

# Honors College

## Annual Report



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS®

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**Honors College**

2024-2025

## Foreword from the Dean

In the 2024–2025 academic year, the University of Arkansas Honors College continued to reach exciting new milestones while remaining a national leader in student advising, curriculum, programming, and honors administration.

Among this year’s milestones, we are thrilled to report another record-breaking class, with 419 Fellows arriving on campus this fall—including 12 members of our newest cohort, the Natural State Fellows. While increasing the Fellowship cohort, we have maintained high standards for our new Fellows, who collectively boast an average ACT score of over 33 and a high school GPA of more than 4.2.

This spring, three outstanding Honors College students earned Goldwater Scholarships, the nation’s premier undergraduate award for STEM research. Each U.S. university may nominate up to four finalists, and the University of Arkansas continues to lead the SEC in producing Goldwater and Truman Scholars. The Honors College and its research endowment play a critical role in fostering the high-level undergraduate research that leads to these national honors.

Equally important, pairing honors students with top research faculty and local experts intensifies the academic enterprise. This year, we offered a range of innovative and rigorous seminars led by industry professionals, including Dean Emeritus Matt Waller’s course Walmart, which provided a deep dive into the history of the company and included collaboration with the Walmart Museum. Award-winning speechwriter and campus communicator Andy Albertson’s class on science communications taught students how to distill complex research into compelling stories for a broad audience. Timothy Muldoon, professor of biomedical engineering, led a course exploring the complex scientific, medical, and societal challenges of cancer, emphasizing cutting-edge research in optical imaging and cancer detection. In Technology Craft, students combined technical and artistic skills at the Studio Design Center using 3D clay printers, CNC machines, and other tools to create original works at the intersection of art and mathematics.

The Honors College also deepened its relationship with honors leaders from across the SEC by revitalizing the SEC Honors Conference, hosted on the University of Arkansas campus. The event brought together honors leaders to explore the future of honors education, including undergraduate research, alumni engagement, curricular innovation, and more. One exciting outcome from the conference is a new course examining college athletics through a cross-disciplinary and cross-university lens for students across the SEC.

The 2024–2025 academic year has been nothing short of extraordinary, defined by remarkable student achievements, groundbreaking research, transformative study abroad experiences, and unparalleled advising. Our students have not only competed but triumphed on national stages, earning prestigious awards that testify to their passion and perseverance. Cutting-edge research projects have challenged conventional boundaries, fueled by the relentless curiosity of our honors community. Study abroad opportunities have expanded horizons, immersing students in rich cultural and academic landscapes that inspire new perspectives. Behind the scenes, our Futures Hub staff have been the steadfast guides, helping students navigate their unique paths to

success. As we set our sights on the 2025–2026 academic year, anticipation builds for new milestones and bold initiatives that will elevate our academic community and honor the visionary investment that brought this institution to life.

Lynda Coon  
Dean

## **Students**

### **Enrollment**

The Honors College has played a crucial role in expanding the student body at the University of Arkansas while also enhancing its quality. This year has been particularly outstanding for recruiting new students to the Honors College.

