

With HONORS

A Magazine of the Youngstown State University Honors College



NATIONALS PRIDE

Moot Court team
brings home the honors



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dean's note	1
New Shaklee travel scholarship	2
Undergrad assists with patent.....	2
Alumna thanks YSU, Honors for foundation.....	3
Cover Story: Nationals pride for Moot Court	4
Student mission moments.....	6
Honors faculty spotlight.....	10
Freshman showcase brings community expert.....	11
From student to staff: Meet Lexi Rager	12



This year's freshman honors class tries out "speed meeting" at the annual Honors Retreat held last October.

Mission Statement



The mission of the YSU Honors College is to provide academically talented students of any discipline with a community of excellence to develop their full intellectual and cultural potential. Through a combination of extraordinary learning experiences in small classes and experiential seminars, living-learning communities, unique and flexible resources for commuter students, leadership and innovative engagement activities, service-learning and traditional volunteer initiatives, interdisciplinary projects, research opportunities, and community, regional, and global perspectives, we fulfill this mission. As a direct outgrowth and articulated in the YSU Mission Statement, the Honors College "places students at our center" of an energized and inclusive community of faculty, staff, and alumni who share in the pursuit of life-long excellence in learning and civic engagement.

This issue's cover photo features four honors students who placed at this year's national Moot Court competition held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana: from left, Moataz Abdelrasoul, Samantha Fritz, Jacob Tomory and Michael Factor. See page 4 for the full story of this year's outstanding team, written by Moot Court team member and Honors College student Nadine Jones. Cover photo by honors student Lauren Rager.

With Honors is a yearly publication of the Youngstown State University Honors College for alumni, students, faculty, staff, parents and friends.

President

James P. Tressel

Provost

Dr. Brien Smith

Dean

Dr. Amy Cossentino

Editor

Andrea (Armeni) Tharp, USXIV

Student Writer

Nadine Jones, HC25

Student Photographer

Lauren Rager, HC26

Graphic Designers

Mary Ann Bodnark

Renee Cannon

Rachell Joy

Renee Vivacqua

Designed by the YSU Office of Marketing and Communications. Printed by the YSU Print Shop.

DEAN'S NOTE



Dean Amy Cossentino

OPPORTUNITY, COMMUNITY, FAMILY: OUR PROMISE TO STUDENTS

The Honors College at Youngstown State University continues to develop in ways that support academic excellence, student success and community engagement to an increasing population of students.

Helping to meet the needs of more than 1,200 students, we established our first Honors College Advisory Board. Alumni, community members and faculty, giving their time and talent, offer expertise in ways to strengthen the honors experience.

Community connections continue to flourish, and our honors students volunteer more than 60,000 hours each year. To highlight their connections to the community, we hosted our first Volunteerism and Service-Learning Showcase, featuring more than 30 student posters depicting the best of campus-community partnerships. The Penguin Pen Pals Program was also awarded the Phi Kappa Phi Literacy grant.

Academically motivated honors students continue to dominate by placing at regional and national competitions with our Moot Court and Ethics Bowl teams and for the fourth time in four years achieving first in discipline distinction at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference last fall in New Orleans.

Fok Hall, our student center and administrative building, is undergoing a makeover with a new roof to preserve the integrity of the building so that many may call it their "home away from home" for decades to come.

The new Ronald Shaklee Study Abroad Scholarship was established by the generosity of our own Dr. Shaklee to support student learning in faculty-led study abroad experiences.

Overall, we are deeply appreciative of the investment so many make in supporting our YSU students, and we are excited to share their stories. Opportunities are available for the taking in a community of learners supported and encouraged by invested people our students come to know as their second family.

With honors,

Amy Cossentino, Dean

"The Honors College is an active and vital part of our campus and has great impact not only here at YSU, but throughout the entire community. These outstanding ambassadors are truly difference-makers. We are fortunate to have these talented students here on campus; they certainly make YSU a better place to live, work and learn."

-Jim Tressel, YSU President

President Jim Tressel with Honors College graduate Jacob Harrah at Spring 2019 Commencement.





NEW SHAKLEE SCHOLARSHIP FOR HONORS TRAVELERS

Ron Shaklee, professor and chair of the YSU Department of Geography and Urban-Regional Studies and former Scholars and Honors Program director, has established the Shaklee Honors Study Abroad Scholarship with the YSU Foundation to help Honors College students find new opportunities to travel and research.

