



Honors Link

2020



Oregon State
University



As we approach the end of the most unusual and challenging fall term of my career, I am truly grateful for the strength and resilience of the Oregon State University Honors College community. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Honors College, building on the longer history of honors programming at Oregon State, and for all that has changed in that time, our values have remained remarkably consistent — even through the trials of the past months. The difficulties our students, families, faculty and staff have faced cannot be overstated, but we have continued to support one another, continued to innovate and continued to build a culture of excellence and inclusivity. This is evident in this year's *Honors Link*, in the stories celebrating our alumni, donors and history; the spotlights on brilliant and dedicated faculty and their classes; and, above all, in the achievements of honors students. Indeed, the past year has seen remarkable accomplishments: continued growth this fall, with the 1,600 students now in the college representing our largest cohort ever, unprecedented fundraising success as our greater community has rallied around honors students and a renewed commitment to building an Honors College that supports the success of all students expressed in our **2020-25 strategic plan**. The challenges of the present are real, and they are hard. But the future I see before us has never been brighter. Thank you for your support.

Toni L. Doolen

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Oregon State University
Honors College

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25 YEARS OF THE HONORS COLLEGE:

Enduring values, lasting impacts.

“The Honors College is central to the university’s quest for excellence in undergraduate education. By recruiting and retaining outstanding students and by serving their aspirations to go beyond the requirements of the standard college curriculum, the college will contribute to the increased diversity and achievement of the student body. The Honors College will provide an appropriate learning environment for the very best of our students and will enhance their value and potential.”

Written in May 1994 in a proposal to establish the Honors College, these ideas have endured over 25 years of growth and evolution. From the first cohort of 246 students in the fall of 1995 to the more than 1,600 students enrolled today, the Honors College has delivered a transformative, interdisciplinary education for outstanding students from across Oregon and beyond.

Small, unique classes, a dedicated residence hall, mentoring from some of Oregon State’s top professors and the chance to pursue original research through the honors thesis — all components of the Honors College experience since its first years — continue to draw students today. Enrollment as a percentage of the undergraduate student population, which had hovered in the 3 to 4% range for years, reached 5.6% in 2020, with the ultimate goal of hitting 7% by 2025.

Enrollment growth is one of several priorities outlined in the latest five-year strategic plan, released earlier this year after a collaborative effort by Honors College leadership, faculty, staff and students. The **2020-25 strategic plan** also emphasizes access for all eligible students, increasing diversity among students and faculty, supporting experiential learning and ensuring the long-term value of the honors experience.

That value has been recognized by Honors College graduates — now totaling 2,093 — over the past 25 years.

“From its launch in 1995 to my graduation in 1999, the Honors College became one of my favorite aspects of OSU,” wrote Bryce Payne in the 2001 edition of *Honors Link*. “It fit the way I looked at the world: through a multidisciplinary lens. And it gave me skills that I draw on daily — critical thinking, reasoning and presentation skills. It gave me

contacts, which have proved invaluable. The honors thesis experience honed my research skills and cultivated strong project management skills.”

Payne earned two honors degrees, in business administration and computer science, in 1999. He went on to earn an MBA from the University of Oregon and a Master of Real Estate Development from Portland State University. He has spent much of his career in commercial real estate and finance in Portland.

“What I believe to be true about the Honors College is it afforded us one of the best educations around and has prepared us as alumni for whatever we decide to set our minds to,” said Melinda Smith in a 2017 *Honors Link* story. “My hope for each of us is that we find something we are passionate about to make the communities we are in a better place as a result of the opportunities we had in the Honors College.”

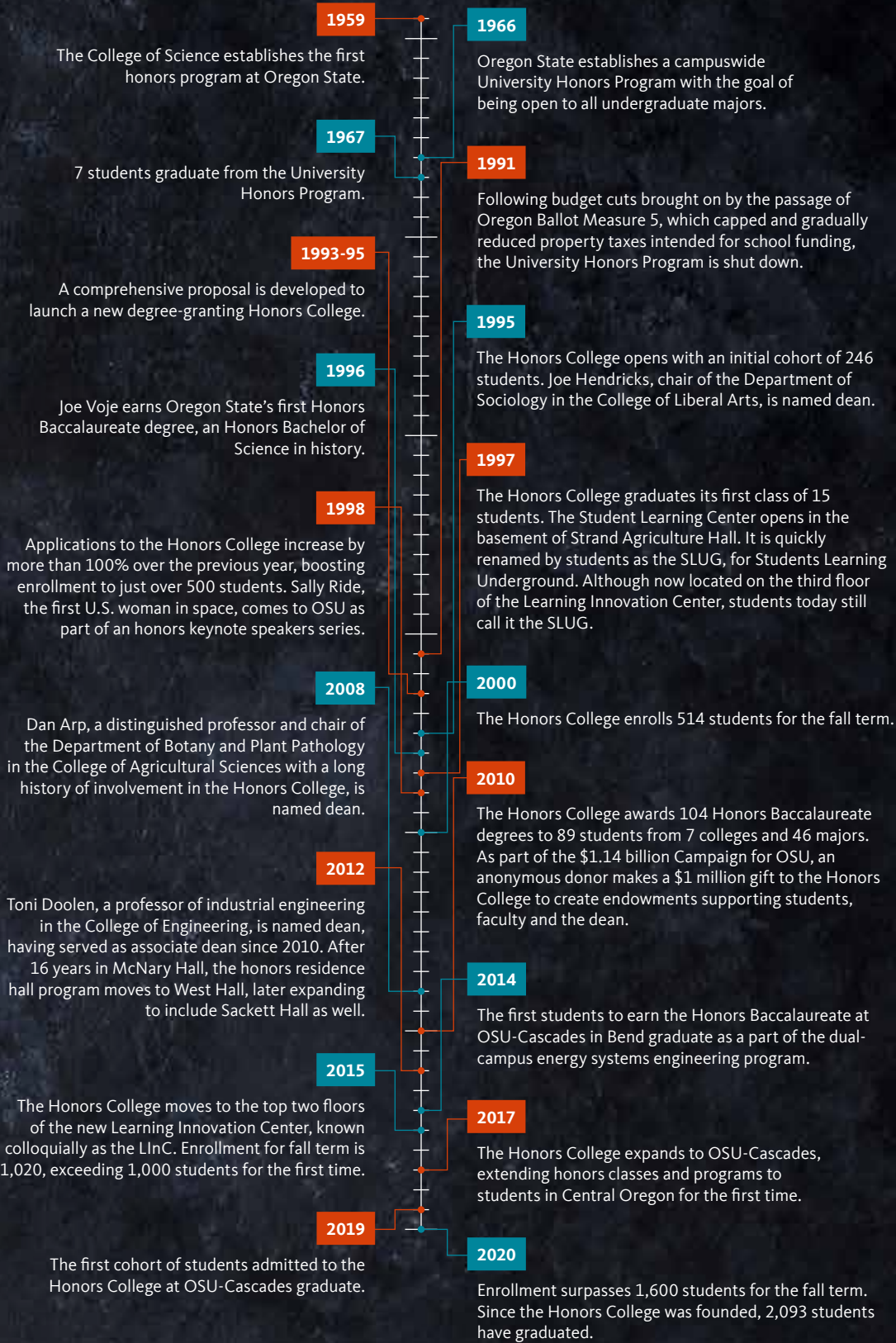
Smith graduated in 2006 with two honors degrees, in nutrition and food management and international studies with a minor in Spanish. She continued at Oregon State to earn her Pharm.D. from the College of Pharmacy in 2008.