- Total Honors College enrollment grew to 4,211 in Fall 2024, a 7.2% increase since 2020.
- The Honors College enrolled a new freshman class of 1,100 new students for Fall 2024. The average ACT for the class was 30.7 and the average GPA was 4.2. Also, 64% of the new students in the Honors College are from Arkansas.
- Starting with Fall 2025 admission, the Honors College increased the minimum high school GPA for automatic admission from 3.75 to 3.85. The overall average high school GPA for new students at the university has steadily grown over the past decade, making this update necessary. The Honors College continues to offer an option for applicants with at least a 3.9 high school GPA but who do not have the necessary ACT/SAT score to undergo holistic application review to gain admission. Even with this change, it is important to note that the Honors College continues to allow current U of A students to apply to the Honors College, where they will be evaluated by their college GPA and credit hours attained. It is anticipated that Honors College enrollment will remain at 13-15% of the total undergraduate population at the university.
- For academic year 2024-2025, the Honors College had over 1,600 prospective students visit campus with their families to meet with recruitment staff. In addition, the Honors College continues to host its signature recruitment events, including Convocation, Discovery Day, and Fellowship Interview Day. Honors recruiters also continue to meet with thousands of students through various outreach efforts, both in person and over virtual mediums.
- This year's Fellowship class of 126 new students was selected from 872 qualified applicants. Out of this group of 126 new Fellows, 101 will enroll at the university as Honors College Fellows. An additional 12 students will enroll as Natural State Fellows. The Natural State Fellowship is designed for Arkansas residents who meet at least one of the following criteria: have significant financial need, will enroll as a first-generation college student, or come from a geographic area of the state that is less well-represented at the university.
- As competition continues to increase for high-achieving students across the nation, the Honors College Fellowship remains an important competitive advantage for the University of Arkansas as it recruits the best and brightest students from Arkansas and beyond. The average ACT score for new Fellows is 33.82 and the average GPA is 4.29.

Arkansans make up 92.9% of the new Fellows class. In addition, first-generation college students make up 20.3% of the new Fellows class.

- Of 385 Fellows on campus in fall 2024, 334 are supported exclusively by the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation gift, while 34 are supported by fellowships created by private donors matched by Walton support such as the Bodenhamer Fellowship. Twenty additional Fellows are supported entirely by the Sturgis Endowment.
- Six-year graduation rates for those who began in honors moved slightly higher again to 85.27% (compared to 84.2% and 84.07% reported in 2024 and 2023, respectively) and remain well above the rate reported in 2018 of 80.9%.

## **Curriculum**

The Honors College continued to offer a variety of courses that take students out of their comfort zones and into contact with ideas, scholars, and students from other disciplines. Enrollment in the Honors College's interdisciplinary courses included 385 students in 31 courses. The Honors College also provided \$440,040 in curricular support to the six academic colleges to support their honors offerings to nearly 4,000 students in departmentally listed honors courses.

- In a course that bridges creativity and research, Andy Albertson, director of research and economic development communications at the University of Arkansas, taught students how to translate complex science into stories that resonate. His Honors College Forum, Science Communications, challenges students to consider not just what they're saying, but who they're saying it to and why it matters. Leen Samman, a Fellow majoring in biology and psychology, helped inspire the course after asking for more support at the intersection of journalism and science. "The whole point of research is to advance knowledge," Samman said. "But if you can't explain your research in a way that makes sense to the general public, it's unlikely to reach the people who can help put it into action." For her final project, Samman created a video series titled "In Plain Science," designed to make faculty-led research more accessible and less intimidating for undergraduates. With training from the course, she filmed in the lab, interviewed scientists and student researchers, and used clear visuals to explain the science behind methanogens—tiny organisms with big energy potential. By grounding the course in real university research and emphasizing audience-first storytelling, Albertson is equipping students with a rare and increasingly valuable skill set: the ability to make science matter to the world beyond academia.
- In Technology Craft, an Honors College Signature Seminar led by Vincent Edwards, director of technology for the School of Art, and Edmund Harriss, assistant professor of art and mathematics, students explored technology as a creative medium. Rather than solving predefined problems, they were encouraged to ask machines open-ended questions and embrace curiosity-driven making through tools like 3D printers, laser cutters, and computer numerical control machines. For criminology and psychology major Daniella Fernandez, the course offered a rare chance to step outside her packed academic schedule and explore a more tactile, artistic process—eventually producing a series of 3D-printed clay mugs. Honors architecture student Emily Kloostra applied lessons from the course to her thesis, blending handmade ceramics with additive design techniques. And mechanical engineering major Alfredo Perez Ramirez leaned into

iteration, using a clay printer to construct a ribcage form while learning to sit with discomfort and see a creative vision through to completion.

