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Marshall University Honors College

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Honors Oracle

Marshall University's Honors newsletter • February 2016



Rebecca Turnbull

Food for Thought helps sophomore honors students find their path

By NANCY PEYTON

The Food for Thought Dinner is an annual tradition for sophomore students enrolled in second year seminar. This year, the dinner was held Feb. 5 in the Memorial Student Center.

Mallory Carpenter, program manager for national scholarships, was the keynote speaker at the event. Aside from discussing scholarships, she also talked about helping students find exactly what they want to do with their lives.

“I think that you have somewhat been looking at this kind of theme in the readings that you were talking about tonight,” Carpenter said. “Hopefully these at least got you thinking about who you might want to be, and I think at face value when you hear that term, we all think of when we were little and someone asked us the question... It’s a much bigger question than that.”

Carpenter said it’s important to do the things necessary to make oneself stand out compared to others applying for the same scholarships, internships and jobs.

“There are obvious benefits to thinking about this if you haven’t thought about it before,” Carpenter said. “If you can identify more specific personal things about yourself, that will lead you to make choices that are in the direction. It’s all about identifying opportunities that will line you up in the right direction.”

Carpenter said students shouldn’t be worried if they haven’t decided exactly what they want to do yet at this stage in the game.

“If you don’t know what exactly you want to do with your life or career, fine,” Carpenter said. “The beauty of considering who you want to be is that it doesn’t require those things. You don’t have to know yet.”

Health science major Autumn Booton said she enjoyed the fact that the discussion wasn’t focused on just the readings, making the environment casual and comfortable.

“It wasn’t what I expected,” Booton said. “I thought it would be more intense on what we read, but I liked that it was open-ended and very comfortable.”

Booton said she enjoyed hearing what opportunities are available to her and other second-year students.

“I enjoyed listening to Mallory’s speech about being a sophomore in college and what opportunities you have instead of just focusing on the readings,” Booton said.

Accounting major Rachel Rohrbach said despite her initial thoughts and expectations about the dinner, she enjoyed herself.

“I liked the speaker a lot, and I liked the food,” Rohrbach said. “I liked getting to know people. I kind of dreaded coming at first, but it wasn’t bad.”

Honors Alumni Spotlight : Taylor Stuck

By KYRA BISCARNER

Honors College alumna Taylor Stuck remembers her days at Marshall fondly.

She graduated from Marshall in the spring 2015 with a major in print journalism and a minor in French, while also serving as executive editor of *The Parthenon*. Stuck said minoring in a foreign language was not in her original plan.

“It just kind of happened,” she said. “I enjoyed the challenges the class presented and just wanted to keep taking it.”

Despite graduating in May 2015, Stuck accepted a job with *The Herald-Dispatch* in January prior to her graduation, and began working there full time after obtaining her diploma.

Stuck said she has had some exciting experiences as a professional reporter, such as providing coverage of President Barack Obama during his drug reform roundtable in Charleston.

“I got to cover the President when he came to Charleston, so that was a huge experience getting to go through White House security,” Stuck said. “I had to apply for a media pass and go through that process. I met a Washington Post reporter and just being in the presence of the President was really cool.”

Stuck said students should take full advantage of the opportunities they have while still in college.



Kasey Madden

“For students in general, just get involved with whatever you can,” Stuck said.

Stuck said Honors students specifically should be willing to “leave their comfort zones.”

Stuck attributes part of who she is today to her experiences in the Honors College, with a major part of that coming from an interdisciplinary seminar she took in her final semester at Marshall called, “The History of Prostitution.”

Stuck was also the editor of “*The Honors Oracle*” during her senior year at Marshall.

Reflections from a Yeager Scholar

By HANNAH HALL

From a rigorous application process to study abroad experiences, the Yeager Society Scholarship is a unique program. While many people are familiar with the Yeager program and may even know Yeager scholars personally, they may not be aware of everything that goes into being a Yeager.

Senior Yeager Scholar Courtney Kramer said her experience with the program has shaped her four years at Marshall.

“I’ve gotten the full college experience,” Kramer said. “I’ve done the academic thing, but I’ve also gotten to do fun things.”

Initially, Kramer wasn’t planning on applying for the scholarship, but was persuaded by her father to fill out the application.