The endowment will be awarded annually, beginning this spring, to a student in the Honors College participating in a study abroad program through YSU. Applicants must also be a sophomore or higher in class standing, and first preference is given to a student who is not receiving an honors scholarship.

“For more than 30 years students have benefitted from Dr. Shaklee’s teaching and generosity,” said Amy Cossentino, dean of the Honors College. “This is a fitting way to continue his great work beyond the San Salvador experience.”

Shaklee has taken YSU students to San Salvador, a small island in the Bahamas, every December since 1988, as part of an honors seminar. Currently, he also teaches a cross-listed honors tropical ecology course.

Taken from an article first appearing on the YSU News Center.



Ron Shaklee, professor and chair of Geography and Urban-Regional Studies, pictured kneeling with YSU honors students in San Salvador, Bahamas.



Mariah DeFuria

FIRST UNDERGRAD TO CO-AUTHOR PUBLISHED YSU PATENT

Mariah DeFuria, Honors College alumna, USXXI, and current graduate assistant for the college, has been listed as co-author on a recently published patent by Doug Genna, associate professor, Chemistry.

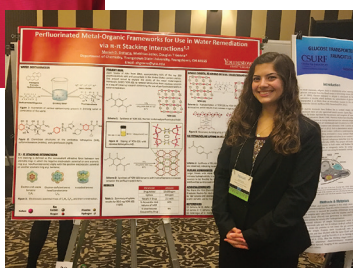
DeFuria, who contributed to the patent’s research as an undergraduate chemistry major, becomes the first undergraduate co-author of a published YSU patent.

“Being a co-inventor on this patent is a rare opportunity to distinguish myself that I attribute to Dr. Genna’s mentorship, perseverance and dedication to our work in water remediation,” said DeFuria. “I am incredibly grateful for the support I have received throughout my undergraduate education and as I continue my graduate studies at YSU.”

The patent publication, “Metal Organic Framework with Group 13 Metal and Perfluorinated Arene Linker” was published this January.

It is Genna’s first of two YSU patent applications. He and DeFuria patented new technology for the removal of prescription drugs and organic pollutants, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), from water using a class of fluorinated metal-organic frameworks. Chronic exposure to pharmaceuticals and PAHs has been linked to carcinogenesis, developmental disorders, hormone imbalance and antibiotic resistance in humans.

DeFuria graduated with her Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry in 2017 and is currently in her second year of the YSU Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.



Mariah DeFuria presenting her research conducted with Doug Genna at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Seattle, Washington, in October 2016.

AUTHOR, PROFESSOR, MOTHER: ALUMNA THANKS YSU, HONORS COLLEGE FOR FOUNDATION

Publishing three novels in three years is no small accomplishment, but it doesn't end there for author Sarah (Holowach) Kollat, USVII. Add associate professor and mother to the list, and you have a trifecta of titles that begins to describe her life.

Though it has been more than 20 years since Kollat began as a student in the fall of 1999, she credits her YSU experience as significantly influencing her career. After earning a bachelor's in psychology, Kollat went on to earn a PhD in developmental psychology from Penn State University. It was during her graduate studies that she began to realize the power of all she had learned at YSU.

"I was with a lot of students from more well-known undergraduate programs, and I felt far better prepared than they were," said Kollat.

She is now associate professor of Penn State's Human Development and Family Studies, a department she describes as having "a wonderful combination of interdisciplinary expertise" that reminds her of YSU and the Honors College.

In fact, Kollat, who writes under the pen name Sarah K. Stephens, chose YSU as the setting for her second novel, *It Was Always You*, which came out in late 2019. (And for this alumna, reading the story as the main character trekked across the 422 overpass brought back many happy memories of my own walk from Cafaro to class.)

But Kollat's fond recollections of YSU don't end with the physical campus. It was the relationships built through honors that set her on a pathway for success.

"Completing honors projects in my coursework helped me build real relationships with my professors. I knew my professors and they knew me, which is such a unique part of the YSU experience. It's an opportunity students don't have at bigger schools," said Kollat. "I felt so connected to my professors and mentors."

Kollat also met her husband, Josh Kollat, fellow USVII and 2003 graduate at YSU. Adoption had always been part of their plan as a couple, and 10 years ago the Kollats adopted Ethan, Katherine and Elisa from Latvia. Sarah recalls first hosting the children for three weeks in January 2010 when neither she nor Josh spoke Latvian, and the children didn't speak English. It took a full year to complete the adoption, and as the mother of three describes their life as a family, "It continues to be an adventure."