- Taught by Eric Darnell Pritchard, associate professor and Brown Chair in English Literacy, the Honors Signature Seminar: Fashion, Identity and Power examined fashion as a powerful site of identity, creativity, and cultural critique. Students considered fashion not only as an art form and industry, but also as a theoretical lens through which to study power, labor, sustainability, and embodied experience. Through archives, visual and performance arts, and hands-on engagement with material culture, they explored how fashion intersects with race, gender, class, disability, and more. As part of the course, students traveled to Little Rock to visit the ESSE Purse Museum, where they examined women's history through fashion, and Hearne Fine Art, where they viewed *Black Fields* by Marjorie Williams-Smith. The exhibit connected cotton production to the legacies of enslavement, labor exploitation and environmental harm—underscoring the course's emphasis on fashion's deep entwinement with social, economic, and political systems.
- One-hour courses offered by the Honors College allow interdisciplinary learning to be accessible for all schedules. In the Retro Readings series, students explored the controversy of Machiavelli's political treatise "The Prince" with Freddy Dominguez, associate professor of history. Students also analyzed one of the most influential essays of the 20th century, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility" by the German Jewish theorist-philosopher-public intellectual Walter Benjamin with Curtis Maughan, director of the World Languages and Digital Humanities Studio.

### **Advising and Student Success Programming: The Honors College Futures Hub**

In 2020, the Honors College introduced the Futures Hub, a dedicated team of honors staff who assist students in accessing resources both on campus and within the community to maximize their honors experience. The Hub also supports students in planning and preparing for their post-graduation goals. The Futures Hub staff operate under the "G.R.E.A.T." framework, helping students with **G**lobal experience, **R**esearch, campus and community **E**ngagement, **A**cademics, and future **T**rajectories, including graduate school, professional schools, and employment.

The Futures Hub is staffed by four full-time employees and two graduate assistants. Chelsea Hodge, director of grants and research innovation, assists students with study abroad and research planning. Director of curricular planning and student engagement, Megan Hull, assists Dean Coon with the coordination of Honors College courses. She also oversees student engagement with the college. Jonathan Langley, director of graduate and professional school planning, is a key resource for students headed to medical and law school. Senior Director of the Futures Hub, Louise Hancox oversees the Hub operations and leads initiatives in professional development.

The Futures Hub staff offers large-group workshops, small-group sessions, and one-on-one advising. This year, the Hub facilitated an incredible 830 one-on-one appointments and engaged in over 5,400 student interactions through workshops and community events. To maintain their commitment to inclusion, the Hub staff provided both virtual programming and in-person events at Gearhart Hall, Hotz Hall, the Multicultural Center, and the CORD Student Success Center.

- **Global experience:** Futures Hub staff offer a variety of study abroad assistance, including programming and one-on-one advising that introduces students to study abroad and shares its benefits and how to participate. Students with unique or complex goals receive specialized advising. Staff also guide students through the four study abroad grant deadlines, results of which are explained below.
- **Research:** The Futures Hub focuses on two key areas of the research process: initiating research projects and progressing with thesis drafts. This support aims to help more students complete meaningful projects. A record 89 students received Honors College Conference Grants to present their research around the country and at conferences as far afield as Morocco, South Korea, and Portugal.
- **Engagement:** Futures Hub staff assist students in making strategic engagement choices, such as extracurricular activities, volunteer work, and leadership roles, to support their long-term goals and to enhance their college experience. The staff also continue to develop the Community Leaders program, which helps Arkansas students who are first generation or the only graduates from their high school in the Honors College get involved, utilize university resources, and develop leadership skills.
- **Academics:** In addition to managing the comprehensive suite of courses described in the Curriculum section, Futures Hub staff help honors students maximize their academic opportunities. They collaborate with advising staff across the campus to identify top graduate school and award prospects, create intervention plans for struggling honors students, and support those in the middle to improve their chances for competitive educational and career opportunities.
- **Trajectory:** Futures Hub staff assist students in establishing a path to professional success by facilitating key experiences that build business connections and refine career interests, such as internships and job shadowing. They provide feedback and suggestions to improve students' resumes, cover letters, personal statements, and interview skills.
  - The Honors College collaborated with the premed advising program and the Student Success Center to provide MCAT tutoring to 20 students. