



HONORS COLLEGE

SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley[™]
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Honors College



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DEAN

HON NEWS

HON (Eta Omicron Nu) is the student organization of the Honors College. Students in HON participate in events on and off campus, serving their campus and their community. Several volunteer opportunities are offered throughout the year, and students are encouraged to join as many events as possible.

During the 2015-2016 school year, honors students participated in HESTEC, an annual event on campus that promotes education in the science and technology fields. Students also attended MLK Day of Service, in which they worked hard cleaning neighborhoods in Donna, Texas. They volunteered regularly with Proyecto Azteca as well, which focuses on building houses for families with low incomes. Besides all of their volunteering activities, students also had socials and fun events on campus, in which all honors students had the opportunity to meet and talk to other honors students.

I am Dr. Mark C. Andersen, dean of the Honors College at UTRGV. The Honors College was formed from the two honors programs at our two legacy institutions. We are here to serve academically talented and ambitious students by offering an enriched core curriculum that provides the advantages of a small private college within the context of a larger research institution. We provide top students with opportunities for leadership training, research, scholarship, creative arts, and campus and community engagement. The Honors College is open to students from any major. To find out more, please visit our Facebook page, [facebook.com/utrgvhonors](https://www.facebook.com/utrgvhonors), and give us a "like."

As I reflect on UTRGV's first year of operation (and my first year here in the Valley), I'm struck by three thoughts.

First, I'm pleasantly surprised at how smoothly things have gone. Sure, there have been some glitches and rough spots, both here in the Honors College and across the university, but in general there have been no major train wrecks.

Second, I'm optimistic for the future of UTRGV, and for the impacts that the university and its students are going to have both locally and globally. This institution really is going to inspire the world.

Finally, I'm very proud of our students and the great things they've accomplished, and the great futures that lie ahead for all of them. Student success is at the heart of what this university does, and I'm thrilled to be able to play a part in that effort.





DEAN AND THREE STUDENTS ATTEND GREAT PLAINS HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE

The 2016 Great Plains Honors Council Conference was held April 8–10 at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Three students (Shangir Siddique, Li Ding, and Jorge Cisneros) traveled to the conference with Dr. Mark Andersen, Honors College Dean. At the conference the students gave presentations on their honors thesis research. One of the highlights of the trip was an excursion to Natural Falls State Park just across the stateline in Oklahoma, including a nice hike featuring a 77 ft. waterfall. The group also visited the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. The museum houses an impressive permanent collection of American artwork from colonial times to the present day. Next year's conference will take place at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

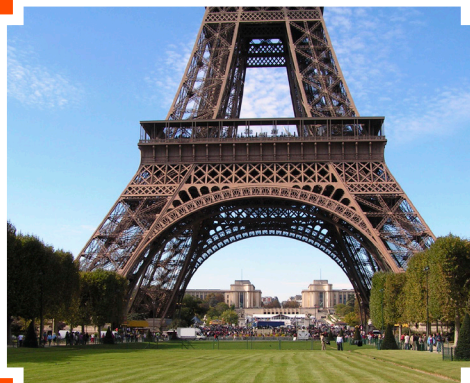
HONORS STUDY ABROAD

In the 2016 minimester, 12 UTRGV Honors College students participated in a study abroad trip to Italy, led by Dr. Christopher Keller. Accompanying the Honors College students on the trip were five recent graduates of UTRGV's Math and Science Academy (MSA) in Brownsville as well as four MSA staff members. During the 11-day visit, the group visited Rome and Florence, along with day-trips to Naples, Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii, Siena, and the Tuscany countryside. They also spent a half-day at the Vatican and saw the Pope speak to a large crowd in St. Peter's Square.

Students experienced diverse sites in Italy: ancient Roman ruins such as the



Colosseum, the Forum, the Baths of Caracalla, and the Pantheon, as well as many important Renaissance structures and artworks such as the Sistine Chapel, Michelangelo's David, and the famous Duomo in Florence. The study abroad coursework entailed a web project wherein students wrote about a particular research interest and reflected on their experiences. The Honors College hopes to make this website available for public view in fall 2016. In previous years, Honors students have studied abroad in Ireland and Northern Ireland (2015), Prague, Vienna, and Budapest (2014), Turkey (2013), Paris (2012), and China (2011).





Congratulations

TO THE UTRGV HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED IN DECEMBER 2015 AND MAY 2016!

The list below includes the honors graduates, along with thesis titles and advisory committee members for those students who chose to do an honors thesis.

- **Elizabeth Alanis**

- **Angelita Alaniz**

"Expression of Biosynthetic Enzymes in a Gastropod Model of Parkinson's Disease"

Advisors:

Dr. Ahmad Hassan
Dr. Evangelina Kotsikorou
Dr. Megan Keniry

- **Sabrina Chavez**

- **Belen Diaz**

- **Li Ding**

"Relationship Between Medical Ethics and Law: The Marlise Muñoz Case"

Advisors:

Dr. Thomas Pearson
Dr. Jerry Polinard
Dr. Audrey Jones
Mr. Niel Norquest

- **Angie Figueroa**

"The Ethics of Crispr Technology"

- **Jorge Garcia**

- **David Lee Garza**

- **Lorena Guerra**

- **Valeria Herrera**

- **Jieun Lee**

- **Demetrius Martinez**

"Access to Healthcare Services for Residents of the RGV"

Advisors:

Dr. Jerry Polinard
Dr. James Wenzel
Dr. Paul Jorgensen

- **Gabriela Mejia-Villarreal**

"Exploring the NFC Scale on Latino's Political Attitudes"

Advisors:

Dr. Angel Saavedra
Dr. Jason Popan
Dr. Frederick Ernst

- **Shuemara Ondoy**

- **Desiree Padilla**

"The Expansive Use of Nanoparticles: An Investigation of Semi-Conducting Nanoparticles and Their Antibacterial Properties"

Advisors:

Dr. Micea Chipara
Dr. Dorina Chipara
Dr. Karen Lozano

- **Marisol Sanchez**

- **Shangir Siddique**

"Analyzing Emotional Detachment in Healthcare using Literature"

Advisors:

Dr. Suzanne Lalonde
Dr. David Fisher
Dr. Angelica Potempa

- **Erika Hernandez Vallejo**

- **Kareem Wahid**

"Materials Characterization of Eu3+ Doped La2Hf2O7 Nanoparticles for Radiation Detection Applications"

Advisors:

Dr. Yuanbing Mao
Dr. Madhab Pokhrel
Dr. Mircea Chipara

- **Andrea Flores Velasco**

- **Daphne Garcia**

Be on the lookout this fall for information about the 2017 Honors Study Abroad!

Visit: give.utrgv.edu/honors-college