



HONORS COLLEGE

COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

ASPIRATIONS

Aspirations is the newsletter of the Columbus State University Honors College, which provides updates, features, and information for alumni, faculty, students, and the community. On behalf of the Honors College Staff, we hope you enjoy *Aspirations* and we welcome any ideas for future issues.

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We made it to the end of the fall semester! Just three months ago, we were still in limbo, unsure of how our lives would look at the end of 2020. But, after many trials, challenges, firsts, and finally successes, we did it!

In the fall of 2019, Columbus State University kicked off their new "Create You" initiative with the four key points listed below. These are proudly displayed on the wall of Illges 317 in the Honors College. Little did we know that in 2020, we would be implementing these in ways we could not imagine when the campaign kicked off. Through social distancing, outdoor events, zoom meetings, and mixed virtual/in-person classes, we are truly learning how to expand our world, find new ways to collaborate, and reimagine education in this new reality.

We wish you a happy end to 2020 and a fresh start to the New Year!

Happy Holidays to you and your family!!!

*Cultivating Creativity
Inspiring Collaboration
Reimagining Education
Expanding Worlds*

HONS 3555

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: SCIENCE AND SCIENCE FICTION



Honors College Faculty Fellows, Dr. Lydia Ray and Dr. Patrick Jackson co-taught HONS 3555 during the fall semester. Great Conversations courses combine professors from two different disciplines to discuss topics from their perspective. This Great Conversations course focused on artificial intelligence and how it has changed through the years.



Dr. Ray is a Computer Science Professor and from her perspective, the students discussed how artificial intelligence is trending towards data driven artificial intelligence. Rather than the common perception that artificial intelligence will become superior to human intelligence, most scientists see data driven artificial intelligence used more frequently for good and potentially evil purposes. Predictive analysis, sentiment analysis, applications in cybersecurity, cancer detection, and earthquake prediction are just some of the positive uses of artificial intelligence. However, it may also be used to create falsified videos that can be used for political purposes. The class discussed the robotic automation process and use of robots to replace tasks that are either boring or dangerous (such as space travel) for humans. The students also discussed natural language processing and the recent GPT technology that can generate codes and can do all kinds of programming tricks (which can lead to potential job loss).



Dr. Jackson is a English Literature Professor and from his perspective, the students read many books depicting artificial intelligence. These books included a book written in 1909 called "The Machine Stops," which describes a future in which everyone lives separately in little underground homes. They don't see each other directly, but spend most of their days talking on screens (which is all too familiar to us now). The people let a big computer run everything and when "The Machine" stops, the society collapses.

The students also read two other books: *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* and one short story "The Lifecycle of Software Objects." Near the end of the semester, the students watched the movie *Her*, about a computer who falls in love with the man she works for and things get complicated.

Many questions were addressed in the course, such as the implications of creating an artificial intelligence that could reach sentience and think for itself, would artificial intelligence be a threat to us and what decisions should we allow artificial intelligence to make for us and what should we not? The students also considered if artificial intelligence may replace humans and could we live through it in some way? Also, is it an extension of human beings? Dr. Jackson explained that many of the conversations kept turning back, not toward artificial intelligence, but toward human beings themselves, such as, "How do we define consciousness?", "What makes us different than animals?", and "Where are we headed as a species?"

Dr. Jackson said, "despite being a virtual class, the course went great! He said the students were engaged and showed up ready to talk each week and the class was fascinating and definitely a success!"

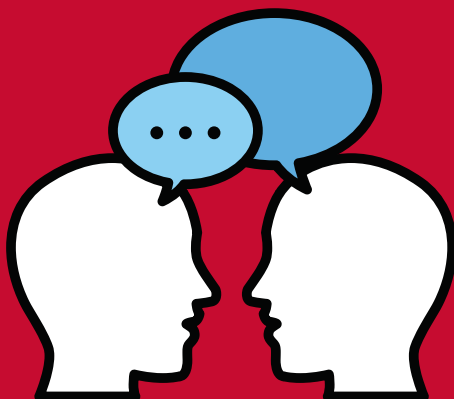
HONS 3000

CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS

In today's political and social climate, it is crucial for our students to learn techniques for deeper respectful conversations about diverse issues. In this Crucial Conversations course, the students were challenged and engaged in civil discussions on controversial topics such as gun control and the death penalty. Listed below are perspectives from two students this semester.