Story by Mollie Hartup, USVI

Sarah Kollat sits atop the YSU rock, which bears the cover of *It Was Always You*, her novel that takes place on the YSU campus. Writing under her pen name, Sarah K. Stephens, she celebrates her latest psychological thriller, *The Anniversary*, which came out March 11. (A special thank you goes out to Honors College students Kira Bowman and Sara Walter for volunteering to paint the rock black before the YSU Marketing and Communications team added the decoupage cover for a photo shoot last fall.)

NATIONALS PRIDE

MOOT COURT BRINGS HOME THE HONORS



This year's nationals-competing members of YSU's Moot Court team. From left, Honors College students Jacob Tomory, Samantha Fritz, Moataz Abdelrasoul and Michael Factor.

This January marked the 11th consecutive year the Youngstown State University intercollegiate Moot Court team qualified for the national tournament, and leading the team to the year's biggest contest were members Jacob Tomory, Samantha Fritz, Michael Factor, Moataz Abdelrasoul, Nadine Jones and Jason Long—all Honors College students.

It was an impressive season leading up to nationals. The team, recently named fifth best undergraduate program in the nation by the American Moot Court Association (AMCA) and above other schools such as Duke and Yale, won two regional championships and placed in a third last fall. Tomory and Fritz won the Midwest Regional; Factor and Abdelrasoul won the Cleveland-Marshall Regional; and Jones and Long placed sixth at the Rubber City Regional. Based on their regional success, the six students, all majors within the political science department at YSU, were sent to compete in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this January at the 2020 AMCA National Tournament.

While Jones and Long went as first alternates, Tomory, Fritz, Abdelrasoul and Factor were among the 80 teams selected to argue this year in Baton Rouge. And they didn't disappoint. Tomory and Fritz placed in the top eight teams nationwide, and

Abdelrasoul and Factor placed in the top 32. In addition to the team awards, Tomory placed fifth for best individual orator, while Abdelrasoul placed 24th.

“Participating in Moot Court has undoubtedly been one of the most valuable experiences I’ve had as a student at Youngstown State University,” said Abdelrasoul, senior political science major. “Winning both the Cleveland-Marshall Regional Tournament and the Midwest Regional Tournament in the same year, as well as sending three teams to the National Tournament—out of nearly 500 teams vying for a bid to compete—are accomplishments that are truly a reflection of the quality of our program.”

Moot Court is a competitive program where participating teams give oral appellate arguments as if they were presenting before the U.S. Supreme Court. Each year the AMCA releases a new case problem, which presents two legal issues explained with a fact pattern, a decision from a fictitious lower court and a list of supreme court and state supreme court cases to support arguments.

This year’s case problem concerned a state investigation into human trafficking and whether or not warrantless searches into the petitioner’s cell phone records that occurred over the course of the investigation constituted a Fourth Amendment claim, among other issues. The YSU Moot Court team has been studying the case since May 2019 when the problem was initially announced.

Coach, advisor and mentor for the team, Attorney Ronald Slipski, credits the team’s success to hard work, saying, “None of this is possible without brilliant students who are willing to work very hard. As I often tell them, sometimes the best I can do is for them is to stay out of their way.”

The four honors students continued to make Youngstown State “Y and Proud” this February as members of the university’s Ethics Bowl team, which was recently named number one in the nation after a win in Atlanta at the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl.

Story by Nadine Jones, HC25



Jacob Tomory, left, and Samantha Fritz at the American Moot Court Association’s National Tournament this January. The team placed in the top eight nationwide.



Michael Factor, left, and Moataz Abdelrasoul placed in the top 32 Moot Court teams at the national tournament in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

“None of this is possible without brilliant students who are willing to work very hard.”

-Atty. Ronald Slipski

LIVING OUR MISSION: THE FACES OF OPPORTUNITY, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY

If you were to walk through the doors of Fok Hall on the YSU campus, you would spot two images immediately: the first, a framed mission statement hanging high on the main hallway with the words “students at our center” highlighted in big, bold print; and the second, a mural covering the wall of dozens of photos of honors students, alumni and staff with the words, “Opportunity, Family, Community,” written underneath.