Kramer said she wouldn’t have ended up at Marshall if it wouldn’t have been for the Yeager program, but she wouldn’t trade her experiences.

“I have friends at a lot of Ivy League schools and high-end liberal arts schools,” Kramer said, “and just talking to them while I’m home on breaks, no one has gotten the academic experience that I’ve gotten. It’s not because of Marshall, it’s because of the Yeager Program.”

The foundations of the Yeager program are academic excellence, enrichment, success,

personalized mentoring and character development. Kramer said that these principles are the building blocks upon which the entire program rests.

“I think those things are what make the Yeager program a program and not just a scholarship,” Kramer said. “They don’t just give you money and say, ‘We hope you have a good education!’ They really are intentional about getting staff members and professors to get to know the students and mentor us and develop us through



Hannah Hall

our four years.”

From the unique field trips, intense

Yeager Reflections Continued

seminars and relationships she's built during her time as a Yeager, Kramer said she appreciates her college experience and the role the Yeager has played in it.

Freshman Yeager Clayton Curry said he had an idea of what being a Yeager Scholar would be like from the beginning.

"When I opened the application for the first time," said Curry, "I knew it was going to be hard, and I knew it was

going to be competitive."

Freshman Yeager Elizabeth "Liz" Adams said that the phone interview step of the process was not a walk in the park.

"The phone interview was the worst," Adams said. "In a real interview, you can see people's faces, but in a phone interview you don't know if it was a good answer or a bad answer or where to play it from there."

Curry said that, even this early on

in the Yeager program, she is already aware of how incredible the experience is.

"The Yeager program is awesome!" Curry said. "We get so many opportunities that I wouldn't have without it."

Adams shares Curry's sentiment.

"I'm just really thankful for what the Yeager program has provided. It has made my college experience definitely way better than I ever thought it would be," Adams said.

Phi Kappa Phi invitations expected

By AMANDA GIBSON

The Marshall University Phi Kappa Phi chapter will be sending out invitations to join the honor society by the end of February.

Students who are invited to join the society must be in the top 7.5 percent of their junior class within their college or the top 10 percent of their senior or graduate class within their college. The society is interdisciplinary and is not limited to students within the Honors College.

The focus of Phi Kappa Phi is to promote academic excellence, and their mission is to be a community of scholars in service to others. The fraternity offers a variety of benefits to its members, including scholarship opportunities on a national level and within the Marshall University local chapter.

Mary Beth Reynolds, associate vice president for assessment and quality initiatives and president of the Marshall University Phi Kappa Phi chapter, said the Marshall chapter has had at least three or four national scholarship winners, but they would like to have a greater pool of applications locally.

"To try to encourage students to apply last year, and just because I think it is important for us to try to support our students...last year we decided to give local awards as well," Reynolds said.

Reynolds said the challenge of local awards is that the chapter's budget is limited, but last year the chapter did decide to give local awards, and they plan to give them again this year.

"If we can at least have some local awards, even if it's just \$250 or \$500, that helps you buy some books," Reynolds said. "And then there's also the recognition, that you were recognized by your local chapter."

Honors student and communication disorders major Kelsey Higgins is one of the four student vice presidents of Phi Kappa Phi. Higgins said expectations for new members include attending an initiation in the spring and participating in community service events.

New members of Phi Kappa Phi are required to pay

\$65 in dues, which includes the cost of the certificate and pin students receive upon initiation. But this amount can decrease over time because after the first year of membership paying annual local chapter dues is optional.

As a student vice president, Higgins helps organize a community service event. Last semester the community service project was a book drive to support St. John's House, which is a youth education-focused organization located in Huntington.

Higgins said she enjoys being in Phi Kappa Phi and she said Phi Kappa Phi is geared toward professional development and reaching out to the community through community service.

Higgins said many people still remain in Phi Kappa Phi after they graduate and develop a career.

"We've only had that one meeting and I've already met a lot more faculty than I would have outside of my department," Higgins said. "And people in other disciplines that I wouldn't have met without being in it."

Biology pre-med major and Honors student Gianna Covelli is a member of Phi Kappa Phi. She said Phi Kappa Phi is a chance to network, find professional opportunities and stay connected once a student is in their career.

