

5-2018

Honors Oracle, May 2018

Marshall University Honors College

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Recommended Citation

Marshall University Honors College, "Honors Oracle, May 2018" (2018). *Honors Oracle*. 14.
<http://mds.marshall.edu/oracle/14>

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Honors Oracle

Marshall University's Honors College newsletter • May 2018

Honors students play games, win prizes at HCSA picnic

By REBECCA RHUDY

Spring has sprung, and the Honor College Student Association annual picnic was full of both food and fun April 19 at Ritter Park.

Emma Ellis, president of the organization, and Madison Davis, vice president, said members of HCSA worked hard to plan an enjoyable and exciting event for Marshall students.

Ellis and Davis said the HCSA picnic was a great opportunity to hang out with friends while enjoying some fabulous picnic food and fun outdoor activities.

"Having the opportunity to invite people and go hang out with friends and have a good time really makes the picnic a fun event," Davis said. "I really think it is the reason the picnic grows each year."

Davis said she wanted to choose a typical picnic theme for

the HCSA event.

"Normally we pick a theme, and this year I was just interested in doing a traditional southern picnic," Davis said. "I think that's the route we were wanting to go. We had some

Road House," Ellis said. "There were barbecue sandwiches and chips, just your stereotypical picnic stuff. We also had some picnic games, like cornhole and KanJam. It was just an overall fun event."



Marshall University Honors College students line up to get their food at this year's annual HCSA picnic.

COURTESY PHOTO

cute traditional decorations and things like that that made the picnic very inviting."

There were different traditional picnic styled food and activities during the event that helped bring the theme to life, Ellis said.

"We were catered by Texas

Davis said another exciting feature of this year's HCSA picnic was getting to offer different door prizes. "There were some door prizes, like gift cards and things like that," Davis said. "Students are always looking for free things, so it was a pretty cool opportunity."

Davis said the HCSA picnic has taken place for the last few years and always is one of the most successful events.

"I know the picnic has been going on a few years," Davis said. "We have the discretion to do what we want, but the picnic has stuck as our spring event."

HON 200 students participate in civic engagement projects

By JESTEN RICHARDSON

One HON 200 class has turned civic engagement into more than just a classroom topic this April by completing four diverse community outreach projects at locations both on and off campus.

Students within Matt James' section of HON 200 have reached out to several groups within the community and addressed several areas of community involvement this semester by spending time with individuals in a senior living community, visiting children in a local hospital, raising funds and awareness for animals and helping middle school students to learn and develop new skills.

James, the section's professor and Marshall University's assistant dean of students, said encouraging his students to take community engagement outside of the classroom has always been an aspect of his class. Though, this semester, with the help of peer mentor Matt Jarvis, Marshall University's former student body president and an honors student who will be graduating in May, he was able to change the assignment from a single community engagement project, involving all the students, to "more of a democratic process."

James said he allowed the students within his class to both break into groups of their own choosing and to tackle four different community engagement projects that they chose within their groups, while still under the supervision of himself and Jarvis.

"I gave them a lot of freedom, but we did a lot of checkpoints to make sure they were actually making progress and scheduling visits and staying organized," James said. "I think it's pretty interesting how diverse each of the experiences are, and they kind of match, now that I've gotten to know my students, it really matches the personalities and sort of the interests and career interests for some of the students in each group."

The first of the community engagement projects occurred on April 3, when a group of students from his section of HON 200 went to the Wyngate Senior Living Community in Barboursville and played bingo with the residents.

On April 11, another group of his students partnered with the Campus Activity Board to raise money and awareness for a local animal shelter through an on-campus event called "Smooch-a-Pooch." James said the event allowed people to donate money to the animal shelter while also getting to hold and bond with dogs from the shelter.

On April 13, one group went to a school in Hamlin, West Virginia, where they taught middle school students coding. The final project that a group

of students from James' class participated in was during dead week when they visited children and their families at Hoops Family Children's Hospital in Huntington.

The learning experience from these projects continued even after each group was finished, according to Jarvis, as in addition to being given the opportunity to help people in the community, groups were also given the opportunity to practice their public speaking through

them. Jarvis said that after each event students were required to discuss their overall experience with the project.