“I received a magnificent undergraduate education at Oregon State,” said Taralyn Tan in a 2010 *Honors Link* story. “The rigorous coursework of the biochemistry/biophysics major certainly provided me with a strong scientific foundation, although I really have to credit my incredible professors and research mentors for their support in the laboratory. They inspired me to pursue a Ph.D., and they challenged me to think and work as an independent scientist.”

After earning her honors degree in biochemistry and biophysics in 2008, Tan earned a Ph.D. in neurobiology from Harvard University in 2016. Today, she is director of educational programming for the graduate program in neuroscience at Harvard Medical School.

Looking back with pride, the Honors College looks forward with confidence. Happy 25th anniversary to all of the faculty, staff, students and alumni who have made the Honors College the special place that it is and always will be.

HONORS AT OREGON STATE — A BRIEF HISTORY.





The first Honors College graduate looks back with gratitude.

“The Honors College let me know that I was capable of more than I thought I was.”

Joe Voje

Since the Honors College was established in 1995, more than 2,000 students have earned the honors baccalaureate. Joe Voje was the first.

For Voje, who had struggled academically in high school, college was a redemption. He chose Oregon State because it was close to home in Washington, and he was offered a scholarship.

Voje transferred into the Honors College as a member of the first cohort of around 250 students. “I think we all knew we were a part of something special,” he says.

Already more than halfway through his undergraduate program, Voje found the honors faculty were willing to help him complete his honors degree requirements quickly to stay on track for graduation. “I worked with faculty willing to add additional coursework to my regular classes and meet with

me one-on-one to expand my learning opportunities,” he says. “I can’t say enough good things about the great folks running the program back then.”

Voje enjoyed the unique classes the Honors College offers. Far Side Entomology, which Mike Burgett taught then and continues to teach today, was his favorite. For his thesis, Voje analyzed the migration history of his own family and explored the factors that led them to migrate from Europe to the United States. In another Honors College first, Voje defended his thesis in the fall of 1996.

“One of my favorite memories was defending my thesis,” he says. “No one had gone before me; it was new.”

After graduating from Oregon State, Voje worked in cybersecurity for the U.S. Navy in positions of escalating impor-

tance. Voje went on to earn a master’s in network security and now holds a plethora of certifications in the field. After the Navy, Voje served as chief information security officer for the city of San Francisco. He then returned to Oregon, becoming the chief information security officer for Oregon Health & Science University in Portland in 2017.

Voje hopes that the Honors College will continue to focus on the individuality of its incoming students, as it did for him. He is grateful that the admissions process looks beyond academic ability, seeing students for who they are, rather than just their accomplishments on paper. That vision, he says, helped him to believe in himself and was ultimately instrumental in getting him to where he is today.

“The Honors College let me know that I was capable of more than I thought I was.”

PUBLIC HEALTH IS A MATTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR Ammara Molvi.

Honors College fall 2020 graduate Ammara Molvi's commitment to community engagement has inspired her during her years at Oregon State University and will continue to motivate her as she looks to the future. A pre-med public health major, Ammara hopes to become a pediatric emergency room physician and work toward health equity both locally and internationally.

Ammara was drawn to her major for its potential to make positive changes in society. "Public health is a social justice perspective that looks at improving the quality of life for individuals and communities by understanding and addressing the root causes of health inequities through means like community organizing and policy action," she says.

While at Oregon State, Ammara has participated in multiple academic, social justice and community-based projects and programs. She was employed as the coordinator of wellness affairs for the Associated Students of Oregon State University, as a media assistant for the Honors College and as the communications representative for the Ettihad Cultural Center. In addition to these paid positions, Ammara had roles as a clinic coordinator at Community Outreach Inc. and as an honors biology learning assistant. She was also an active member of the Pakistani Student Association, Muslim Student Association and the Student Health Advisory Board.

