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Honors Oracle, May 2015

Marshall University Honors College

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Marshall
University's
Honors
College
Newsletter

The Honors Oracle

The Oracle

May 2015

Upcoming Dates:

May 4-8: Exam Week
May 9:
Commencement/
Residence Halls Close
May 12: Final Grades
Due

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Saying Hello and Goodbye

By Callie Snodgrass
Not only does the Honors College at Marshall have a great community of students, it also has an exceptional staff. This year, one dedicated staff member came out of retirement when she found out help was needed.

Mitzi Cyrus, former office administrator for the Honors College, retired last year after working in the Honors College for three years. When new office administrator Renee Denney was requested to work temporarily in another office, it didn't take much to convince Cyrus to come back and fill in.

"I think the world of Nicki [LoCascio] and Susan [Gilpin]," Cyrus said. "And I miss the students."

Cyrus has a wide variety of responsibilities as office administrator.

She takes care of daily office duties like answering phones and answering questions, and is the primary contact for Phi Kappa Phi. Cyrus also helps plan the Honors Convocation, makes arrangements for the Yeager medallion ceremony, and enters the schedules for the registrar.

"It's a lot of variety, but that's what makes it fun" Cyrus said.

Cyrus has taught two UNI 100 courses in previous semesters, which has given her the opportunity to meet and teach honors students. Cyrus said she feels that the Honors College community is special.

"Honors students are awesome," Cyrus said. "It's neat to see the names of students who are admitted, then meet them and see how they become involved at Marshall."

Cyrus was born and raised in Huntington, and graduated from Marshall

with her Master of Business Administration degree. She still lives in Huntington with her husband, and has two children and two grandchildren. In her free time she enjoys playing golf, knitting, quilting, playing the piano, and singing.

Cyrus will be filling in until the end of the current semester, in a few short weeks. While she said she will miss her campus involvement, she is looking forward to being able to spend more time with her grandchildren.



Recognizing Excellence

Adam Michael Adkins
Scarlet E. Allen
Shea Diana Ambrose
Pete Andresen
Oksana Bailiff
Bradley Ball

By Clara Maynard
Marshall University's Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society that extends invitations to the top 10% of seniors and 7.5% of juniors, initiated 98 new members on Tuesday, April 7 in the Memorial Student Center.

Student Vice President Shawn Cheeks said Marshall's chapter is one of over 300 across the United States.

"Phi Kappa Phi members include both students and graduates, many of whom are actually faculty," Cheeks said.

Junior biology major Jack Hopkins said his invitation to Phi Kappa Phi came as a surprise.

"I wasn't aware that I was going to [be accepted], so to get an invitation was an honor I wasn't expecting," Hopkins said. "It always feels great when that happens."

Hopkins said he believes becoming a member will bring many

Jade Hamilton
Katherine Hargleroad
Lauren Haynes
Timothy Saad Deeb
Amy DelSignore
Jason Dempsey

Yoram Elitsur
Morgan Farrell
Tyler Flaucher
Justin Gandee
Joshua Hagen
Matthew Hale
Erik Hall

benefits and chances to volunteer.

"They have scholarship opportunities and that's something that could potentially connect me with people in the future," Hopkins said.

Members of Phi Kappa Phi are eligible to apply for scholarships such as the Love of Learning Award and the Graduate Fellowship. Members can also apply for study abroad grants.

"In the short time that Marshall has had a chapter, it is my understanding that we have had two recipients of each award," Cheeks said.

Assistant professor of English Dr. Allison E. Carey won the Love of Learning Award in 2014. English literature and political science major Shaina Taylor won a \$5,000 Fellowship Scholarship in 2013.

According to the national organization's website, Phi Kappa Phi's mission statement is "to recognize and promote academic excellence in all

John McAulay III
Briana McCoy
Katelyn McGuffin
Angela McKeone
Eric Mendenhall
Matthew Meriweather

Jeremy Mitchell
Stephen Mitchell
Zachary Montgomery
Katie Napier
Kayla Napier
Shelley Naylor

fields of higher education and to engage the community of scholars in service to others."

Marshall's Phi Kappa Phi chapter has been upholding that mission. The chapter recently hosted a book drive for St. John's House in collaboration with the Honors College Student Association and the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association.

The drive received 302 book donations, 242 of which will be going to St. John's House Library. The remaining 60 books will be donated to the Summer Reading Camp at St. John's Episcopal Church and the Family Resource Center at Marcum Terrace.