"It's clearly a good recognition and it would look good on a resume," Covelli said. "And it's definitely something to look more into, especially because they have scholarships I know for study abroad, and students are interested in that, and there's always leadership roles and community service."

Reynolds said there will be information sessions on Phi Kappa Phi in March for those who are invited and are interested in joining or learning more about the society.

"I would encourage any student who is invited to join Phi Kappa Phi who has any questions at all to come to the informational sessions," Reynolds said.

The Marshall University Phi Kappa Phi chapter initiation will be April 5 in the Memorial Student Center.

Honors seminar explores racial diversity through science fiction

By KASEY MADDEN

Assistant professor of English Kristen Lillvis is teaching about diverse people groups to a diverse group of Honors students this semester.

This is the first semester Lillvis has taught the seminar, “Aliens, Robots, and Black Speculative Fiction.” She said the class looks at the ways those groups of people live through books and short stories.

“It’s looking at time in a lot of ways and how we can think about different people,” Lillvis said, “and we’re looking specifically at people from different races how they can exist throughout time and that can be as humans but it also be as aliens, or robots, or vampires or zombies or any of these other types of mythical creatures.”

Lillvis has taught in the Honors College before, and said she likes having the perspectives of a variety of majors in the class.

“I think it’s great because people are bringing knowledge that other people in the class, including me, really don’t

have,” Lillvis said. “There are some people from communications studies who will talk about different theories of that, we have somebody that does like computer programming, so he’ll talk about stuff related to that, so it’s been really interesting because they enrich the discussion.”

Lillvis said studying varied content and having a classroom of mixed majors has helped the students apply their knowledge in a new way.

“I also think we’re in a time where studying diversity is particularly important,” Lillvis said, “and I think this is a way to look at how diversity can be exciting and empowering and really applicable to everybody.”

The seminar also includes many different kinds of assignments, as throughout the semester students will collect social media posts and create part of a comic book.

Senior computer science and applied math major Daniel Davis said the sci-fi topics in the class interested him.



Kasey Madden

“I took Lillvis’s Honors seminar last year on post humanism and it was amazing so I figured this one would be as well,” Davis said.

Davis said he has enjoyed the class so far this semester, and the class is helping him look at past events in a new way.

“I would say just to continue in gaining multiple perspectives and looking at things at not just a past narrative but a future style narrative,” Davis said.

Lillvis’s course provides students with multicultural, women’s studies and writing intensive attributes.

Syria lecture shares unique perspectives

By RYAN FISCHER

The Marshall community took a deeper look at the events happening in Syria with a lecture called “Is West Virginia ready for refugees?” in Willis Hall Jan. 28.

Director of Morrow Library Majed Khader moderated the discussion along with two other Syrians, one of whom is in refugee status.

He said the issues Syria is facing will not merely go away.

“There is no such one force or two forces,” Khader said. “There are probably a multitude of forces over there.”

Khader said the Assad regime is a point of origin for political corruption in Syria, a problem that arose out of the initial political image of Bashar al-Assad, the current President of Syria.

“The Middle East in general has a strategic location as well as an important location,” he said. “Everyone in the world may be looking for that area.”

Khader said he also points to the abundant resources that are found in the Syrian region, such as oil, as a large reason for the entire globe’s interest in those locations.

David Cartwright, live-in academic mentor of Willis Hall, also lent his insight when Khader opened the floor

for discussion.

“If I had to leave my house and take my kids with a knapsack and all that kind of stuff, somewhere in the back of my mind I think I would be saying ‘I want to come back home,’” Cartwright said. “There would be something in my mind, something in my heart, that would be saying ‘home is where I would want to be.’”

Willis Resident Advisor Hallie Andrews said she established the program in association with the Honors College and the Department of Housing and Residence Life.

“Honors students typically are more interested in big issues and, like, seeking education on those issues,” Andrews said.

Andrews said her intended discussion topics included integration into West Virginia culture and how that could interact with the government systematically in terms of welfare and benefits.

“I think that personally, ethically, we should bring in the refugees,” Andrews said.

To set the scene for the discussion, a variety of Syrian-themed foods were offered to those attending, giving the attendees a lighter taste of Syrian culture.