This fall, Ammara defended her thesis, which analyzes how anti-immigration policies are drivers of health disparities. "Working on my thesis has been an opportunity for me to

examine just how social justice and public health are related, and it has solidified my future goals to advocate for and promote the health of migrant populations," she says.

Ammara next plans to apply for medical school to pursue an M.D./Master of Public Health degree, enabling her to further study and explore the issues she's been researching as an undergraduate.

Ammara credits the Honors College for much of her involvement and finds value in knowing that the lessons she's learned and connections she's made will serve her well after graduation.

"The Honors College has allowed me to meet a lot of people that I feel like I'll be connected to for the rest of my life," she says. "I'm most proud of all that I've learned and what I'll carry with me through life."

While remote learning hasn't been ideal for her last term at Oregon State, Ammara is grateful for the support her professors have given her and her classmates.

"I would like to thank all the professors and people who are working to make sure that not only am I continuing to learn, but are checking in to see how my peers and I are doing during this time," she says. "These are uncertain and by no means easy times; we must remember to take care of others as well as ourselves."

It's a commitment she's already fulfilling.



Photo: Hamza Molvi

"These are uncertain and by no means easy times; we must remember to take care of others as well as ourselves."

Ammara Molvi



HONORS COLLEGE learns from remote spring term, keeps improving this fall.

When Oregon State University announced that spring term 2020 would be fully remote, Honors College faculty, staff and students knew they were facing an unprecedented challenge with just a week to make the shift. Although the Honors College has offered online courses through Ecampus for years, in-person classes and activities have traditionally been central to the honors experience.

“Spring term was a challenge for everyone, as we were asked to pivot quickly to remote delivery of classes, advising, mixers, events, everything,” says Associate Dean Susan Rodgers. “A top priority was to ensure that students’ academic experience remained as high quality and intellectually engaging as possible.”

Honors College faculty took this priority seriously. Without face-to-face lessons and activities, instructors found innovative workarounds. Sam Logan, for example, couldn’t host students in his lab to modify ride-on toy cars for his class, Toy-Based Technology for Children with Disabilities. So he sent each student an electronics kit with which to learn the same skills they would have gained in the lab. Tom Carrico, whose course includes creating images of space, set up cameras in his backyard and had students control them remotely. This unique adaptation allowed students to develop the same astrophotography skills as students had in previous terms.

Students joined faculty in working creatively to help deliver the full honors experience. Members of the Honors College Student Association held a remote student-led event every week, mailing supplies so students could join in activities like a Bob Ross Paint Night and a baking challenge. Asking students to lead events allowed them to contribute something they were knowledgeable and passionate about.

“Having one person host an event of their choice each week during the spring worked well because they were able to use their creativity and cater to those who are interested in the same things, such as video games or virtual treasure hunts,” says HCSA President Maja Engler.

While everyone did their best, sometimes finding new formats that will continue when in-person activities return, the spring term definitely had a learning curve. With fall term again largely remote, the Honors College has applied those lessons to improve the experience for all.

“We had low turnout for some events, in part, I think, because people just got tired of being on Zoom,” Rodgers says. “When you’re online all day, it’s difficult to log on in the evening for a social or co-curricular event.”

To combat this, the Honors College has created options for both in-person and remote activities around Corvallis, along with online versions of Honors College staples — Dean and Friends conversations, trivia nights, community coffees and others.

Another new initiative is assigning all Honors College students, wherever they are learning, to a Conversation Cluster. Meeting via Zoom for 30 minutes every week throughout the academic year, the goal is to “discuss topics, play games and be in community together,” says LeeAnn Baker, Honors College director of student success and engagement. “Conversation Cluster members will get to know each other well and look out for one another as we navigate this challenging time together.” Almost 800 students, about half of the Honors College student body, are participating in Conversation Clusters.

While the challenges associated with remote delivery of classes and programming will continue beyond fall term, Honors College staff and students remain optimistic about the future.

“These are difficult times,” Maja says, “but if there is one thing that my Honors College peers have taught me, it’s how to think critically, adapt and band together under new circumstances.”

THEY WERE FRIENDS BEFORE THEY GOT TO THE HONORS COLLEGE.

Their shared experience made them friends for life.

Sometimes, if you're lucky, there are relationships that accompany you through every stage of life. This has been true for 2003 Oregon State Honors College graduates Brandon Togioka and Bory Kea. Friends as kids and now colleagues at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, they have remained close through years of shared experiences.

Togioka and Kea grew up in Salem, attending the same middle school and high school. At Oregon State, they both majored in bioengineering.

Togioka knew he would be going to the Honors College and Oregon State as soon as he received his early acceptance. "Once I got in, I didn't look anywhere else," he says.

Attending Oregon State was also an easy choice for Kea, with a long line of Beavers in her family. Beyond her legacy ties, Kea was attracted to the many opportunities Oregon State and the Honors College provide.

Years later, Togioka and Kea have fond memories of their honors experience and the connections they made. "[The classes] help you feel like you're in a small college atmosphere, but you're part of a bigger community. It's the best of both worlds," Togioka says. Kea adds that the program helped her to grow as a student and as a person.

Throughout his time at Oregon State, Togioka was active in residence hall life and the honors community. Highlights for Kea include honors trips to Sunriver for fly fishing and skiing and a three-month research trip to Argentina. Some of their favorite memories at OSU were ones they shared together, like studying in the basement of Gleeson Hall and attending football games.



After completing their undergraduate degrees, both went on to prestigious medical schools, Johns Hopkins for Togioka and Stanford for Kea. At OHSU, Togioka is an associate professor of anesthesiology and perioperative medicine, and Kea is an associate professor and director of clinical trials in the Department of Emergency Medicine.