The organization has been on Marshall's campus since 2010 and became a Chapter of Excellence in 2014.

For more information on Phi Kappa Phi, visit the chapter's website at www.marshall.edu/phikappaphi or www.facebook.com/phikappaphi

Edward Trador
Jacqueline Turley
Erica Vogel
Huixin Wang
Kelsea Whaley
Rachel Wheeler
Kayli Williams
Yecen Zhu

By Alexis Kastigar
With the closing of a vibrant competition for seats in Marshall University's student government, campus is relaxing after strong weeks of campaigning. Votes have been cast and Presidents appointed, but just how much do Marshall students know about Student Government? Amanda Schwartz, sophomore Creative Writing major and Yeager Scholar, is a face and influence that should be known well.

Schwartz is a Senator for the Student

Government Association. It is her job to represent the interests and concerns of the Honors College to the rest of the Student Government.

"I schedule regular meetings with the Honors College Dean in order to stay up to date on what the interests [of the Honors College] are," Schwartz said. "So...in meetings I can address the concerns of the Honors College students and support positions that would benefit them."

Schwartz states that her position has a

Our Representative

unique benefit due to the smaller number of constituents she represents.

"I lived with many Honors College freshmen last year on the 4th of Freshman North and have taken several Honors courses," Schwartz said. "I feel that I have a much more focused sense of who I am representing and how I can best do that."

Schwartz's enjoyment of her position has led to an appreciation for the work behind the successes of student organizations and an overall positive leadership experience that continuously encourages her activity in SGA.

"I continue to be active because I enjoy it so much," she said.

By Andrew Ely
Honors College students have the opportunity to take several intriguing seminars in their career. Dr. Kristen Lillvis, of the English Department, has brought to fruition "Technology and Human Identity," a seminar examining how technology shapes the ideas of being human.

Lillvis says her inspiration for this class comes from stories by African American writer Octavia Butler, a science fiction author.

"I needed to research technological

advancements to understand her writing," Lillvis said. "Also, I really like video games," she adds, "and I was interested in seeing how playing games and developing a virtual persona shape my 'real world' identity."

The class has just finished playing and studying video games together, and has moved into studying Afrofuturism, which is how technology influences our ideas about race in the past, present, and future.

Topics in this area include Janelle Monae music videos, Sun Ra's music, and author Walter Mosley, who focuses on short stories.

Students in this class use reason, morals, language, and education in each section to interpret how that specific medium, such as music or cultural phenomena, influenced our understanding of what it means to be human.

Junior Honors student Ian Lovern is enrolled in the seminar.

"I'd say it's the most interesting class I've had in the Honors College," Lovern said. "Lillvis has done well to design a class that everyone can participate in. It's

exciting for everyone involved."

Lillvis said we are connected to technology through a two-way umbilical cord.

"Technology shapes humans, and humans shape technology," Lillvis said.

Lillvis said she anticipates that students will have developed a new perspective at the end of the course.

"I hope students will leave the seminar with a strong understanding of past and present theories about identity," Lillvis said. The Honors College provides students with new and challenging seminars each semester. For more information on upcoming seminars, students may refer to <http://www.marshall.edu/honors/courses>

Humanity and Technology

Engineer, Yeager, First Generation College Student

By Alexis Katsigar
College is a time for rediscovery and reinvention and provides a unique environment to thrive personally and academically.

The Honors College and the Society of Yeager Scholars pride themselves on creating a curriculum that challenges students while allowing them to discover their true passions and abilities.

Freshman Yeager scholar Cody Mason welcomes these challenges openly, not only as an intellectual, but also

as a first generation college student.

Mason, a Saint Albans native, is the son of a night-time shift baker at Panera Bread and the general manager of Penn Station East Coast Subs in Teays Valley. While his parents have never gone to college, they are both incredibly supportive of Mason and push him to strive for excellence.

Mason said that the support and expectations of family help alleviate any apprehension that may be held by first generation college students.

"I know my family is really proud of me and expecting a lot," Mason said. "I know that through focusing on my ambitions and keeping up my grades, I will fulfill my potential and my family's expectations."

Mason is a Civil Engineering major and his ultimate goal is to obtain his

master's in Civil Engineering. He strives to specialize in bridges and water systems.

"I hope that one day, I can...work for a firm that engages in developmental projects in Africa," Mason said. "I want to help develop bridges and irrigation systems for impoverished regions in need."

