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Honors Oracle

Marshall University's Honors College Newsletter • February 2022

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Dedication of Kopp Pharmacy School

Why You Should Be A Presidential Ambassador

By AVERI AYA-AY

The presidential ambassadors are a group of students that represent Marshall University and assist the University's president at a variety of events. There are currently twenty-seven ambassadors coming from a large range of diverse backgrounds, majors, and even states. While any student can be a presidential ambassador, the program notably attracts many students from the Honors College each year.

Each ambassador serves for one year but is encouraged to continue for as many years as they would like. The ambassadors represent the student body at several events ranging from helping the President host guests at the home football games to assisting at the Marshall holiday party.

Gavin Boothe, who has been a presidential ambassador for multiple years, states that "My favorite event that I worked at was the dedication of Kopp Hall. It was great to meet new people and represent the president's office."

Since there are so many ambassadors most years, they are only required to work three events for the year but can

sign up to work as many as they would like. The program is very flexible to fit into the students' often busy school schedules.

To become an ambassador, you apply in the spring and interviews will usually be conducted in April to choose representatives for the following year. This opportunity is great for students who would like to strengthen their resumes for grad school or for future job opportunities. It also allows students to make meaningful connections with people in the Marshall and Huntington community.

This program teaches students how to have strong communication and leadership skills, as well as introduces a student to other driven and likeminded students at Marshall. Students who are interested in becoming an ambassador for Marshall can follow the link below to find more information regarding the program and applications.

<https://www.marshall.edu/ucomm/presidentialambassadors/>

How Difficult Are Honors Classes?

By EVAN GREEN

One of the most important features of Marshall's Honors College is the additional classes that students must take as a part of the honors curriculum. Many of these classes are taken in the place of other general education courses; such as First Year Seminar-Honors, which takes the place of the regular first-year seminar class that all freshmen are required to take.

Other classes that provide honors credits are exclusive to the college; such as the Honors College Steering Association, a class focused on developing events and fundraisers for the Honors College. An important question prospective honors students may ask when considering joining the college is how hard these honors courses are.

"I haven't really had much of a problem with any of the honors classes so far. I haven't had the chance to take many yet, but they mainly seem to be more engaging versions of the regular classes," said Jaxon Smith, a freshman honors student at Marshall majoring in chemistry and biology.

The main honors class that Smith took was the first-year seminar, and he described the opportunities the class provided to him. "I was really able to flex my creativity in that class. My main project focused on education reform, which is something I never would have really focused on in my major-specific classes."

Honors students are required to take an additional 24 credit hours of honors classes throughout their time at Marshall to receive the benefits of the college. 12 of these credits are made up of honors seminar classes, while the other 12 can be made up of any combination of honors courses—many of which also count towards Marshall's general education requirements, such as Honors Sociology.

Once a semester, an honors student can also arrange to be given an honors credit for a non-honors course. This requires making arrangements with a faculty mentor to enhance the course and having the honors credits approved by the college. Under special circumstances that are not directly outlined by the honors college

handbook, up to six of these credits can be waived by the college.

"The Honors College has been a significant part of my experience at Marshall. It's allowed me to meet a lot of great people and take some really cool classes," said Logan Rose, a senior honors student majoring in math. Logan is the president of the Honors College Steering Association and has a lot of involvement in the program. "I sat at the Honors College booth at Marshall's Green and White Day a few times last semester so I could encourage prospective students to join the college," Rose responded when asked about some of the additional responsibilities he has faced as president.

When asked about the difficulty of the honors program, Rose had this to say: "For the most part, my honors classes have been pretty engaging. None of them have been extremely difficult, but none of them have been extremely easy either. It's really just about how much work you're willing to put into a class."