To the people who walk through these doors every semester, these aren’t just words posted and forgotten on the walls of the Honors College headquarters; they’re a lifestyle. They’re lived out every day in the goals and accomplishments of the students; the intentional actions of the staff and faculty; and the dedication and giving of alumni, parents and friends.

This fall, the college launched its “Honors Student of the Week” program to spotlight members who are living and breathing these words in their daily efforts. Here are a few of this year’s faces behind the mission.



From left, Hannah Haynie and Ashley Amendol, both senior biology majors

Ashley Amendol & Hannah Haynie

Their mission moment: The duo helped create Penguin Positivity Boards across campus, which offer positive messages written on wooden tiles for other students to take when they need encouragement. The students then have to leave a new uplifting message for another to pick up in the future.

The idea was an effort to help the claim that more mental health support is needed for students on campus. The first board went up in Kilcawley Center, and there are plans for three others in the Christman dining hall, the Stavich Family Bridge across Wick Ave., and the Veterans Resource Center.

What they had to say: “We’re so thankful for the opportunity to be a part of this mental health initiative at YSU. We received advice from so many campus community members throughout this process, many of whom contributed in such unique ways—like campus carpenter Andrew Phillips. Without his help, we would not have even considered the Veterans Resource Center location, and there is such a great need among our student veterans!”



Jasmine Smyles, senior exercise science major

Jasmine Smyles

Her mission moment: A student-athlete on YSU’s track team, Jasmine is also the leader of the Honors College MALAINA initiative, which seeks to unify, educate and empower students of diverse backgrounds.

What she had to say: “My life as a student-athlete and honors member is very busy, running from classes to practice and being involved throughout campus. But I love being among the athlete community and the Honors College family. They both taught me to be disciplined, have time management skills and plan ahead, skills I know that I will carry with me throughout my life.”



Hannah Crites, senior psychology and exercise science double major

Hannah Crites

Her mission moment: For the past two summers Hannah has been interning at the Forget-Me-Not horse farm, which provides equine therapy to children with physical, mental and emotional disabilities.

What she had to say: “For my internship, I was able to side-walk and assist the kids as they were on the horse by either helping them stretch their muscles, play games to improve their core strength or just stand by them and talk. This experience was very rewarding because I got to see the children improve their strength and social skills over the whole summer, and knowing that I helped them achieve this is a wonderful feeling.”



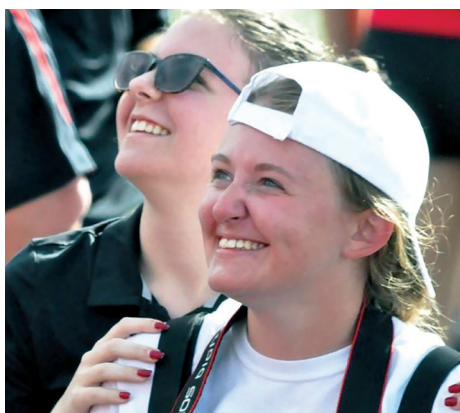
Sarah Elisabeth Odidika, senior biology major

Sarah Elisabeth Odidika

Her mission moment: Sarah Elisabeth got accepted into the Masters Direct Entry / Doctorate of Nursing Practice program in Nurse Midwifery at Columbia University as well as the Accelerated BSN/MSN program in Nurse Midwifery at Emory University.

What she had to say: “Now in my senior year, I have reflected over my experiences at YSU and how they have shaped me to be who I am today. Honors has been at the root of many of my experiences. The Honors College has prepared me for graduate school through service-learning and volunteerism. Going into the healthcare field, one should have a true connection to and passion for service.

I began my Honors College experience through PAYO and National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and expanded that idea of service to other honors organizations such as MALAINA and Honors Trustees. Above all, the Honors College has taught me to be a servant leader, and for that, I am most grateful. I am nervous about attending graduate school, but I am more excited to take my passion for service with me to graduate school and create new connections with those around me.”



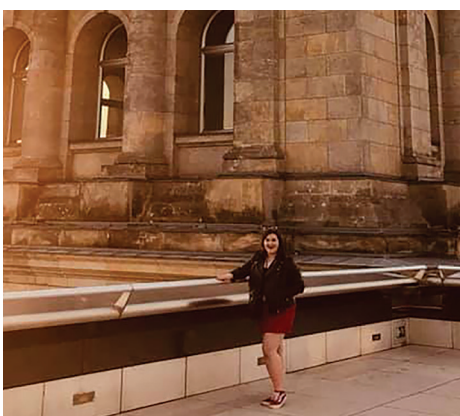
Kelcey Norris, junior journalism major

Kelcey Norris

Her mission moment: Kelcey has taken finding opportunities within her major to the next level as a boss behind the camera for all things YSU. She is a multimedia journalist with the Jambar and a line producer for Penguin Rundown and Jambar TV—the first news show at YSU. She’s also the editor-in-chief of the YSU digital yearbook, *The Guin*, and a freelance photographer for the YSU Marching Pride.

What she had to say: “In addition to the work I do on campus, I had an internship with a local church and was able to help increase their presence with graphics and photography. The Honors College taught us to become involved

within our community, and I believe this motivated me to be active in pursuing my passions.”



Nadine Jones, senior political science major

Nadine Jones

Her mission moment: This past May, she traveled with the YSU Department of History to study the Holocaust and human rights in Central and Eastern Europe. During the course of three weeks, she traveled through the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany to visit sites relevant to the Holocaust and Communism, as well as modern-day memorials to victims of state-sponsored violence.

What she had to say: “I was able to contract this summer course for honors credits. Not only did the course allow me to gain a better global perspective of human rights issues faced in other cultures, it also allowed me to better understand those issues academically through research. This class gave me the opportunity to speak with human rights activists in these countries for various marginalized groups, the ability to listen to their stories regarding human rights in these regions and the time to discuss the work that still needs done for equal rights. For my contract, I chose to write on the relationship between the state, society and victims of mass atrocity crimes and how all are interdependent for healing. I would not have been able to write on this subject without first understanding what my role as a global citizen is, and I learned this role through the Honors College.”



Moataz Abdelrasoul, senior political science major

Moataz Abdelrasoul

His mission moment: This past summer, he was one of 60 students selected to take part in the Donald J. Weidner Summer for Undergraduates Program at the Florida State University College of Law. The month-long immersion into legal study consisted of taking two law school courses, experiencing a law school final exam, delivering a mock oral argument, visiting the Florida Capitol and Supreme Court and networking with prominent judges and attorneys. To top it off, he received the Professionalism Award at the conclusion of the program.

What he had to say: "The program provided the opportunity to learn of various career paths available to law school graduates, including non-traditional professions. In addition, the relationships formed with fellow program participants will prove to be extremely valuable as we each progress through our academic and professional journeys. The Honors College and the qualities it has instilled in me proved to be extremely beneficial during my experience. The tenets of Research & Scholarship and Leadership & Engagement were on full display as the program allowed me to both compile and present legal research, as well as engage productively with others in a group-based environment."



Brandon Maffitt, senior music education major

Brandon Maffitt

His mission moment: Brandon earned a spot on the Cleveland Browns Drumline this year. He had to submit video auditions of himself playing 15 pieces of music. He then was called in for a live audition, and the rest is history. He was armed with a bass drum on Sundays this football season at FirstEnergy Stadium.

What he had to say: "The experience is beyond insane. I get to play great music with incredible musicians and watch my favorite football team all at once. When the Browns hosted a Sunday Night Football game for the first time in ages, the broadcast crew asked the drumline to be present at their pregame stage. We literally got to play on national television! The work ethic required with being an honors student really helped me push through this one. There were times when I was preparing music and didn't think I would even get a shot at a callback, let alone a spot. I just kept grinding away at it, and it got me so far."



Brooke Schaefer, left, senior biology major

Brooke Schaefer

Her mission moment: She spent four weeks in Tanzania, Africa, this summer teaching a men's intermediate class on English and helping students perfect their grammar. And during her downtime, she worked on such construction projects as eco-blocks and permaculture gardens. Oh, and she climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. No big deal.

What she had to say: "From this trip, I came back a completely different person. Not only did I dive into a new culture, but the locals accepted me as their own, and my eyes were opened to see the daily struggles in life that they endure just to survive. A huge lesson I took home is appreciating the importance of education after seeing the locals' dedication to their own education. Students would wake up two hours early just to make sure they arrived to school on time. Overall it was truly a humbling experience, and it inspired me to continue making a difference in people's lives who don't have access to the opportunities we take for granted."



Noor Khalayleh, senior psychology major

I was learning in that lab and implement it in my own research because I was just so interested in the topic. We're always told critical thinking is an important skill to have, and as students it is, but when faculty teach it and students have to apply it, they are unable to do so. I wanted to find where that disconnect was and implement a solution with the aim of better understanding critical thinking as a construct. Along with Dr. Raulin, whom I thank very much for investing his time in me and our research, the value of honors helped to empower me to believe that I can not only do research and be a scholar in the field, but also excel in it."