The two have grown up together, through the awkwardness of middle school, the trials of high school, the challenges of undergrad and now to the successes of professional careers. It's been a long journey that's ended up close to where it started; today they live only three blocks from each other.

While their relationship has the longest history, Kea and Togioka developed other connections in the Honors College that have stood the test of time. Kea married another Honors

College graduate, Yosuke Yamamoto, who earned a degree in chemical engineering and now works as an engineer in Portland. Another friend, Patrick Lew, also earned an honors degree in bioengineering, went to medical school and works in internal medicine and pediatrics in Portland.

Both Togioka and Kea agree that cultivating relationships is essential to the Honors College experience. "You get most of the positive benefits through the connections and the relationships," Togioka says.

Kea adds that if you invest in friendships and work hard to maintain them, "they can be long-lasting relationships."

They might even last a lifetime.



The long view: Honors College experience pays off in graduates' careers.



Nearly 20 years after earning her degree, Meadow Clendenin's Honors College thesis helped her land her dream job.

A corporate attorney in Dallas, Texas, Clendenin, '99, unexpectedly found herself looking for a job in 2017. Facing an interview panel from Toyota, what set her apart from the other candidates? Her thesis.

"It jumped off my résumé because I didn't have experience working in the auto industry, but I had spent more than a year researching marketing in the U.S. and Japanese auto industries and had a minor in Japanese language and culture," Clendenin says.

Clendenin's thesis experience not only helped her win the job as managing counsel for Toyota North America, it also gave her insight into the corporate culture she would be joining. From her research, she was familiar with Kaizen — the concept of continuous improvement at every level of a company — and the consensus-driven management style commonly used in Japan.

"It was nice to walk into a company, even though the industry was brand new to me, where I had that knowledge," she says.



Experience, contacts and a career head start

The honors thesis, especially when combined with other experiential learning, can also lead to a job offer before students even graduate. It did for Gertrude Villaverde, '19, who earned her degree in energy systems engineering from OSU-Cascades.

Villaverde was among the first students to join the Honors College when it expanded to the Bend campus, and the opportunity to conduct in-depth research, writing and presenting at a level more typical for graduate school, was a major draw.

Her thesis, a proposal for a hydrogen/natural gas energy system, won third place in an international competition. And the experience — conducting extensive research and reporting on it effectively in a short amount of time — got the attention

of Energy 350, an energy efficiency consulting firm in Portland. Villaverde worked with Energy 350 on data logging and analysis for a lean manufacturing project while completing a MECOP internship at A-dec, a dental equipment manufacturer in Newberg, Oregon, during her senior year.

"They liked the way we worked with each other and how quickly the project was implemented," Villaverde says. She joined the company immediately after graduation in April 2019 and was recently promoted.

Beyond knowledge, practical career skills

In addition to what students learn about their topic, the thesis process — researching, writing and defending — helps students develop valuable, transferable skills that can be applied in any career field.

According to Honors College Dean Toni Doolen, one reason for the thesis requirement is to make students active contributors

to Oregon State's research mission. Just like faculty, they are framing a question, testing an idea and explaining results in a way that adds to the body of knowledge in their subject areas.

"We don't just require that they engage in research and scholarship. They actually disseminate what they do to the scholarly community," Doolen says. "A huge part of the learning is in documenting what you've learned, being able to do that in writing, talk through it with folks who are experts and explain the work in an accessible way. That's one of our learning outcomes."

Another skill they develop is resilience. "Many of the students who come into the Honors College don't have a lot of experience with failure," Doolen says. "As with any research, it never turns out like you thought it was going to. What an amazing life lesson!"

Knowing that these setbacks are to be expected, the Honors College has built support structures into the thesis process, including guidance from faculty mentors, to help students get back on track and keep moving forward.

Villaverde, for one, acknowledges that the thesis "may seem daunting, but if you're aiming for excellence, this is the way to go." The good news? "You will get more than you imagined out of this," she says.

Exploring across disciplines

One unique aspect of the honors thesis is that it does not have to be in the student's major field of study. Doolen says this adds value to the thesis because it develops students' ability to work across disciplines. Plus, it allows them to explore other areas where they have interests and talents.



Esther Vega, for example, is an industrial engineering major, studying the science of optimization and efficiency in systems. The system she chose to study for her thesis was one close to her heart, K-12 education and building connections between teachers and Latinx parents. Her research found

common ground in teachers' and parents' desire that their students excel, along with practical strategies to promote engagement.



For mechanical engineering major Robyn Wells, '19, it was her love for playing in the Oregon State marching band that led to her thesis topic: the physical impacts of band members' workload after a football gameday. The thesis gave Wells real-world experience in ergonomics and human factors

analysis for product development — skills she's now able to use in her job as an engineer at Sound Devices, a company in Wisconsin that designs and builds equipment for the TV and movie industry.

Wells says the Honors College "helped prepare me for starting this next stage in my life." In addition to the thesis, she gives credit to an honors colloquium class, Last Year Experience, which included developing job interview skills, insights from OSU alumni on their career paths and goals, learning about personal finance and assessing personal values.

"This class has been incredibly valuable to me, not only because I learned skills on how to succeed in a career but also because life is about pursuing happiness and fulfillment, and that looks different for everyone," she says.

Wells is right that people define career success for themselves. What she and all Honors College alumni have in common are the experiences — the thesis especially — that prepared them to thrive.



“At OSU, I had the opportunity to really grow as a leader, and these lessons have stayed with me in my work as a health care leader and a policymaker.”

SreyRam Kuy

INSPIRED AND INSPIRING: 2020 Alumni Fellow pursues her calling.