Mason said he believes that the Honors College and Yeager program provide the ideal challenging environment to help heighten his academic experience and personal development.

Dr. Nicki LoCascio, Interim Dean of the Honors College, stated her high hopes for Mason and the pleasure she has already experienced with his class of Yeagers.

"Cody has adjusted very well to the rigors of the Yeager curriculum. His class of scholars appears to have formed a strong cohort, which is important when tackling the Yeager seminars as a group. He is the only current Yeager to

choose Engineering, which is a discipline with very little choice in courses..."

LoCascio said. "I am confident he is capable of succeeding in Engineering and as a Yeager."

Mason expressed great interest in the seminars and developmental summer experiences within the Yeager Program and stated his greatest excitement is in the summer session at Oxford University.

Mason considers himself blessed to have been accepted as a Yeager Scholar.

"I have no words to describe the feeling I got when I received my letter of congratulations from the Society of Yeager Scholars," Mason said. "I know I have a lot to do to keep up with the standards that I have given myself, as well as those given by being accepted into the program."



The End Goal

By Ian Lovern
Daniel Davis,
Honors College
junior, already boasts
an impressive
resume of
accomplishments in
computer science,
both nationally and
here at Marshall.
Davis will add to the
list this summer, as
he starts a job with
CBS interactive in
Louisville, KY.

Davis has already
made a name for
himself in the
Computer Science
world.

Under the
tutelage of Dr.
Wahjudi here at
Marshall, Davis was
invited to present
research at the 2014
International
Conference on
Industry,
Engineering, and
Management

Systems, which led
to his work receiving
a publication in a
peer-reviewed
journal for Computer
Science.

When asked
about the influence
Dr. Wahjudi has had
over his career,
Davis was adamant
that he would not be
where he is today
without the
considerable
influence from the
professor.

“Dr. Wahjudi
always pushes his
students to go
beyond classwork,”
Davis said. “He is
largely to thank for
every opportunity I
have had here at
Marshall.”

Davis went on to
describe several
occasions on which
Wahjudi stayed on
campus late into the

night to assist him on
various projects.
Wahjudi also
introduced Davis to his
now close friend and
colleague, Keyur

Patel. Davis worked
with Patel on several
projects here at
Marshall, and it was
Patel, who is now
employed by CBS, who
presented Daniels’s
resume to the program.

“KP and I became
great friends through
working together here
at school,” Davis said,
“He is actually the
reason I have the CBS
job this summer.”

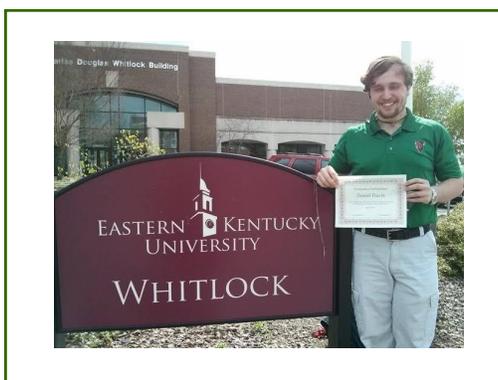
When asked about
the nature of his work
this summer, Davis said
that he would be
working directly on the
Content Managing
System used by all
CBS Interactive web
sites. This includes
CNet, CBSNews,
CBSSports, LastFM,
and GameSpot, among
others.

Davis has been
working with computers
since middle school,
and said that he is
excited to gain
experience working on
a large-scale
production system.

“I knew I wanted
to work with
computers in the
sixth grade,” Davis
said, “I spent an
entire semester of
English class
upgrading my
professor’s out-of-
date and non-
functional
computers.” It was
this fascination with
the workings of
computers that led
Davis to choose
Computer Science as
a field, and to excel
at every chance he’s
had.

For the future,
Davis plans to apply
the skills he has
learned as a
Computer Science
and Applied
Mathematics double
major as a software
engineer. On the
path, the opportunity
at CBS Interactive
will be invaluable.

“I am extremely
excited to know that
the work I will do will
be going into
production quality
software.” Davis said,
“[It] is literally used by
millions of people
around the world.”



By Robert Bordelon
Marshall University's Gamma Beta worked in collaboration with the Heritage Center to play host to its first Senior Prom for the 160 residents of the Heritage Center senior citizen's home in Huntington on Saturday.

The event brought music and dancing to the Heritage Center, and was hopefully the first of many to come.

It featured decorations and music that were popular at the time of the resident's high school proms, with Elvis featured as the major star.

