

The HonorRoll

UP HONORS NEWSLETTER

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Spring 2025

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Happy summer, Honors friends!

We are winding down from a very busy, productive, and fun spring semester in Honors.

We tried out some new events, including our inaugural Three Minute thesis, admitted our new Honors cohort, and said goodbye to the Honors graduates of 2025 (who are going off to do very cool things).

In this issue of the HonorRoll, we're excited to share good news, catch up on old friends, and offer a glimpse into what's going down in Honors.

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!

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

Cara Hersh
UP Program Director

In this newsletter
you can read
updates about:

Welcome

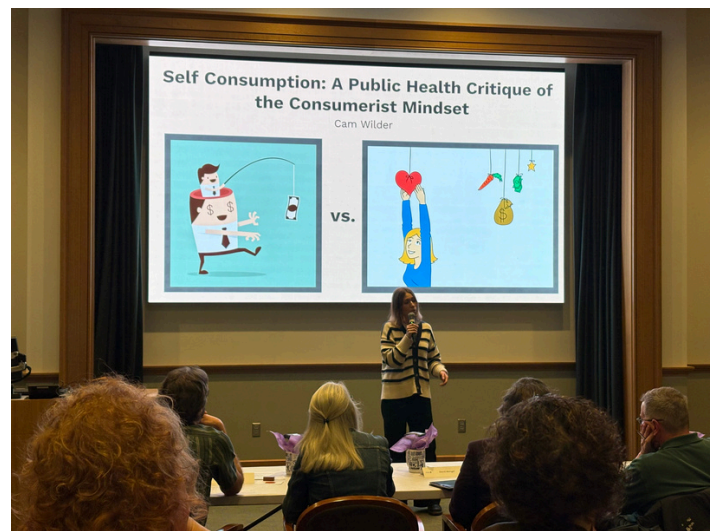
Three Minute Thesis

Western Regional
Honors Conference

Honorable
Mentions

Co-Curricular
Spotlight: Mock
Trial

Honoring our
Seniors



Three Minute Thesis Competition

All graduating Honors students were invited to participate in the program's first annual Three Minute Thesis competition. This event, which is held in graduate programs across the world, challenges students to present their work in a compelling, clear, and concise format. UP students presented the work they completed for their Senior Honors project in just three minutes with just one static slide. Semi-finals were judged by three amazing UP Honors alumni and a COM professor who provided invaluable feedback about their presentations--Kathryn Howard, Cathy Myers, and Emilie Stayner. Then, in April,

nine fearless students stood in front of an esteemed panel of faculty judges and an enthusiastic audience to quickly but expertly present their research. At the end of this fast-paced and fun evening, three students were awarded prizes based on their presentations and one student received the Audience Choice Award. Congrats to our prize winners Cam Wilder, Malia Kaiser, Katie Newton, and Priyanka Vinsal. We are looking for alumni judges for next year so please let us know if you are interested!

Western Regional Honors Conference



This April, four Honors students and Dr. Hersh attended the Western Regional Honors Conference in Denver, CO. Adin Sokol and Liam Rogan presented on the new 300-level Honors course with Dr. Hersh while Lauren Swaney presented a poster and Ainsley Henry gave a talk on their respective undergraduate research projects. We had a great time hearing about cool work being done in Honors across the Western states and met Honors peers at other universities.

Honorable Mentions: Celebrating UP Honors Students

- Shane Ruyle had two pieces published in the regional Honors literary publication, *Scribendi*, and was awarded a Staff Choice Award
 - Nandita Kumar was selected to serve as an Editor for the National Collegiate Honors Council undergraduate research journal, *UReCA*.
 - Malia Kaiser is the recipient of a 2025-2025 Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Taiwan
 - Emma Beadle is the recipient of a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Spark Award to study Arabic virtually during the summer of 2025
 - Katie Newton was awarded the 2025 West Coast Conference (WCC) Postgraduate Scholarship
 - Susan Novak was selected to participate in a NSF-funded REU in a high energy physics lab at Oklahoma State University in the summer of 2025
 - Nina Sullivan was elected treasurer of UP Mock Trial for the 2025-2026 season
 - Catherine Leach was elected Vice President of Outreach of UP Mock Trial for the 2025-2026 season
 - Sophia McLellan presented at the Pacific Sociological Association Conference in San Francisco in the Spring of 2025
 - Honors alumni Hannah Monti ('23) and Ethan McNally ('23) were awarded NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Honorable Mentions
 - Congratulations to the following Honors students who were honored with awards at the Senior Awards breakfast in April: Dylan Ostendorff, Cam Wilder, Priyanka Vinsel, Katie Newton, Tait Vigeland, Malia Kaiser, Sophia McLellan, Adin Sokol
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Rising Junior Treasurer



Rising Junior

“Mock Trial has been a fundamental part of my undergraduate experience, I’ve wanted to be a lawyer since high school and this club gives me a sense of what that profession could look like. More than that, however, Mock Trial is a place for anyone, and what I love most about it is that it fosters a team of people who support each other through tournaments and through the general ups and downs life can bring.”