Dr. SreyRam Kuy, the 2020 Honors College Alumni Fellow, can pinpoint the exact moment she knew her calling was to be a doctor. Her mother was hurt, with massive abdominal injuries, and Kuy, just 2 years old, had sustained head trauma, her left ear partially torn off. Only weeks before, the family — Kuy, her older sister, SreyReath, and their parents — had escaped Cambodia and the violence of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Now, in a refugee camp on the border with Thailand, a grenade attack nearly killed them. It was a volunteer surgeon with the Red Cross who performed lifesaving surgery on Kuy and her mother. From this moment onward, Kuy knew she wanted to one day overcome her own terror and adversity to care for others.

“I was young when this happened, but these stories are a part of my history, and they’ve shaped much of what I do in my work now,” Kuy says. “These experiences taught me to appreciate the blessing of being alive, when millions of others didn’t survive. They taught me the power of perseverance when your circumstances seem so bleak. And, most importantly, these experiences have demonstrated the extraordinary capacity for human kindness to rise in the face of evil atrocities.”

Building a new life in America

After the family spent a year and a half in refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines, a Christian missionary group helped them move to the United States. They settled in Corvallis in 1981. Trained as a teacher and an engineer, her parents worked whatever jobs they could find. One of her mother’s first jobs in the U.S. was in the horticultural greenhouses at Oregon State, and her father worked as a janitor cleaning classrooms at the university. Kuy and her sister would help their parents with their second job at the OSU Folk Club Thrift Shop as well as by cleaning houses and doing yard work for university professors.

Despite the difficulties of the transition to the U.S., Kuy thrived academically and was valedictorian at Crescent Valley High School in Corvallis. She was accepted to Harvard University and offered a scholarship when tragedy hit her family again. The spring of her senior year in high school, her father died of cancer.

“I remember, as I sat on the steps of Strand Ag, I wrote down what I wanted to accomplish in my life. I decided, instead of Harvard, I was going to come to OSU so I could continue to help my family,” Kuy recalls. “And now, looking back more than two decades later, that was one of the best decisions I made.”

While at Oregon State, Kuy immersed herself in the community while pursuing degrees in microbiology and philosophy. She was a senator for the College of Science on the OSU Undergraduate Senate; vice president of Talons, a women’s service honors society; president of the Science Student Council; president of Phi Eta Sigma; president of the OSU campus chapter of Habitat for Humanity; and an Honors College student.

Though Kuy ultimately did not finish her honors degree, instead participating in an internship in the U.S. Senate, she looks back fondly on her time in the Honors College. She remembers studying and hanging out in the SLUG, the Honors College student lounge, trips to Ashland to watch Shakespeare plays and the incredible discussions in the small Honors College classes. “Many times the classes were discussions and dialogues, rather than lectures,” she says.

Kuy is especially grateful for the Honors College’s professors, “who were excellent teachers, but were also mentors who genuinely cared about us.” Specifically, she is thankful for the mentorship of two faculty members in the Department of Philosophy, Lani Roberts and Flo Leibowitz.

Helping veterans and underserved communities

After graduating from Oregon State with degrees in microbiology and philosophy, Kuy earned her M.D. from Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. She later received a master’s in health services from Yale University. Now living in Houston, Texas, Kuy teaches students and residents at the Baylor College of Medicine while working as a surgeon caring for veterans at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. She is also deputy chief medical officer for quality and safety for the South Central VA Health Care Network.

Throughout her career, Kuy has remained committed to helping underserved communities, specifically veterans and Medicaid recipients. She was a special advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and then became the first woman to be appointed deputy undersecretary for community care in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In another previous position, Kuy served as the chief medical officer for Medicaid for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, helping lead the state through a variety of public

health crises. There, she was able to ensure, for the first time, that low-income women could get genetic testing for breast cancer, and those with breast cancer had access to necessary breast reconstructive surgery. She also helped reduce new opioid prescriptions among Medicaid patients by 40%.

Kuy is most proud, however, of the work she accomplished in the Department of Veterans Affairs. There, Kuy and her team helped transform the VA, once considered among the worst government agencies to work for. In 2020, *Forbes* named the VA as one of America’s best employers, thanks in considerable part to the legacy of her and her colleagues’ work.

“The reason why I cite this as the accomplishment I’m most proud of is because, when the VA secretary and chief of staff tasked me with tackling this problem in December 2017, this challenge seemed impossible. It took more than just implementing policies or rulemaking. We had to accomplish a change in the workplace culture,” she says. “And changing a culture requires changing our belief about what’s possible.”

Kindness overcomes adversity

Throughout her life, Kuy has continuously been inspired by those whose human kindness overcomes adversity and advances change, including her Oregon State and Honors College professors and mentors, the veterans and Medicaid recipients she has helped, and of course, the volunteer Red Cross surgeon who saved her life decades ago.

“At OSU, I had the opportunity to really grow as a leader, and these lessons have stayed with me in my work as a health care leader and a policymaker,” she says. “But I didn’t just gain the critical thinking skills that have been essential in my work as a leader. OSU also nourished my humanity, and that has shaped my work as a surgeon and as someone who cares for underserved Medicaid patients and vulnerable veterans.”

Kuy has spoken with small groups of Honors College students over Zoom in both spring and fall terms this year. And for all of her accomplishments, her advice to current students is deceptively simple: “Believe in your dreams. Persevere. Be kind to others, and be kind to yourself,” she says.

It’s wisdom that has been hard won — and that continues to make an impact.

Leading during a crisis: From Hurricane Harvey to COVID-19

The alumni fellow program was created by the OSU Alumni Association to recognize eminent graduates for their leadership and accomplishments. Dr. SreyRam Kuy, ’00, the 2020 Honors College Alumni Fellow, is an accomplished surgeon and deputy chief medical officer for quality and safety for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Kuy is widely recognized as an international leader in health care policy and management. Her Alumni Fellows presentation can be viewed at beav.es/oDn.