Staff Spotlight: Rileigh Smirl

Major: English and Political Science with a minor in Constitutional Democracy

Hometown: Huntington, WV

Favorite Class: Creative Nonfiction Workshop with Dr. Rachael Peckham

Plans After Graduation: Going to The George Washington University Law School in DC starting in August to hopefully become a civil rights attorney

Currently Reading: "An Absolutely Remarkable Thing" by Hank Green



The Great Commons Snowball War

By RAFAEL ALFONSO

On Sunday, January 16, members of the Honors dorms at Willis Hall and other residents across Commons had an amazing night together during an impromptu “snowball war” across Marshall’s campus.

According to BS/MD students Sidney Strause and Payton Fitzpatrick, the event kicked off following a text that invited everyone in Commons for a snowball fight.

“It was an awesome night,” said Strause, “and I’m very thankful Marshall sent out that text inviting everyone out for a snowball fight with Spider Man.”

After pelting one another with snow for a while, Strause said that Fitzpatrick “inspired the people on Harless Field to start a snowball war” and that the two carried out the idea together.

The quickly forming Commons army then gathered snow for ammunition and more residents from Commons to join them. Once fully armed, Strause and Fitzpatrick led the army in a march across 5th Avenue towards the freshman dorms.

“In my opinion,” said Strause, “I must say the best part of the snowball war was the very beginning when we looped around from the field to the front of the dorms starting near Gibson. I heard from others afterward seeing our group with snowballs at ready was quite intimidating.”

Once at the freshman dorms, the Commons army tried to get the freshmen to come out for war but only a few accepted the challenge. While a few volleys were exchanged between the Commons and freshman residents,

most opted to stay inside and watch from their windows.

One student from Freshman North did come out, however, offering himself as a sacrifice in exchange for peace for his residence hall. The Commons army agreed, surrounding him “like a military execution” according to Nico Raffinengo, a freshman Yeager Scholar and member of the Honors College. After counting down from three, the Commons army pelted the Freshman North resident from all sides, earning his dorm’s safety from the war.

The snowball war continued for about an hour after the Commons army stormed Freshman North and South. The war ultimately ended after charging at a snow fort built by other students on Buskirk field, with the Commons army claiming the fort and victory for themselves for the night.

Looking back on the event, Fitzpatrick said, “The best part of the snowball war was just getting to spend quality time with fellow students outside of the classroom environment.” He said that the snowball war provided an amazing opportunity to take a break from studying and socialize with people outside of an academic setting.

Many shared in Fitzpatrick’s feelings of togetherness. Adding onto Fitzpatrick’s sentiment, Raffinengo said, “I feel much closer with my fellow roommates and people from the Commons.”

Raffinengo also said that “a capture the flag event between the dorm buildings”



Photo courtesy of Rafael Alfonso

could recreate the magic of the snowball war. Meanwhile, Strause and Fitzpatrick had more general ideas about events that could similarly bring people like that again.

“I think the most important element needed is the ability to amass a crowd,” said Strause. “Whatever it is, the students need to be inspired to go out and show up. From there, I’m sure a good time can be had.”

Elaborating on that, Fitzpatrick said, “If an event were to recreate this magic it would have to find a way to be destressing as well as come at a time when most students are free to have fun. I guess you could say the snowball fight was created from a ‘perfect storm.’”

Regardless of how it comes to pass, another opportunity for Marshall students to come together for some more stress-relieving fun would certainly receive a warm welcome this winter.

Quarantining on Campus Through the Eyes of a Student Athlete

By BROOKE BURNS

Being a student athlete has never been easy, and the current COVID-19 pandemic has only added to that challenge with quarantine. Student athletes are tested weekly based on vaccination status; vaccinated students are tested when they are directly exposed to COVID (for an undisclosed amount of time), and unvaccinated students are tested weekly regardless of exposure. When an athlete tests positive, proper quarantine protocols are followed, and they are put into isolation.