According to Jarvis, having students create their own community service, encouraging them to do something that they maybe hadn't done before, or something that may have been challenging but was still worthwhile and following up with them to make sure that everything went smoothly was perhaps his favorite part of the semester.

Jarvis said that he and James really encouraged



COURTESY PHOTO

Members of Matt James's HON 200 class play bingo with residents at Wyngate Senior Living Community.

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Honors student returns to university in Japan

By JENNA MARSH

Marshall University honors student Caralee Casto will be studying for nine months at Kansai Gaidai University in Japan starting this August. Casto previously completed a homestay and studied at this same university and said it will be beneficial to return.

“I am excited for the food,” Casto said. “It is what I have missed the most honestly. I will be living in a dorm, which I don’t get to do here, so I am excited to experience that and live on my own.”

Casto said she believes that her trips abroad help her expand her language speaking capabilities and make her a more natural speaker, which complements Casto’s double major of Japanese and international affairs.

“I feel like studying abroad is going to help me a lot, because Marshall doesn’t offer too many Asian courses outside of history and language, so I’m pretty excited for that because I feel like it will give me a more real-world experience,” Casto said.

The cost of studying abroad often deters people from taking the leap, but Casto said one of her biggest influences for organizing the financial aspects of her trips was program manager of national scholarships Mallory Carpenter.

“She (Carpenter) has spent multiple hours going over scholarship essays with me and correcting applications, even over Skype if she had to,” Casto said. “When I told her I was interested in studying

abroad, she immediately provided me a list of scholarships and application deadlines without a sweat. Her guidance has been one of the most reassuring and helpful aspects of my entire application process.”

Casto is attending a sister school of Marshall when she studies in Japan, so her scholarships here will transfer to cover costs abroad. She also received the Kimbler scholarship from the department of modern languages at Marshall University, which covers costs associated with study abroad including application fees, tuition and books.

Casto is awaiting results from many scholarships she has applied to, including the Freeman Asia scholarship and the Gilman Critical Need Language scholarship.



COURTESY PHOTO

Caralee Casto pictured during her homestay in Japan

Honors student to study in Spain this summer

By JENNA MARSH

Studying abroad is an experience that allows students to see the world and take in a new culture, while still getting an education. It is a way to perfect new language skills, establish career opportunities and find new interests.

Honors college student Delaney

Ellis acknowledges the potential benefits of studying abroad. Ellis said she plans to capitalize on these benefits by studying abroad at Universidad Nebrija in Madrid, Spain this summer.

“Since my freshman year of high school, I have loved my Spanish classes,” Ellis said.

“Because of this, I decided to make Spanish my second major, and what better way to learn the language than to be immersed in the culture?”

Ellis is double majoring in Spanish and Biology with a pre-med emphasis. While it seems like

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NSE offers students chance to study at US colleges, abroad

By NATHANIEL PORTER

Marshall University's chapter of the National Student Exchange allows students the opportunity to study at nearly 200 different universities in the United States, Canada or U. S. territories at the cost of Marshall's tuition.

Academic counselor and NSE coordinator Robin L. Taylor said, "(the program) broadens your horizons and allows you to think beyond what you're used to, especially for students who may have remained in one place for most of their life."

Some examples of schools included in the program are Bishop's University in Canada, University of Puerto Rico at Cayey and Salem State University in Boston. Students can choose to study at these schools for either one or two semesters.

"The NSE program is fairly competitive, with popular schools filling empty spots much faster than others," Taylor said. "But, there are many universities to choose from, and there are always universities ready to accept new students."

Some universities also offer special programs through the NSE. A few examples are a summer geology field experience program in South Dakota, a political science internship at the University of Alaska Southeast and a field experience program for biology

and marine science majors at Stony Brook University in New York.

Once a year NSE coordinators and interested students meet at a conference.

"Students get to meet NSE coordinators from other schools and are matched to that school in person and also receive all the necessary material they will need for their student exchange," Taylor said.

This is done so that students are able to meet their NSE coordinator, who will check up on them, help them through the process and inform them on how to get involved with campus activities.

"I want to keep the students' interests in mind, whether that be to focus more on their studies or to explore and gain once in a lifetime experiences," Taylor said.