"We discussed Black Lives Matter, abortion/Women's Rights, the presidential election, and several other controversial topics. We talked a lot about policy change and the people involved in these events. Examples include the murders of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, Roe v. Wade, riots in Oregon this past summer, and the election outcomes in our very own state.

The best thing about this class was how willing each class member was to create safe space for discussions. Oftentimes when discussing these tough topics, I personally tune out or shut down, but I found that in this class I could ask questions and learn from the perspectives of my classmates. I could learn from them, and I could tell they wanted to listen and learn from me when I spoke, too."



"The Honors seminar Crucial Conversations was a very interesting class this semester! We discussed important controversial issues which are often difficult to talk about due to the current political climate. The topics included the safety measures surrounding coronavirus at CSU, climate change, the Black Lives Matter movement, abortion rights, freedom of speech, and immigration policy. The examples I used in class to support my opinion as the class progressed included the experiences of DACA recipients with immigration policy and scientific evidence on climate change. I enjoyed having conversations with everyone in class and hearing their opinion on the topics. I learned a lot from listening to everyone's experiences and researching the weekly topic. Online classes have been challenging this semester due to the lack of hands-on experience and being away from campus. However, I really liked logging on to this seminar each week because there was a new topic to talk about and it helped me develop my opinion on important political issues!"

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC

"I do not believe our HONS 3000 was heavily affected by COVID as some other courses. Since the focus was on discussion, Zoom was actually a pretty nice format. It was easier to see everyone's faces on screen and gauge their reactions or see when they were ready to share something. I know Zoom can't ever beat the experience and feeling of vulnerability that comes from speaking in person, but it was nice to see everyone on screen and catch a smile. It was also a lot easier to gauge when someone had enough of a certain topic, and we could move on without it being too awkward."

"I attended a mix of virtual and in-person classes. Some of my classes were entirely virtual and some of my other classes were a hybrid/extended-classroom style.

One thing I liked about the virtual or hybrid model is that it allowed me to experience time in the classroom with an instructor but also pace myself in my instruction and manage my time how I see necessary. However, one thing that was hard for my transition into college was that many of my teachers were not prepared for the complications arising from COVID and were unable to cover some of the material they had previously planned.

My personal challenge this semester was finding a good place to work on my school work without interrupting my roommate or being interrupted myself."

"Every one of my classes was virtual, a few even changed to that style at the last minute.

- I disliked not being able to meet people in person because I felt like I was missing a lot of stuff and communication between us students seemed to take much longer to be completed.
- My challenges were trying to stay on task when I had nothing but emails and zoom meetings to keep me tethered to CSU.
- I do know that I missed out on some in person meetings because I lost the will to go back to campus after losing all my in-person classes. I wish I had tried to go to at least one event, especially some of your Honors College events like the frisbee-golf. I'm glad I had this year to reflect on life, but I hope next year I can get back to being more active in my university life."

"I had all virtual classes with the exception of one hybrid class that met mainly outside in the One Arsenal courtyard when we had in-person meetings. I have found that some professors try to replicate the in-person experience while others try to optimize virtual classes.

I appreciate professors that worked to optimize the virtual format, it worked better with my schedule and was more navigable. Unfortunately, classes like these were very impersonal and I never got to know any of my classmates, but I have found that this is a tradeoff I am willing to accept. Courses with set meeting times did not always provide the best learning experience for me. Major challenges were burnout, lack of community, and related, isolation. Given the current circumstances, none of these are surprising. Additionally, a big motivator for me in school is finding relevance in my studies, why is the material important? Why is it relevant? How is it constructive? Answering these questions was difficult for me this semester. Last thought: Everyone is trying their best and deserves to be extended some grace during this time - even/especially to ourselves."