Recently, my teammate and myself had to spend some time in Holderby Hall, better known to the campus population as the “COVID dorms.” My teammate, Taylor Winebrenner, and myself are both throwers on the women’s track and field team. Taylor, at the time, was not yet two weeks past her second vaccine dose, so she was considered not vaccinated and put into Holderby. I tested positive, was sent to Holderby,

and was immediately put into the “test to play” protocol. The test to play protocol is a system in place to rule out false positives for fully vaccinated and boosted student athletes who test positive and are asymptomatic. To test out of quarantine, you must test negative for two consecutive days after your initial positive test. It is a great program that gives those student athletes who have followed all of the COVID guidelines a second chance. Thankfully, I was able to test out and return to my normal routine.

Between mine and Taylor’s combined 10 days of quarantine we missed 17 classes and 7 practices. This caused us both to get extremely behind in our classes and training upon our exit. We had to play an extreme game of catchup to try and get back to where we were both athletically and academically pre-quarantine. Mentally, quarantine was heartbreaking. Simultaneously I was enraged, devastated, and full of anxiety,

but mostly I was just enraged. I was mad at my teammates who put me in the position to get tested in the first place and mad at myself for testing positive. Most of all, I was mad that I would be missing a track meet and that I would also spend my 21st birthday alone. The circumstances made me ball up in anxiety as I waited for up to 8 hours each day to hear back for my test results. I was so distraught that I couldn’t even manage to do my schoolwork, not that I could do much to begin with (I am mostly in lab-based courses).

Overall, quarantine was an awful experience and one that I would not wish on anyone. COVID has made the balance between “normal” life and “athletic” life for student athletes almost painful to balance with the fear of testing positive and being sent to quarantine. Taylor described life as a student athlete during a pandemic best, “Sometimes, it just sucks.”

Becoming a Student Tour Guide at Marshall

By CAMERON WHETZEL

There are many jobs available on campus, but one of the more overlooked options may be the Student Tour Guides. While it may be a little more out there, Emily Roush describes why it is worth a look. She is Marshall’s special events coordinator in charge of training the tour guides, on campus events like Green and White days, and gives one-on-one tours herself.

She explained the job of a student tour guide starts with training, then moves to shadowing one of the staff members, and finally being shadowed yourself before beginning to give tours on one’s own. Once on your own, you’re still aided by a standard route and a script for you to use as a reference and add your experiences.

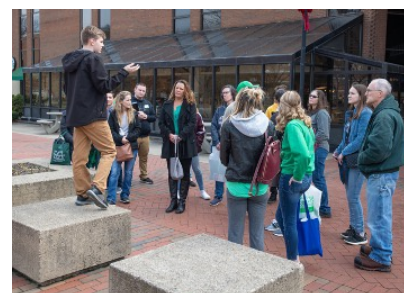
There are two types of tours done by the student tour guides, which are Green and White Day tours, and field trips. Both follow the same schedule and script, however, depending on the

school coming, i.e., a middle or elementary school, the tour may be altered slightly. This means tour guides get to interact with kids of all ages and hundreds of prospective Marshall students, an experience that Roush told me seems to really benefit the education majors who work as tour guides. This is where the real benefits of touring come in. Roush described the thing she and many of the students find most fulfilling about tour guiding is “being able to influence someone’s decision to come to Marshall and then being able to see them on campus as time goes on.”

Marshall hires guides from all walks of life and Roush was happy to tell me that in her four years here she has hired students from all the different colleges on campus. She also told me a lot of them keep coming back after their first semester and how she enjoys watching them grow over time. Tour guides can be anyone from freshmen to grad students, but students usually complete

a semester or two before applying.

Of course, these aren’t all the benefits, much like the other jobs and groups here on campus the tour guides build camaraderie, and it’s a great way to become more confident in one’s public speaking ability while also having an influence on Marshall and its student body. Individuals who are interested in becoming student tour guides will have to wait until the fall, but they can contact Emily Roush at roushe@marshall.edu to learn more.