MAKING CHANGE:

Jax Richards overcomes a challenging past to create a better future.

“Statistically speaking, I shouldn’t be at college. My personal best achievement is just keeping myself motivated and dedicated to bettering myself and my community.”

Jax Richards

Jax Richards is only going into his second year at Oregon State University, but he is already a leading advocate for change on campus.

Jax, an economics and public policy major, is the founder of Safeguard Youth, a nonprofit advocating for youth and survivors of child abuse. He is working with state Sen. Sara Gelser and Oregon State University to expand the organization beyond OSU.

Jax began Safeguard Youth after experiencing child abuse and neglect while growing up in Beaverton. He wants his nonprofit to improve Oregon’s current child welfare systems and be a voice for those who have experienced or continue to experience abuse and neglect. This fall, he will be meeting with multiple nonprofit leaders, policymakers and department directors to advocate for change.

Jax has been busy the past few months. He recently finished a fellowship with the Biden presidential campaign and is part of the Willamette Valley Legislative Fellowship, led by state Rep. Dan Rayfield. He took 19 course credits over the summer, and he is the lead organizer of TEDxOregonStateU. And he continues to work on his honors thesis focusing on child welfare reform, which he started during his first year.

Referring to his unstable and difficult childhood, “statistically speaking, I shouldn’t be at college,” Jax says. “My personal best achievement is just keeping myself motivated and dedicated to bettering myself and my community.”

In his free time, Jax enjoys hanging out with his emotional support turtle, Ginsburg, named after the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Like many students at Oregon State, Jax found the abrupt transition to remote learning last spring challenging. But he has persevered through the fall, with one of his favorite Honors College classes being A Data Geek’s Guide to the 2020 Election.

“Ultimately, I’ve found peace in knowing that these are going to be unpredictable and changing times, and I’m making the most of it possible!” he says. “The Honors College has been great with their communication and service throughout this whole process, and I’m proud to still be working with them and be one of their students.”

2020 HONORS COLLEGE EMINENT PROFESSORS

Each year, the Honors College recognizes two faculty for outstanding teaching, research and undergraduate mentorship. For 2020, the honorees are **Belinda A. Batten** from the School of Mechanical, Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering in the College of Engineering and **Melissa Cheyney** from the School of Language, Culture and Society in the College of Liberal Arts.



During her time at Oregon State, Belinda Batten has served in multiple roles: assistant professor in mathematics, department head in mechanical engineering, head of the School of Mechanical, Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering, director of the Northwest National Marine Renewable Energy Center and executive associate dean for the College of Engineering. In the Honors College, Batten has mentored two honors theses and taught a range of courses, including several terms of two colloquia, Experiencing Engineering Research and Design Thinking in Teams. Since 2017, she has been a member of the Honors College Board of Regents, advising college leadership on strategic planning and fund development initiatives.

Batten's broad research interests include computational methods for partial differential equations, reduced-order model and control design, numerical optimization and control, mathematical modeling, marine energy and autonomous vehicles. She has more than 60 publications, has given more than 70 lectures worldwide and has been the principal or co-investigator on over \$25 million of federally funded research. In recognition of her many contributions to Oregon State University, the Honors College and honors students, a committee of faculty peers selected Batten as the 2020 Sandy and Elva Sanders Eminent Professor in the Honors College.



Melissa "Missy" Cheyney has been a member of the Oregon State anthropology faculty since 2007. She has also served as vice-chair of the Institutional Review Board and as the graduate program director for the Department of Anthropology. She has taught numerous courses in the School of Language, Culture and Society, ranging from Introduction to Anthropology to Reproductive Justice, and she has led an honors version of Introduction to Medical Anthropology. Cheyney has advised 12 Honors College students through their thesis projects.

Cheyney has written and edited two books, with a third in progress, focusing on birth and maternity care, along with more than 60 journal articles and book chapters. She currently serves on the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine's Birth Settings in America Study Committee. Cheyney has also been active in the community, serving as co-founder and vice president of the board of directors for Heart of the Valley Birth and Beyond, a local birth justice nonprofit. In addition, she is director of the Community Doula Project and a member of the Homebirth Summit Steering Committee. In recognition of her service to the Honors College and the broader Oregon State and regional community, a committee of faculty peers selected Cheyney as a 2020 Honors College Eminent Professor.

The Honors College Eminent Professor awards are made possible through generous support from the Margaret and Thomas Meehan Estate, Ruth Beyer and Joseph (Sandy) and Cheryl Sanders. A list of past eminent professors and mentors can be found at honors.oregonstate.edu/faculty-awards.



A MENTOR IN THE CLASSROOM, IN THE LAB AND BEYOND:

Sam Logan named 2020 Margaret and Thomas Meehan Eminent Mentor.

Mentors are essential to the honors experience — and the relationships they build often extend well beyond a student’s time at Oregon State. That has been the case for Sam Logan, the 2020 Margaret and Thomas Meehan Honors College Eminent Mentor.

Logan, an associate professor of kinesiology in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, was nominated by students and recent alumni and selected by a panel of Honors College faculty.

Logan is also director of the Social Mobility Lab — best known for modifying ride-on toy cars for children with disabilities. Honors students can join in Logan’s research by taking Toy-Based Technology for Children with Disabilities, a class he teaches nearly every term. Often, students continue to work in the lab after the term is over. Many find a home on campus — and a lifelong mentor — at the same time.

The Honors College Eminent Mentor award was established through a gift from the Margaret and Thomas Meehan Estate. The Meehans came to Oregon State in 1962. Thomas was a history professor and well known for teaching and mentorship before retiring in 1987. Margaret worked in the library as well as the history department and later helped establish the University Honors Program — a predecessor to today’s Honors College — serving as its director from 1974 until her retirement in 1986. A list of past eminent mentors can be found at honors.oregonstate.edu/faculty-awards.