STUDENT NEWS!

This fall, two Honors College students will be graduating in CSU's Drive-Thru Graduation on December 12, 2020.



Shannon Eshman - B.S. Special Education

Thesis: Literacy Based Behavioral Interventions: A Review of the Literature

Mentor: Dr. Kalynn Hall-Pistorio

Notes: After graduation Shannon will teach in the Muscogee County school system for a year and half before she attends graduate school to obtain her masters and Ph.D. in Special Education with the goal of becoming a professor of Special Education.

Elijah Neundorfer - B.S. Computer Science with a focus in Cyber Security

Thesis: ClearComm Privacy: A Software Template to Communicate App Privacy Behavior in Android

Mentor: Dr. Alfredo Perez

Notes: Elijah has accepted a position as an entry level project manager with TSYS, and plans to further his experience and education with the goal of studying and finding solutions to problems related to privacy and security in human computer interaction.



Senior Ashlyn Dewberry has been offered a full scholarship to Baylor Law School. Ashlyn graduates in May. Congratulations!

Senior Teresa Himes has been accepted to NYU's Silver School of Social Work beginning Spring 2021. We wish her the best!

HOMECOMING



In past years, the Honors College has hosted an event where alumni could watch the Homecoming parade together downtown. This year, with the Homecoming parade canceled, we went virtual and it turned out great! We hosted a cocktail hour with the Center for Servant Leadership during the week of Homecoming. We had a very knowledgeable bartender showing us how to make drinks while catching up with alumni from across the country.

It was wonderful to hear stories from our alumni. We believe this event worked so well at bringing alumni together who would not have been able to come to an in person event that we plan on doing it again next year. Thank you to those who attended and we hope everyone will be able to attend next year. We love hearing from you!

ALUMNI NOTES

Each year we present alumni awards for Community Impact and Global Impact. We know our Honors College Alumni are doing great things right here in our community and around the world, and we are hoping you can nominate one of them for these amazing awards. Please see the criteria for each of the awards below, and submit your nominations to by March 1st to Kristi Rehrauer at rehrauer_kristi@columbusstate.edu. Nominees will be asked to submit their CV upon nomination for our committee to review.

Criteria for Alumni Community Impact Award

- The nominee must hold a bachelor's degree from Columbus State University and have completed the requirements of the Honors Program or Honors College.
- The nominee must have distinguished himself or herself in his or her professional or personal life by demonstrating through and/or research focus on the the Chattahoochee Valley Region.
- The nominee would demonstrate the ability to have disregard for the impossible when it comes to their research, action, and/or advocacy.
- The nominee must have exemplified high moral character and integrity and be held in high esteem by his/her fellow alumni.

Criteria for Alumni Regional Impact Award

- The nominee must hold a bachelor's degree from Columbus State University and have completed the requirements of the Honors Program or Honors College.
- The nominee must have distinguished himself or herself in his or her professional or personal life by demonstrating through and/or research focus on the the Global or Regional Level.
- The nominee would demonstrate the ability to have disregard for the impossible when it comes to their research, action, and/or advocacy.
- The nominee must have exemplified high moral character and integrity and be held in high esteem by his/her fellow alumni.

HONORIS CAUSA CELEBRATES HOMECOMING

Honoris Causa, the Honors College student organization, celebrated Homecoming by "Painting a Paw." This is a CSU tradition that shows school spirit to students and visitors on campus. You can find our Paw on the road in front of Richards Hall.



HONORS COLLEGE

SPREADING KINDNESS IN OCTOBER

During the month of October, Honoris Causa officers challenged members to "Do Something Nice" to spread joy and happiness during the middle of the semester.