✦ Nina



Rising Junior



Rising Sophomore VP of Outreach



The University of Portland Mock Trial Program offers students a unique opportunity to develop critical thinking, public speaking, and analytical skills in a courtroom simulation. The team prepares comprehensive cases, examining witnesses, and presenting legal arguments in front of judges.

Mock Trial is a popular activity with UP Honors students! Nina Sullivan, Q Acosta, Mai Nguyen, and Catherine Leach are all participants in Mock Trial as well as students in the Honors Program.

This spring, UP Students had the opportunity to compete at Regionals in Seattle.



STUDENT CELEBRATIONS “HONORING OUR GRADUATES”



LAUREN SAVAS

Lauren is majoring in Biology and minoring in Medical Spanish and Chemistry.

Her SHP is titled "Bacterial signaling and mechanisms alter risk-taking behaviors in *Caenorhabditis elegans*." She explored the effects of changing the gut microbiome of *C. elegans* animals via bacterial exposure on chemotactic food-seeking behavior and intestine-neuron signaling pathways."



OWEN GENT

Owen is majoring in both Mechanical Engineering and Philosophy

His SHP is titled "Reinventing the Wheel: Budgeting 10000 lbs" His project sought to develop a new way to have a forklift tilt a payload within a tight budget and without the use of hydraulic cylinders, which are industry standard, and then test this new method.



MALIA KAISER

Malia is majoring in psychology and minoring in fine arts.

Her SHP is titled "Who's Punishing? Impact of Identity on Third Party Punishment Reputation". In this thesis, Malia explored how gender and racial stereotypes impact how we form reputations after witnessing disciplinary actions, specifically third-party punishment.



LIBBY HUBBELING

Libby is majoring in Biology with a Chemistry Minor.

Their senior honors project is titled "Fecal Microbiota as a cure for Type 1 Diabetes" focused on the potential to reverse pre-diabetic symptoms in diagnosed patients at risk for developing type 1 diabetes.



JADE CRUZ

Jade is a Psychology Major and Philosophy Minor

Her senior honors project is titled "Mental Health Experiences, Motivations, and Values of YouthLine Staff: Insights from a Teen-to-Teen Crisis Line" I facilitated a focus group among YouthLine staff that explored the staff's approach to supporting youth, highlighting their unique position in the crisis line field and their relationship to youth volunteers and supporting teens in crisis.



ALEX DESAI

Alex is a Psychology major with a minor in Neuroscience.

His SHP is titled "Impact of Mindful Acceptance on Perceived Stress in College Students in the Short Term." My study showed a significant reduction in perceived stress within the mindfulness with acceptance group (compared to the control), aligning with previous studies and contributing to the growing body of research supporting shorter and online interventions.

STUDENT CELEBRATIONS “HONORING OUR GRADUATES”



LUCIAN KENNELLY

Lucian is a computer science major.

His senior honors project is a lap simulator for the EVGP club, which simulates battery drain on a go kart to help prototype the go kart to be better.



HELEN LUU

Helen is majoring in Cell, Molecular & Biomed Sciences and minoring in Chemistry and Neuroscience.

Her SHP is titled “Effect of Collagen Supplements on Flexibility in Young Adults.” She explored the physical benefits that collagen may bring to college students and whether collagen supplementation can produce the same improvements in flexibility that daily stretching presents.



ANNIKA MAXWELL

Annika is an English major.

Her SHP is titled “Emulating Anne Carson: Poetry in the Style of “The Glass Essay.” Essentially, I am writing a poem using Anne Carson’s techniques from her 1995 poem “The Glass Essay.” Similar to how Carson close reads Emily Brontë’s work within the poem, I am examining the writing and life of the poet Elizabeth Bishop.



SOPHIA MCLELLAN

Sophia is double majoring in Psychology and Sociology and minoring in Spanish. Her SHP is titled “Examining the Effects of a Diagnosis on the Mental Health of Individuals”. Her research analyzes NSDUH data to compare the mental health of those who have received a diagnosis for a physical health condition, with those who seem to exhibit symptoms but have not received a diagnosis.