*Student giving tour,
via muphotos.marshall.edu*

Conceptions of Flight

By JILLIAN BROWN

Despite freezing temperatures and impending snowstorms, people still turned out for the opening night of Conceptions of Flight. The show, put on by Sandra Reed and upperclassmen at Marshall University, boasts a variety of works ranging from ink drawings to a life-sized replica of an Amur leopard made entirely of paint swatches. The works are meant to represent individuals' ideas and experiences with flight.

The show is made possible by the American Rescue Plan Project Support for Individual Artists, a one-time grant given to artists with the intent to lift the spirits of the American community through artwork. Marshall's Sandra Reed applied for the grant in early August and received notice in mid-November that she had won it. Part of the grant proposal included contracting with artists to provide the work. In order to meet this requirement, she

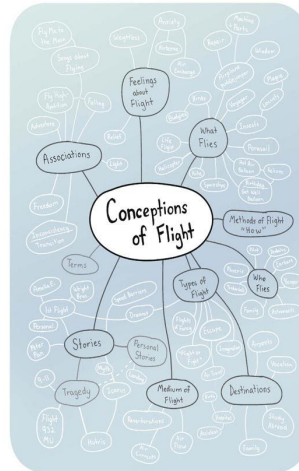
asked her advanced drawing class if we would be interested in showing our work in this way. Most of us agreed that day.

While the works in the exhibition where our final project in the class, participating in the exhibition with that particular work was not a requirement to passing the course. 14 of us in the class agreed to participate and we worked diligently for months in preparation for this show. While in climate weather may have prevented a larger crowd from coming, the show

officially opened to the public on January 20th. Six of the artists and Professor Reed were able to attend and meet with the public to discuss the show and the inspirations behind the works.

In conjunction with the show, Doctor Rachael Peckham is scheduled to host a literary event on February 3rd on the topic of flight in the Library Gallery. Guests are highly encouraged to walk through the gallery and see the show. There is a guestbook in the front lobby, and feedback sheets available

The show is on display at Marshall University's South Charleston campus Library Gallery from January 18th to February 18th. A tour of the show is [available online](#), complete with voiceovers from the artists talking about their work.



Cover designed by Savannah Julian

Getting the Most Out of Academic Advising

By JAMES C. WILLIAMSON

Navigating college isn't easy. Why? Well, that answer is different for everyone. Students of the Honors College for instance have unique requirements not always easy to integrate with the baseline requirements of a major. This is why students are assigned personal academic advisors to help them finish their degrees efficiently. However, many students end up wondering 'What all can my advisor really help me with?'

I sat down with academic advisor Sara Simpson from the College of Science to get an advisor's perspective on this question. Her overall message? Advisors can help you more than you probably think. She stated that Honors students in particular seemed to fill into the more independent student category, shying away from advisors' help, however this independence isn't always a good thing. A tendency to not reach out for help when needed can cause students to have trouble when

transitioning to tough curriculums after undergrad.

Ultimately, it never hurts to contact your advisor and ask if they can help you with something. Mrs. Simpson informed me that although she has many resources that would be helpful to students both academic and non-academic (guides to writing personal statements, resources for finding mentors, contact information for counseling services, etc.), this is something not many people take advantage of.

Simpson also talked with me about how advising can be a place to talk about much more than just academics. Uncomfortable questions such as "How could a DUI affect my plans?" or "How could a charge of academic dishonesty affect my future?" are things advisors are more than willing to discuss with you. More common is the topic of changing majors, an idea that many

Honors students are particularly uncomfortable confronting when it means subverting expectations by authority figures such as family. What these students don't realize is that an advisor can be a good first step to exploring this idea and can help with the complications that arise from such a decision.

As for how you should contact your advisor, it really is simple, they're just an email away. When contacting, make sure to keep your email professional and always send an update if you unexpectedly need to miss an appointment. Not only is this good practice for a future in the professional world, these people are key to your future and it is important to make a good impression. I encourage all reading to consider the struggles you currently face and contemplate if contacting your academic advisor could help you, after all it never hurts to ask.