Noor Khalayleh

Her mission moment: At the 2019 National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in New Orleans, Noor took home first place in the Education & Pedagogy category for her poster, "Assessing Life Experiences: Developing an Ecologically Valid Measure of Critical Thinking." Her project focused on the many different definitions of critical thinking in academic settings and how to measure it in order to find a universal way of teaching critical thinking in the classroom and beyond.

What she had to say: "I joined Dr. Michael Raulin's research lab my sophomore year, and he's been researching critical thinking for a while. I wanted to take what



Lauren Rager, sophomore biological anthropology major

also most rewarding adventure I have ever been on. The Honors College helped give me the courage to try for an opportunity that seemed out of my reach. A year earlier, I would have thought traveling to British Columbia for three months was not a journey I was ready for, but the Honors College helped me realize my time to succeed starts now."

Lauren Rager

Her mission moment: Lauren spent three months last summer taking care of squirrels, skunks, rabbits and raccoons at Critter Care Wildlife Society in Langley, British Columbia, in Canada. She worked with people around the world to bottle-feed baby animals and perform countless rescues and releases. In total, she intensively cared for about 48 animals throughout her internship.

What she had to say: "Previous to Critter Care, I had experience bottle-feeding kittens. I did not realize how incomparable that would be to feeding and raising baby raccoons! They are wild animals, but they also became my children. Nothing can replace the proud moment in your heart when your first animal gets released. Based on the entire opportunity, I can say that it was the most challenging but



Brendan McEvoy, senior music major

helped give me insight into how non-profits can have wonderful impacts on the community, and the Honors College helped make these opportunities accessible to me and encouraged me to connect with the Youngstown community."

Brendan McEvoy

His mission moment: This past November, Brendan was named OH WOW! Children's Center's Volunteer of the Year. He has been volunteering with the organization for three semesters and has spent his time assembling exhibits for the center's Silly Science Sunday event, helping with marketing to local school districts, and assisting with general upkeep of science exhibits.

What he had to say: "In my Intro to Honors seminar, two other music students and I created an interactive exhibit for OH WOW! with musical instruments for kids to explore, which was a wonderful way for all three of us to explore the connections that children form with music and the arts. The volunteer experience

HONORABLE MENTION

Showcasing

YSU FACULTY WHO ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN HONORS STUDENTS' LIVES



Dr. Alicia Prieto Langarica

The backbone of the honors program throughout its history at Youngstown State University has always been the pillar of scholarship and research. Student members are introduced to the curricular expectations at the outset of their freshman year and start planning for their honors-level studies, as well as outside research opportunities. But from Day 1, they also know that they will have the help of dedicated,

passionate faculty to guide them along their journey.

One faculty member who has been involved in helping shape the academic lives of honors students is Mathematics and Statistics Associate Professor Alicia Prieto Langarica. In her nearly eight years of teaching at YSU, Prieto has served as mentor to countless students, and honors members recognize her influence on their academics.

"In the classroom, Dr. Prieto challenges us not only mathematically, but also with our leadership and communication skills," said Clay Miller, sophomore integrated mathematics education major and honors student. "She consistently promotes teamwork that creates a welcoming environment filled with much more than just academics—one that transcends the classroom."

With a research focus in the intersection of mathematics and biology, Prieto also introduces students to numerous outside research opportunities, including the chance to work together and present at national conferences.

Alanis Chew, senior mathematics and business economics double major, is one honors student who has been able to work with Prieto on bio-math and data clustering research throughout her four years at YSU after meeting Prieto through the Association for Women in Mathematics student organization, for which Prieto serves as advisor.

"I have been able to attend five national math conferences because of Dr. Prieto," said Chew. "She has been instrumental in helping me grow as a student and, more importantly, as an individual."

Like Chew, Lexi Rager, Honors College coordinator, has had the privilege of assisting Prieto in her research. As an undergraduate, Rager worked on a project with Prieto

titled, "Helping Students Make Wise, Data-Driven Academic Decisions," which focused on algorithms that services like Netflix and Amazon use to make recommendations to customers. Along with a team of four other researchers, Prieto and Rager applied these types of algorithms to the higher education arena to create a program that could recommend classes and professors to students based on their previous choices and preferences.