Thomas Weathers, who took the class during his first year, joined the lab after Logan received a grant for a summer research project. Thomas’ experience with a toy-based mobility device turned into a thesis, and the mentorship endures as he pursues a degree in computer science.

“We continue to work together on projects, and I’m confident that this will be a lifelong mentor/mentee relationship,” Logan says.

Jenna Fitzgerald, a recent honors alum, began volunteering in the Social Mobility Lab during her first term and stayed, driven by a passion for research about children with disabilities and Logan’s mentorship.

“Dr. Logan’s mentoring style facilitates effective independent learning and problem solving, yet he is always eager to answer questions and provide more direct guidance if necessary,” she says. Now a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Jenna says Logan “continues to be a mentor to me today.”

Beyond teaching classes and working with students in his lab, Logan has advised eight students on their theses since 2017.

“My philosophy includes providing undergraduates with opportunities to dig into the research process and learn by doing,” Logan says. “I provide guidance, but I also believe that the most learning comes from critical thinking and problem solving.”

Students from Logan’s lab have gone on to numerous graduate school and professional opportunities, each having gained something from his mentorship. Logan feels he’s learned from them as well.

“I’ve had a fantastic experience with mentoring undergraduates through the thesis process and teaching in the Honors College,” he says. “I’d like to thank all of the students who have worked with me in the past who contributed to receiving this recognition.”



Susan Jackson Rodgers NAMED HONORS COLLEGE ASSOCIATE DEAN.

Susan Jackson Rodgers, a professor in the Oregon State University School of Writing, Literature and Film, has been appointed associate dean of the Honors College. Rodgers has served as interim associate dean since January 2020, when she replaced Tara Williams, who became dean of the University of Alabama Honors College.

The Honors College associate dean has a broad set of responsibilities, including curriculum, assessment, supervision of the honors advising team and faculty engagement and development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rodgers has also represented the Honors College at the university’s continuity of operations meetings.

Rodgers was named interim associate dean following a competitive search in December 2019. Due to her qualifications for the position and achievements in the role, Honors College Dean Toni Doolen was able to waive a second search for the permanent position.

“Associate Dean Rodgers’ work has been absolutely critical during a very challenging time,” says Doolen. “This position is central to our ability to serve honors students, and Professor

Rodgers has managed to provide continuity and innovation, all while learning and integrating into our team largely remotely.”

Rodgers has been a faculty member at Oregon State since 2008 and was director of the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program in the College of Liberal Arts from 2015 to 2019. She is a nationally recognized fiction writer and creative writing teacher and has written two collections of stories, a novel and award-winning pieces for numerous literary journals and magazines.

Before coming to Oregon State, Rodgers taught at Kansas State University from 1992 to 2008. During her time there, she was recognized with Kansas State’s most prestigious teaching commendation, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Rodgers also serves on the Board of Directors for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs.

“I’m thrilled to remain with the Honors College community and build on the foundation I’ve established this year,” Rodgers says. “The students, staff and faculty in the college are models for the entire university, and I look forward to continuing to work with them — hopefully in person again at some point! I feel like we are just getting started.”

NEW HORIZONS: HONORS COLLEGE CHAMPIONS LEAD UNPRECEDENTED FUNDRAISING SUCCESS.

Donor support for scholarships, experiential learning, new programming and curriculum development has never been more important to the success of the Honors College. The economic challenges of the past months have made external funding even more critical for student success and retention, and Honors College supporters have risen to the occasion.

Fundraising for honors has reached unprecedented levels, surpassing \$1.5 million in the 2020 fiscal year — \$400,000 more than the previous three years combined — with the first quarter of 2021 on pace to match. Leading the way are a group of “Honors College Champions,” donors giving \$100,000 or more to the college.

“The Honors College Champions are completely reshaping our future as a college and expanding our sense of what is possible,” says Dean Toni Doolen. “Never before have we seen giving at this level, and the leadership, commitment and vision of our champions is setting the college up to be a true model of innovative and inclusive excellence in honors education at public universities.”

Seven champions, different connections

The seven current Honors College Champions, six couples and one anonymous donor, represent a range of backgrounds and connections to the college. They include parents of current and past students, faculty members and others with long histories of engagement with honors. All have signed on in part to inspire others to step forward and support the college and its students.

“We want the Honors College to have the resources that it needs to educate young people as well as possible — providing research opportunities, small classes and other attributes of a first-rate education,” explain Carol and Rich Pickard, one of the champion couples.

Our community steps up as well

Support has also come from throughout the Honors College community. In response to an urgent call for emergency donations in the spring, alumni and other donors contributed \$23,911 toward student support. This was the fifth highest total among colleges at Oregon State University, despite honors having the fewest overall number of alumni.

“Everyone in the college is so inspired by the compassion our community has shown and by the belief they’ve expressed in the Honors College’s mission and honors students,” Doolen says. “As successful as our first 25 years as a college have been, we are poised to reach even greater heights in the next 25.”

To learn more about supporting the Honors College, visit honors.oregonstate.edu/giving, email Kellie Parker with the OSU Foundation at kellie.parker@osufoundation.org or call her at 541-207-6182.

Meet the Honors College Champions

Kevin Ahern and Indira Rajagopal were longtime teachers and mentors in the Honors College until their retirement in 2018. They also served on the Honors College Board of Regents, the college’s leadership external advisory group, and as co-associate deans. Their Honors College Champion gift will support scholarships for Honors College students.

Michael and Janice Burgett have created a new recruitment scholarship in the Honors College. Mike, an emeritus faculty member in horticulture, has taught his class Far Side Entomology in the Honors College since its founding in 1995, and it has become one of the most famous — and beloved — classes in the honors curriculum.