Karol Peters, event coordinator at the Heritage Center, said the event was particularly special to the residents.

"It's really important

for the residents at the facility to have the opportunity to be around younger people, and be able to really connect with new faces," Peters said. "The music especially is a good cue for those with cognitive disabilities."

Honors student and Gamma Beta Phi Secretary Ryanne Brown said the idea was inspired by the organization's involvement in a senior prom hosted through Marshall University.

"Gamma Beta Phi helped out with Marshall's Senior Prom because they needed manpower. That was a few years ago and it hasn't been done since, so we decided try to pick it up again," Brown said. "Then I've heard from several agencies, like nursing homes, that

Senior Prom



were really interested, so we were going to do them next semester when we've had more planning time."

Peters said Gamma Beta Phi has pushed for their end of the event.

"The Senior Prom has been easy to pull together," Peters said, "Ryanne looked at the space we have for the event and has been really easy to work with. They are all really open to new

ideas about food and decorations.'

The event was a major success, with residents excited for the next one, according to Brown.

"They loved the music, the food, and the chance to talk with us," Brown said. "For some of the residents, they had never had the chance to go to a prom before and were so happy they finally got to attend one."

By Clarissa Bonnefond
Professor Carla Lapelle's HON 200 class worked together this semester to support a cause that will benefit victims of domestic violence in the Huntington community.

By teaming up with Branches, the local domestic violence center, the honors students hosted a drive for all Marshall students and faculty to donate supplies.

Lapelle said the

students chose to work with the Branches organization in order to provide them with supplies for the residents they support.

"One student has a connection through Branches and that is how we are teaming up to donate the supplies," Lapelle said.

Members of Lapelle's class took turns operating a collection table in the student center to collect donations and answer questions in early April.

The class collected items ranging from cleaning products, hygiene products, school supplies, and clothing.

Chase Dye, a member of the second-year seminar class, said Branches has a dire need for the items the class collected.

"We collected a number of items just to help them out," Dye said. "[Branches is] going through a financial crisis, so they were in danger of closing."

The organization was struggling in order to accommodate the needs of the large network they aid.

"[Branches] serves a wide range of counties, which is an over-extension of the resources they have, and this is why they were in danger of closing," Dye said.

The actual location of the organization is not revealed to the public in order to protect the organization's residents.

"For safety reasons it is kept top secret," Lapelle said. "Women and children who need to go there go first to the Huntington Police Department."

Students or faculty wishing to assist in providing donations for Branches may contact Carla Lapelle in Prichard Hall office 155.

Lending Hands



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One Last Go Around

By Jared Castro
The Honors College's annual End of the Year Picnic took place at Ritter Park, April 23, wrapping up the semester for Honors College students and faculty. For several years, the Honors Picnic has been a way to get Honors students together for fun activities and socialization. Honors faculty, staff and their families were also there to meet with students and enjoy a break before finals week.

The Honors picnic is an event hosted by the Honors College Steering Committee, a group of students who provide academic and social events for their honors students throughout the year.

The picnic has always been a success for the Steering Committee,

and this year's picnic was no exception said Tuesday Simmons, president of the Steering Committee.

"I'm really happy with [the turnout] and the weather, because I was kind of worried about it," Tuesday Simmons, President of the Steering Committee, said. "And it looks like we had just enough food."

Refreshments included hotdogs and chicken, a change from the previous years that was well received amongst those in attendance.

This year's picnic aimed to diversify the usual activities with a raffle for gift cards to restaurants such as Applebee's and Taco Bell. Other prizes included Frisbees, a bike lock, and Honors College t-shirts. Corn hole tournaments and volleyball were other options for students.

For many, however, the appeal of the Honors

Picnic is the chance to meet new people inside of the Honors College.

"This is a nice opportunity to get to know people who work in the Honors college," Ashley Dunham, freshman Honors student, said.

Mingling with others was a mutual interest for the Honors College staff who were also in present at the event.

"The staff in the Honors College completely support this because it's fun for us to get to see students and relax in a social environment," said Dr. Susan Gilpin, Associate Dean of the Honors College. "And it's fun for students to get out and socialize with each other too."

Most importantly, the picnic provides a way for students to relax before preparation for finals week begins.

"It seemed like a good way to cycle down a little bit before we ran into exam week," said Gilpin.

At the end of the picnic, it seemed that both Honors College students and faculty were relaxed and prepared to survive the two hectic weeks in front of them.

