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Honors Oracle

Marshall University's Honors College newsletter • Feb. 2020

Cheers to ten years: Honors College celebrates anniversary

By AUDREY STARK

The Honors College at Marshall University has been a benefit to student and faculty success for the past 10 years.

The Honors College began as a program and transitioned to a college at Marshall in the 2009-2010 school year, according to the Honors College section of Marshall's website. Since its creation, the Honors College has grown to more than double its original size.

"In 2009, the college began with around 250 incoming freshmen, and it now contains almost 600 students all together," Nicola LoCascio, the dean of the Honors

College, said.

According to Marshall's website, the main goal of the Honors College was to increase Marshall's overall GPA and academic standing nationwide. It has surpassed that goal by not only increasing Marshall's status but also creating an environment for students to come together and gain opportunities for life at college and after graduation.

According to LoCascio, an obvious benefit is that Honors College students get first pick for classes, but there are many other opportunities to consider. For example, honors students also get access to numerous scholarships

and more one-on-one academic counseling.

When LoCascio speaks to incoming students about why they should join the Honors College, she said she recommends that all students take every opportunity they are given and that joining the Honors College is a way to meet other students with similar aspirations and to gain academic advantages. Some students who are currently involved in the Honors College would agree with LoCascio.

For example, Cameron

Blizzard, a freshman majoring in bio-chemistry, said he credits the Honors College with allowing him to "receive additional scholarships, meet other students with the same ideas and have experience to include in future job and graduate school applications."

This year, members of the Honors College celebrate the college's 10th anniversary and give thanks to the faculty that has made these opportunities possible for students.



AMANDA LARCH | LAYOUT EDITOR

Counseling services to benefit honors students' mental health

By KYLIE JOHNSON

Kicking off the spring semester, the Marshall University Counseling Center Honors College services are in full swing.

The Counseling Center expansion was initiated into the Honors College when the college began experiencing an influx of students who needed the services but were not seeking the help.

“It is so much pressure to

continue being a high-performance student in college, and we found that honors students were having trouble going to the Counseling Center,” said mental health specialist Nikki Barr.

The honors counseling services give students the chance to access help in an environment they are comfortable with.

The aid provided during counseling sessions aims to offer care for honors

students and their mental well-being.

Mental health specialist Rick Lee said there is often a stigma attached to mental health, but being there as a support system for the student and “helping them understand that there doesn’t have to be anything major going on for them to come talk to someone” is the main goal.

This free program geared toward honors students

offers them professional therapeutic services on the third floor of Old Main, in room 355. These services are offered on Friday mornings with specialists Lee and Barr.

To make an appointment, students can call (304) 696-3111 and request an Honors College appointment or visit the Counseling Center website at www.marshall.edu/counseling to fill out a referral form.

Student athlete spotlight: Abigail Dropik

By BETHANY KOONTZ

Being an honors student has allowed Abigail Dropik, a soccer player and junior biology major, to get more out of her education at Marshall University, she said, as well as to make connections with faculty and fellow students apart from her team.

Dropik has been playing soccer since kindergarten. She is currently a defensive player and said she enjoys that soccer pushes her both physically and mentally. She said it takes a lot of dedication and drive to be a college student and even more to be a college athlete.

Through balancing her academics, sport and extracurricular activities, Dropik is able to be well-rounded and an involved student.

While she has many responsibilities, Dropik said she believes that pushing herself by being an honors student will be beneficial to her even after her days at Marshall are over.

For college students, time management is one of the most important skills one needs to be successful in



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABIGAIL DROPIK

college. Dropik said she has had to be even more diligent by adding a sport on top of her list of responsibilities.

“I have to stay very organized and keep track of all my assignments throughout the semester,” Dropik said. “I also talk to each of my professors in advance before I travel [for soccer].”

By being in the Honors College, Dropik said she has learned several strategies for success. She keeps

a detailed calendar in which games, practices, exams and assignment due dates are planned for well in advance.