The program caters to different types of students, whether they are more interested in the specific classes or programs a university might offer or are more interested in an experience a certain area might provide. Also, honors students are able to receive three honors credit hours for studying abroad.

Those interested in the NSE program can find more information at www.nse.org or reach out to Taylor via her email, taylorro@marshall.edu.

Scholarships awarded to students for research

By NATHANIEL PORTER

Over the past months, a select group of students have been working diligently on their applications for various scholarships. Recently, some students have received the exciting news that they have been awarded their scholarship of choice.

One such student is Hailey Hughes, a creative writing major and recent graduate from Marshall University who is now participating in graduate research at the University of West Georgia.

Hughes was awarded the Fulbright U.S. Student Scholarship, a program that allows students to work

on individual research projects around the world. Hughes will be conducting research in Ireland and is focusing on developing storytelling groups for people with disabilities to help spread awareness and develop advocacy skills.

The application process for the scholarship involves writing two essays, one being a personal statement and the other advocating for research, submitting three letters or recommendation and seeking Marshall University's endorsement

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students to consider what they were passionate about when choosing their community engagement projects and that each of the projects was able to make a difference within the community, even if they may have seemed small.

“By no means are any of these events big, huge, crazy things,” Jarvis said. “But they’re events that are important to the students, and they’re events, though they might not be anything huge or glamorous, they have an impact on the community. They’re helping, which has been really sweet to see.”

Rawan Elhamdani, an honors student from Barboursville who plans to major in biology pre-med, was part of the group that played bingo at the Wyngate. She said her experiences in James’ section of HON 200 have made her realize that no matter how busy she is, she can always still “do stuff for the people around” her and that the community

engagement project gave her a “great opportunity to step outside” of her major and to try a different kind of community service than volunteering at hospitals, which she said she has done before.

Elhamdani said the class has made her think back on all the things she loves that are service related, made her feel “more a part of the community” and provided her realistic ways to give back to her community.

“The whole basis of our HON 200 class this semester is altruism,” Elhamdani said. “So, we’ve been learning a lot about giving back to our community and how giving back to your community defines you yourself. You can’t just live in a community and not do anything. That doesn’t change you, it doesn’t help you grow as a person, and it doesn’t help your community grow. We’re learning to give back to our community to benefit ourselves and to benefit the people who gave us the chance to become something here.”

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through a board selected by the Fulbright program.

“It was a very long process that required a lot of dedication,” Hughes said. “At times I felt like quitting, but the English department and Honors College really helped me stay motivated.”

Another student who recently received an award is Mary Piaskowski, junior biology major. She received the Mayo Clinic Summer Research Fellowship, in which she will be conducting research in immunology.

Piaskowski will be working alongside Dr. Robin Patel, a specialist in infectious diseases

who is currently doing research on biofilms present in joints. The internship is a paid summer program, and the application process includes filling out a resume, collecting letters of recommendation and completing a two page essay.

“It is a privilege to be chosen for this program, and I can’t wait to see what it has in store,” Piaskowski said.

For more information on these scholarships as well as the many others available, those interested can contact Mallory Carpenter, program manager of national scholarships, through her email at Mallory.carpenter@marshall.edu.



COURTESY PHOTO

Honors student Hailey Hughes, a recent scholarship winner.

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these two majors are completely unrelated, Ellis said they can work complementary to one another.

“I hope to use Spanish in my medical career by being able to communicate with an entire other culture and population,” Ellis said. “It is a nice break from the strict science curriculum that I am subjected to with my pre-med major.”

Studying abroad can come

with various struggles like learning to adapt to different languages and cultures; however, studying abroad can also be beneficial to one’s studies, Ellis said.

“I know for sure that the first week or two I will struggle with my understanding of the language,” Ellis said. “I hope that stumbling through it day-by-day will allow me to finally be confident in interacting with the people.”

While she is there, Ellis will

be taking 15 hours of Spanish curriculum that focuses on the culture, grammar, conversation and composition. She said she hopes to broaden her knowledge this summer, while being fully immersed in Spanish culture.

Those interested in studying abroad can visit the study abroad office or contact program manager of national scholarships Mallory Carpenter at mallory.carpenter@marshall.edu.