Ken and Paula Krane created a scholarship several years ago to support students pursuing experiential learning opportunities. Their Honors College Champion gift will provide additional resources for this fund. Ken is an emeritus professor of physics and was chair of the faculty senate committee that created the Honors College in 1995. He is also a member of the Honors College Board of Regents.

Carol and Rich Pickard have created a new scholarship that will help students pay the differential tuition associated with enrollment in the Honors College. Carol graduated from Oregon State in 1976 with a B.S. in clothing textiles and related arts, and she served on the Honors College Board of Regents for 11 years. She is now on the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees.

Patrick and Vicki Stone are parents of an Honors College student and have hosted engagement and outreach events for the college. They have created a new scholarship that will recruit 10 outstanding students, each representing an undergraduate academic college at Oregon State. The scholarship will provide four years of funding, as well as support for experiential learning.

Wayne and Marta von Borstel are parents of two Honors College graduates, who both completed their degrees in 2006. They created the largest scholarship offered by the Honors College and have supported students from Eastern Oregon, particularly The Dalles. Their Honors College Champion gift supports the Wayne and Marta von Borstel Honors College Scholarship.

2020

HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATES



Lili Adams
Marina Aguinaga
Sally Albright
Ryan Alder
Ammar Alkhalifa
Alyssa Andrew
Hiruni Aponso
Molly Austin
Kiana Barr
Lydia Bastian
Benjamin Bauml
Lindsey Benoit
Debra Beyer
Jay Bickell
Katherine Bodner
Victoria Boechler
Claire Boenisch
Kyle Botermans
Kali Bravo
Juliana Brown
Makenna Browne
Bailey Burk
Madeleine Busby
Christina Cafferata
Samantha Carrothers

Ryan Cashen
David Catherall
Jessica Chadwick
Alvin Chang
Marisa Chen
Andrea Chiou
Emma Christian
Tucker Cochenour
Harley Coldiron*
Carlee Conner
Jocelyn Conroy
Jacob Cook
Jeffrey Crowell
Derek Dardzinski
Leone Davila
Jeffrey Dhas
Dustin Diep
Daemon Dikeman
Brigh Dolan
Claire Dowd
Sarah Duke
William Duke
Elena Ellingson-Cosen
Clark Embleton
Hannah Escobar

Erica Ewton
Alessandra Ferriso
Ryan Forcier
Erin Ford
Conner Fox
Brooke Frey
Zachary Fried
Nicholas Gadinas
Molly Gallagher
Amanda Gamboa
Mark Geisler
Emma Gibbs
Breanna Gollihugh
Varun Gopinatth
Cheyenne Gordon
Tyler Gray
Gillian Griffin
Corey Groshong
Sonia Grutzius
Sonica Gupta
Alexander Guyer
Sakib Haque
Karen Harper
Rogue Hartman
Ashley Hay

Joseph Hebert
Kali Henderson
Lena Hildenbrand
Octavia Hogaboam
Zohar Hoter
Victoria Houdeshell
Marilee Hoyle
Yi Huang
Kate Hultberg
Alan Huston
Celine Huynh
Shaina Jachter
Kendra Jackson
Matthew Jansen
Keira Johnson
Chloe Johnston
Trenton Joiner
Alexander Jones
Montana Kaiyala*
Isabella Karabinas
Zachary Kendall
Julia Kim
Soyeon Kim
Taylor Kreul
Michael Kupperman

Andrea Lanz
Abigail Larkin*
Eve Lathrop
Nathan Lausmann
Jaime Law
Vivian Le
David Lehrburger
Kaylene Lim
Joseph Linebarger
Blake Lopez
Carly Loving
Erica Lumianski
Yun Luo
Cedar Mackaness
Austin Martin
Benjamin Martin
Susmitha Matlapudi
Madison McKinney
Ryan McLaughlin
Tomas McMonigal
Brett Meador
Rachel Meeuwsen
Emily Meier
James Merlo
Phillip Mestas III

McKenzie Meyer
Hamza Molvi
Austin Mullins
Thomas Murphy
John Musgrove
Renee Myers
Jane Myrick
Cocoro Nagasaka
Ronni Naggar
Trevor Nash
Jacob Newton
Mai Nguyen
Ian Oakes
Elora Ormand
Nidhi Pai
Nathaniel Pereira
Zachary Pinard
Taylor Prichard
Kiley Pugh
Victor Puoci
Symon Ramos
Eryn Reeder
Caitlin Reid
Karissa Renyer
Bailey Reynolds

Bianca Robison
Diego Rodriguez
Grace Ross
Elise Ryan
Sarah Settimo
Mohammed Shakibnia
Jonah Siekmann
Nicole Sipple
Amira Smith
Madeleine Smith
McGwire Smith
David So
Brenna Stevens
Chloe Stewart
Marika Stock
Jordan Strahl
Danielle Sweitzer
Alexa Tawzer*
Mrinal Thapliyal
Seth Thomas
Hailey Kehoe Thommen
Ronald Thompson
Ryan Tollefsen
Kiara Tomlinson
Hannah Triplett

Nathaniel Trobough
Kylie Tyler
Andrea Uskokovic
Eden Vanderhoek
Zoe Vanderhoek
Edward Veytsman
Chinmay Wadgaonkar
Zielle Walsh
Alexander Watt
Alec Westbrook
Cora White
Max Winer
Julia Winett
Mandy Wolfe
Han Xue
Jasmin Yang
Margaret Yates
Alexandra Zinn

*OSU-Cascades graduates





Includes students who graduated in fall term, 2019 and winter, spring and summer terms, 2020.



Oregon State University Honors College

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