She said she also dedicates her free time to studying, but even more importantly, to spending time with friends in order to de-stress from her busy schedule.

Dropik connects her experiences playing soccer to her accomplishments as an honors student. She said soccer has taught her discipline and the importance of teamwork, on the field and in the classroom.

“I enjoy the feeling of being out on the field, working [my] hardest and achieving success,” Dropik said.

Dropik said being an athlete and honors student has given her more opportunities than she could have imagined. She said she is very thankful for the education she has received over the past three years at Marshall.

"Honorable Mention"

EAN BILLS

By AMANDA LARCH

Connection to the Honors College: Member since Fall 2017

Class Level: Third year

Major: Biology with a pre-medicine concentration

Hometown: Salt Rock, West Virginia

Passions: Performing and theatre. Ean has been in many musical and theatrical groups and productions throughout the years and has really developed a passion for it.

A Word He Would Use to Describe Himself: Determined. Ever since Ean started at Marshall, he has been working hard in all his extracurriculars and classes to achieve his goals. No matter how hard he has to work and whatever he has to go through, Ean said he is determined to do his best in everything he does.

Involvement on Campus: Member of the Alpha Chi Sigma Chemistry fraternity, completes research in a neuroscience lab with the department of biomedical sciences

Community Involvement: Regular volunteer at the Huntington Ronald McDonald House, patient care volunteer at Hospice of Huntington, has done several community theatre productions at Ritter Park through Huntington Area Regional Theatre (HART), directorial staff member of the Cabell Midland High School Rhythm in Red show choir

Awards: Dean's List every semester he has been a student at Marshall, recipient of the Undergraduate Creative Discovery Research scholarship

Favorite Marshall Memories So Far: The friends he's made and events he's gotten to attend as a member of Alpha Chi Sigma. By joining, Ean



PHOTO COURTESY OF EAN BILLS

said he has some lifelong friends, and joining was one of the best things he has ever done, as it has given him opportunities he would not have gotten otherwise.

Proudest Accomplishments: Receiving the scholarship to fund his research. Ean worked hard on the application and training to perform the necessary protocols, and he said it was great to actually be awarded the scholarship.

Hopes for the Semester: To get straight A's in all of his classes, to continue studying for and to receive a high score on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

Know someone you'd like to nominate for "Honorable Mention"? Contact richardso164@marshall.edu!

Scholarship database offers opportunities for honors students

By ISABELLA BOOTH
Marshall University's student body president and student body vice president helped to create a scholarship database of all private and merit-based scholarships the university has to offer for current and prospective students. President Stephanie Rogner, a senior marketing major, and Vice President Anna Williams, a junior English and communications major, teamed up with Marshall's financial aid department, the IT department and the Alumni Foundation in August 2019 to create the database. Before the new database, issues had been reported that private scholarships were scattered throughout various websites and hard to locate for students, and each scholarship also had to be individually applied for. "Initially, it [the application process] was trying to navigate all the different colleges, and no scholarship was really in the same location," Rogner said. "Students are



Stephanie Rogner and Anna Williams helped to create the new scholarship database.

going to be more aware of what scholarships are out there and how to better utilize them." The database is not only convenient for students, but it is also helpful to donors. The donors now have access to a database where they can see all applicants instead of having paper applications. "[The database] allows donors to better connect with recipients, so we can better track who gets what, the thank you letters and reminders being sent out. It builds a connection between

the recipient and the donor," Rogner said. In the past, Marshall has tried to cultivate these relationships between recipients and donors through "Thank a Donor" Day. "We are hoping that we can facilitate a lot better relationships,

because it is so important to the donors to know who they gave the money to really made an impact," Williams said. With easy accessibility to both students and donors, the current student body administration is hoping to increase usage of financial aid services and student retention as well as to encourage future donors to sponsor scholarships, according to both Rogner and Williams. To access the scholarship database, one may visit <http://www.marshall.edu/sfa/scholarships>.

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