JORDYNN MICHAEL

Jordynn is majoring in Biology and minoring in Chemistry.

Her SHP is titled “Association Between Breast Cancer and Vitamin D.” This project investigates the potential relationship between vitamin D levels and breast cancer risk, with a focus on the high incidence of breast cancer in Oregon. By evaluating vitamin D supplementation as a preventive measure, Jordynn’s research aims to explore whether increasing vitamin D intake can reduce the risk of breast cancer, particularly in populations with lower baseline levels of vitamin D. The project has significant implications for public health, offering a non-invasive, cost-effective approach to cancer prevention.



AMANDA MYERS

Amanda is an English and Spanish major, Writing minor

Her SHP is a research paper titled “Indigeneity in Walden: Thoreau’s Contribution to the Public Perception of Native Americans” and it explores the work of transcendentalist writer Henry David Thoreau to evaluate how his interest in Indigenous philosophy and activism, romanticization of nature, and condoning of manifest destiny offered a complex and dialectical contribution to Western attitudes toward Native American culture at large.

STUDENT CELEBRATIONS “HONORING OUR GRADUATES”



KATIE NEWTON

Katie is majoring in chemistry with an emphasis in biochemistry and minor in math.

Her SHP is titled "Structure-Altering Mutations and Conformational Analysis of the HIV-1 Frameshifting Element" and is an extension of a summer research project she did at New York University.



DYLAN OSTENDORFF

Dylan is a Biology major with a minor in Psychology and Chemistry

His SHP is titled "The Role of Play in Healthcare"

Dylan tested how play is integrated into multiple healthcare fields and the effects it has in healing. This is to help in his future career in pediatric medicine!



LIAM ROGAN

Liam is and Economics major, with a minor in environmental policy.

His capstone project is titled "The effects of disability diagnoses on standardized testing scores in the European Union." To answer this question, he analyzed social and economic statistics using a regression model, to determine how different factors influence the average standardized test scores in 22 different EU countries.



JANICE SINGHARAJ

Janice is majoring in Cell, Molecular, and Biomedical Science with a minor in Chemistry. Her SHP is titled "Accessibility to Dental Care in the Portland Metropolitan Area." The purpose of her project was to analyze accessibility to dental care in the Portland MSA of varying income classes, where trends observed were examined to understand possible correlations arising from the data that could explain what inhibits Portlanders from attending their dental cleanings.



ADIN SOKOL

Adin is majoring in Mechanical Engineering. His SHP is titled "Malawi Sustainable Energy Solutions"

The project aims to develop more sustainable cooking solution for St. Mary's Secondary School in Karonga, Malawi. Currently reliant on wood, the school faces economic, social, and environmental challenges due to widespread deforestation in the country. Our team is committed to delivering two alternative solutions that enhance sustainability across these pillars.



TAIT VIGELAND

Tait is majoring in English with a minor in Spanish and Political Science & Global Affairs

Her SHP titled "How Literary Doppelgangers Reflect Identity Formation of Black American Women" For my capstone, I'll be analyzing Toni Morrison's novel Sula through the lens of the doppelganger to learn more about Black American women's experiences of intersectionality and how this impacts their journeys of identity formation, consequently informing how I, as a white woman, show up as an advocate and activist in womanist social justice movements.

STUDENT CELEBRATIONS “HONORING OUR GRADUATES”



PRIYANKA VINSEL

Priyanka is majoring in Human biology with a minor in Chemistry

Priyanka's SHP is titled "Effects of ethanol exposure and the Sonic Hedgehog signaling pathway on neural crest migration." This project examines the effect of alcohol exposure on a cardiac cell population during development and potential rescue treatment to reverse the inhibition of the sonic hedgehog signaling pathway.



CAM WILDER

Cam is majoring in Integrative Health and Wellness and minoring in Psychology.

Her SHP is titled "Self Consumption: A Public Health Critique of the Consumerist Mindset." She sought to analyze the effects of consumerism on multi-dimensional public health issues and suggest potential upstream interventions.



EMMA BEADLE

Emma is majoring in Political Science & Global Affairs, minoring in Spanish and Constitutional Studies, and obtained a certificate in Leadership

Their SHP, titled "A Strategy of Inclusion: Deconstructing and Combatting Anti-Immigrant Populism in the US" was inspired by their work in refugee resettlement over the past year. They used a "Theories of Strategy" framework to deconstruct the roots of anti-immigrant populism and strategically disrupt this sentiment through the development of a localized storytelling campaign.

Contributors

Nandita Kumar
Catherine Leach
Cara Hersh

Thank you for reading!

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