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University Honors Program Newsletter

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Celebrate 35 Years of Honors



Georgia Southern is celebrating 35 Years of Honors
Saturday, April 22, 2017
7 to 9 p.m.
Eidson House on the campus of Georgia Southern
Click on the image for more details

Honors Student Researchers Connect Savannah to Ireland on St. Patrick's Day



Students researchers meeting with Irish government officials

Students from the University Honors Program delivered a briefing on St. Patrick's Day in Savannah to Irish Government Minister Michael Ring and Irish Consul General Shane Stephens. This opportunity was made possible because of the ongoing research into the historic links between Savannah and the southeastern Irish county of Wexford. The Wexford-Savannah Axis is a partnership of the Honors Program with the Center for Irish Teaching and Research. In addition, the work of honors alumna and current graduate student Sarah Ryniker (anthropology '15) was featured in the Savannah Morning News and on WSAV.

Link Wexford-Savannah Axis to: <https://www.wexsav.com/>

Link Savannah Morning News to: <http://savannahnow.com/news/st-patricks-day/2017-03-15/georgia-southern-student-helps-uncover-savannah-s-irish-american#>

Link WSAV to: <http://wsav.com/2017/03/15/gsu-student-discovers-savannahs-irish-heritage-in-ireland-archive/>

Alumni Update: Molly Williams Publishes Honors Thesis



Honors alumna Molly Williams (exercise science) has been busy since graduating in 2015. While working on her master's degree in kinesiology, volunteering at an after-school youth soccer program, and interning with Tormenta FC, a semi-pro soccer team in the Professional Development League, the former Georgia Southern women's soccer team goalkeeper managed to find time to send out her honors thesis for publication. Titled "The Impact of NCAA Division I Women Soccer Coaching Style on Player Well-Being: A Qualitative Analysis," it was included in the 2017 Applied Research in Coaching and Athletics Annual.

"When Dr. Czech emailed me that my article had been accepted and was going to be published, I could not believe it," Williams said. "It felt so gratifying to have something I had written and spent so much time working on become published. I really owe all my thanks to the Honors Program at Georgia Southern for allowing me to have the

opportunity to conduct undergraduate research and to write a thesis. It really does push its students to be their best, as well as creates opportunities that would not be possible elsewhere.”

Honors in Action: Camp Blue Skies at Camp Twin Lakes



Lydia Bonnell and Kristi St. Clair pose for a picture at camp

A week at camp is where 21 Georgia Southern students spent their spring break in March. However, this camp was not simply about getting outdoors and roasting

marshmallows by the fire at night. These students were here to work. This was the Honors Program's alternative break trip to work with Camp Blue Skies at Camp Twin Lakes.

For seven years now, honors students have spent their spring breaks volunteering as cabin counselors for adults with developmental disabilities. This year's group, led by Dr. Jerri Kropp and Dr. Brent Wolfe, included seven honors students and three honors alumni, the latter of which included Sarah Holmes (psychology '16) who returned for her twelfth year in a row. The students working at camp led campers through activities such as ceramics, karaoke, cooking, and yoga.

Two pre-med majors, Kristi St. Clair (biology '18) and Lydia Bonnell (biology '19) had the opportunity to shadow the camp's medical director. St. Clair, who participated in her second camp this year, said, "The campers are incredible. They never fail to surprise me with their intuition and thoughtfulness. I love going to camp because I am reminded that everyone struggles with their own demons but by showing kindness and welcoming new friends, problems can disappear."

Fun (and Work) in the Sun



Students represent Georgia Southern in the forests of Costa Rica

While many college students spent their spring break lounging on the beach, six honors students traded their swimsuits and suntan lotion for shovels and tennis shoes. They were part of the third year of Project Pura Vida!, an alternative break trip based in Costa Rica. Along with Dra. Leticia McGrath, these students worked with the Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation to volunteer in La Carpio. Their activities included playing games and reading books to local schoolchildren, as well as helping to build new homes. In their free time, they were able to explore the country's breathtaking sights, engaging with and experiencing a culture entirely different from their own.

For Alana Bray (early childhood education '19), this trip was her first time in Costa Rica. "I wanted to be a part of Project Pura Vida! To expand my knowledge of different culture, and this trip definitely did that. Experiencing both the wealthy and impoverished sides of Costa Rica really opened my eyes. I learned to try new things with an open mind and always be willing to step outside of my comfort zone."

Honors Alumni are encouraged to update their information here!

A New Chapter: Aleyna Rentz Receives Graduate School Fellowship



Aleyna Rentz (Writing and Linguistics & English '17) has always known writing is her passion. When she was in elementary school, she created “novels” out of folded notebook paper during lulls in her classes. In middle and high school, she tried her hand in poetry and short stories. These pastimes led Rentz to pursue a degree in writing and linguistics at Georgia Southern, where she honed and developed her raw talent. Now, her next chapter in her life will involve pursuing an MFA in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University’s prestigious Writing Seminars program, which awards its students a teaching assistantship and stipend. The program is extremely selective, only accepting four fiction writers annually from among hundreds of applicants.

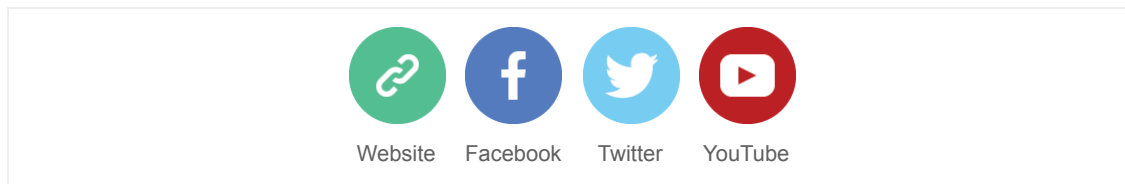
Rentz credits much of her success to her four years at Georgia Southern. “My classes in the writing department played a tremendous part in my development as a writer,” she said. “The program here has given me so many opportunities to grow both artistically and professionally, and I’m so grateful for that.”

Professor Jared Sexton was one of Rentz’s first creative writing instructors who supported and mentored her throughout her four years. “Aleyna has worked incredibly hard over the past few years,” he said. “She’s brought draft after draft of her stories into my office and has always been willing to go the extra mile to make her writing better. We’ve seen the results with her numerous publications, and now with this acceptance into Johns Hopkins MFA program. It’s well, well deserved.”



The Georgia Southern University Honors Program is designed to foster the development of a critical sense of inquiry, a spirit of creativity, a global perspective and an ethic of civic responsibility. With your investment, the University Honors Program will continue to enrich the lives of students at Georgia Southern University.

To learn more about Honors at Georgia Southern, support honors activities or become involved in honors alumni events, contact Honors Director Steven Engel at sengel@georgiasouthern.edu



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