Our members really stepped up and showed how much they cared. Many students wrote notes to their professors, some helped their community, and others helped friends in need. Pictured below are just a few of the good deeds performed by our amazing students!



HONORIS CAUSA FALL EVENTS

Although our lives were different this semester, our students were still able to host events and have fun! Here are some of our events:



Hiking



Disc Golf at Flat Rock Park



Trunk or Treat



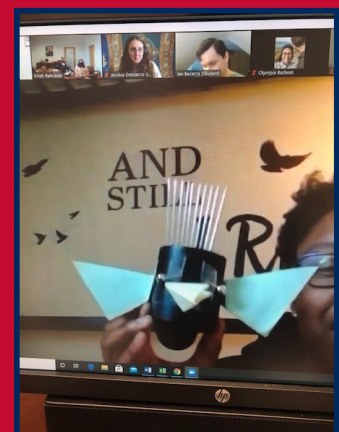
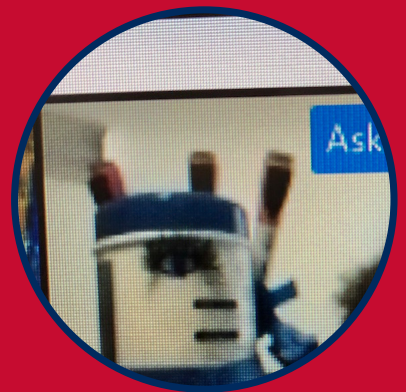
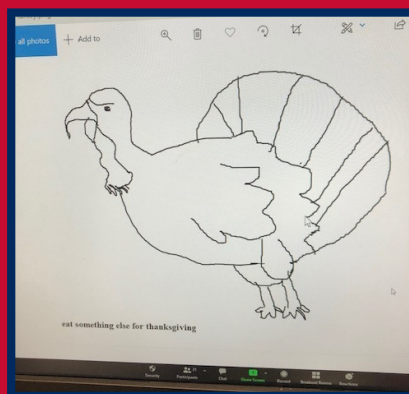
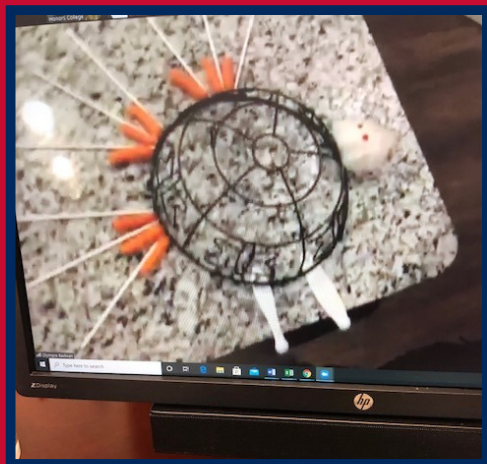
**TRICK
OR
TREAT**

****PROPER SOCIAL DISTANCING WAS ENFORCED AT ALL EVENTS.
IN SOME PICTURES, MASKS WERE REMOVED FOR THE PICTURE****

HONORIS CAUSA NOVEMBER TURKEY FUN



During the fall semester, we had all of our Honoris Causa meetings virtually. It is hard to find activities to keep students engaged, but in November we had lots of turkey fun. We challenged students to make a turkey out of whatever they could find around them. We had some interesting homemade turkeys. Our students are amazingly talented and creative!



Honors College Vision

The Honors College will make Columbus State University a first choice institution for students who strive to succeed by championing innovative instruction, undergraduate research, and interdisciplinary studies.

Honors College Mission

Our dual mission provides an innovatively delivered curriculum for high achieving students and advances the intellectual growth and recognition of the university. Our college challenges a diverse community of students to individualize their academic experiences, while serving as an institutional champion for undergraduate research, interdisciplinary studies, and creative instruction.



Do you have a student or faculty member you would like to spotlight? Or just have a suggestion for an upcoming edition of Aspirations?

Please send us an email at honors@columbusstate.edu
We would love your suggestions!



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