"We spent part of our summer at California State University, Fresno, collaborating with students from universities across the country," explained Rager, who graduated last year with a bachelor's degree in mathematics. "The travel didn't stop there—we ended up presenting this research at national conferences in Chicago; Atlanta; San Diego; and Lincoln, Nebraska, as well."

Rager adds, "The reason Dr. Prieto is such a great mentor is because she sees your potential, even if you don't see it yourself. She never gives you the answers; she makes you work for them because she knows that given enough time and space to think, you can and will find them yourself."

The respect and admiration is mutual when it comes to Prieto's feelings of her students.

"With most students, one has to sell the beauty of mathematics and even sometimes the purpose of a higher education degree," she said. "I like conveying this, but I also really enjoy that honors students are so highly motivated. I love being witness to their hard work and growth as students and as human beings. It is a pleasure to work with them in every aspect of their lives at YSU."

Prieto also serves on the Honors College's new advisory board, a team that supports the college in its efforts to improve student success, academic excellence and community engagement. Among her honors Prieto has been awarded the Distinguished Professor Award and the Honors Professor Award, both from YSU, as well as the Alder Award from the Mathematics Association of America.



Alicia Prieto Langarica, second from left, with Honors College students, from left, Alanis Chew, Madeline Cope (current alumna) and Julie Phillis at the 2018 Mathematical Association of America's MathFest in Denver.

EVENT STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY MINDSET ON AND OFF CAMPUS

Last March, the Honors College held a special event, the Service-Learning Showcase, for the Youngstown State University campus and Youngstown communities. Co-hosted by the YSU Geography Department and Strategic Planning Organization Team, it featured keynote speaker Kenneth Reardon of the University of Massachusetts Boston, along with a showcase of student posters demonstrating the students' involvement and service in the Youngstown community.

Reardon is a professor of Urban Planning and director of Urban Planning and Community Development at UMB, and his keynote addressed the importance of university-community partnerships to transform cities. His personal experiences in establishing the nationally recognized East St. Louis Action Research Project and New Orleans Planning Initiative resonated with those in attendance.

"One of the ways we learn is by sharing stories and our reflections," said Honors College Dean Amy Cossentino. "Ken's story could have been scripted for Youngstown. We thought it could inspire and expand more of the great campus/community partnerships already in existence."

The event allowed Youngstown leadership, campus faculty, staff and administration, and students to come together for the day to share ideas and renew conversations on action plans to help the city.

"Even our freshmen had the chance to present the valuable service work they completed in their Intro to Honors seminar," said Andrea Tharp, Intro to Honors instructor. "It's awesome to see that kind of early opportunity that will hopefully spur bigger projects in the future."



Dr. Kenneth Reardon speaks to YSU and Youngstown community members about his experience in resident-led revitalization in economically distressed communities at the 2019 Service-Learning Showcase.



Honors students discuss their service projects and posters with members of the Youngstown community.



FROM STUDENT TO STAFF

MEET OUR NEW COORDINATOR

WHO IS SHE?

Lexi Rager, an Honors College alumna and former four-year student assistant in the Honors office.

WHAT DOES SHE DO?

All things recruitment for the college, from planning the Honors College Open House to managing email campaigns to conducting prospective student visits! She also advises Honors Trustees and spends time in the Cafaro House Honors office, where she oversees programming and helps to answer student questions.

EDUCATION:

BS in mathematics, BA in psychology; currently working on her MA in professional communication.

FAVORITE HONORS EVENT TO COORDINATE:

"My favorite things to coordinate are actually prospective student visits. I love having high school students and their families come and visit us on campus because I feel like that's the very best way to get a sense of what the Honors College and YSU are all about."

FUN FACTS:

- My favorite animals are otters and octopuses.
- I consider myself a professional Netflix binge-watcher.
- I can play the xylophone with four mallets!



WHY SHE LOVES HER JOB:

"There's no better feeling than when a student lets you know that visiting with the Honors College made them realize YSU could be their home for the next four years!"





Opportunity. Community. Family.





YSU Honors College
One University Plaza, Youngstown, OH 44555

www.ysu.edu/honors

330.941.2772
honors@ysu.edu

Follow Us



Youngstown State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion or veteran/military status in its programs or activities. Please visit www.ysu.edu/ada-accessibility for contact information for persons designated to handle questions about this policy.