Lewis ('26) gave an introductory speech for best-selling author Viet Thanh Nguyen's reading on campus this fall
 - Emmely Minoth ('27) was accepted and participated in the 2024 Summer Health Professions Education Program the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, which explores improving health care for underserved communities
 - Nandita Kumar's ('27) piece, "My Tune" was published in the Fall 2024 issue of University of Portland's magazine, *Portland*
 - Catherine Leach's ('28) pieces, "Someone Will Remember This," and "We Have Seen That It Is Good" were published in the Fall 2024 issue of the University of Portland Writers Magazine
 - Joshua Mager ('25) performed in two UP Fall 2024 productions, *You Can See All the Stars* and *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*
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Honors Alum Highlight

An interview with Dr. Samielle Brancato

Recently, sophomore Biology major V Godoy had the opportunity to meet UP honors alum and breast cancer surgeon Dr. Samielle Brancato. Here are some snippets from their conversation-



About Dr. Brancato's past and present:

She grew up in Portland and chose to attend the University of Portland because she wanted a liberal arts curriculum along with study abroad opportunities, and was impressed by UP's strong premed program and high medical school acceptance rates.

Her experience with honors:

At UP, she felt connected with students in the honors program and formed great friendships with the honors students. She admired their academic curiosity and engagement, so she decided to apply to the honors program at the end of her first year. She called the then honors program director and asked if she could be a member. She was invited to join the honors program and participated in the curriculum starting her second year while in Salzburg, Austria.

Her advice for current students who are interested in going into the medical field:

Seize opportunities that present themselves, in any field. Take time to learn from these experiences because you'll never know what may come out of it. Before her current career path, Dr. Brancato shadowed veterinarians and physicians, conducted behavioral research with white flies and the effects of Imidacloprid, and traveled abroad. She seized every opportunity. All of these experiences gave her something, helping her understand what her true passion was, and eventually leading her towards her current position.

Q&A with Will, Sam, and Luke

What was your colloquium experience like as a freshman?



Luke
'27

"My freshman colloquium was centered around food. We read a book about food and spent a week doing food-related activities, like volunteering at a local garden and going to a farm. We had two hours scheduled to discuss the book, and it turned into a debate where most people decided they didn't like the book."

What opportunities have you found to be the most helpful in the honors program?

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- ✦
- ✦ "I'd say that the best part of the honors program is getting to know the other honors students. It's great to see them around campus and say hi, especially the upperclassmen. It's nice to have friends who are older than you. Plus, once you get further into the program, you'll have at least one honors student in every class. You don't always recognize them right away, but colloquium helps with that. And anytime you end up in a group project with someone from the honors program, you know it's going to be a good time."
- ✦
- ✦
- ✦
- ✦



Sam
'28

Looking back, what do you wish you had known when you started?

"I guess I wish I had known how valuable the connections with other honors students would be. Colloquium was a great experience because I got to know my cohort really well. It's awesome to be able to wave to almost everyone in my cohort when I see them on campus. It's especially nice to have upperclassmen as friends since that can be hard to do otherwise. It's not always obvious at first, but colloquium helps you recognize everyone. And it's always a relief when you're placed in a group project with an honors student because you know it's going to be a good experience."



Will
'26

Do you have any piece of advice for new students entering the program?

"Don't let the extra work required by the honors program deter you from joining. The benefits, like early registration and the opportunity to take unique honors courses, outweigh the workload. The honors classes are pass/fail, so the pressure is off, allowing you to focus on learning and engaging in meaningful discussions. If there are aspects you aren't thrilled about, you can prioritize the parts that excite you and simply fulfill the basic requirements for the rest."



Luke
'27

Q&A with Will, Sam, and Luke

Has honors influenced your future plans/career path in any way?

“I think the honors program has definitely opened my mind to new ways of thinking and approaching problems. Like, our colloquium discussions really pushed me to think critically and consider different perspectives, which is something I'll need no matter what career path I choose. Plus, the whole 'public intellectual' thing the program emphasizes has gotten me thinking about how I can use my knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on the world. It's made me realize there's more to success than just getting a good job; it's about using your education to contribute to society in a meaningful way.”



Luke
'27

What is one of your favorite memories from your time in the program?

“It's tough to pinpoint just one favorite memory, but some of the best times have been the unexpected moments of connection with other honors students. Like, one time, I was in this class, and we were doing group work, and I realized the person I was partnered with was also in the honors program. We hadn't really talked before, but once we knew we were both "honors kids," it was like an instant bond. We ended up having a blast working on the project, and it made the whole thing way more fun and less stressful. It just goes to show that the honors program isn't just about academics; it's about finding your people and building a community.”

What do you enjoy most about being a part of the honors community?

“The honors community is super tight-knit, and it's awesome to have that support system. Like, just seeing a familiar face in a class or being able to wave to someone across campus makes a big difference. Plus, the honors kids are all pretty motivated and engaged, which makes classes and group projects more interesting and productive. We kind of get each other's vibe. And honestly, having the upperclassmen to look up to and get advice from has been super helpful. I don't think I would've found that kind of connection anywhere else on campus.”



Will
'26



Sam
'28



Contributors

Nandita Kumar
Catherine Leach
Cara Hersh

Thank you for reading!

UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND HONORS PROGRAM	honors@up.edu
https://www.up.edu/honorsprogram/index.html	5000 N. Willamette Blvd. Portland, OR 97203
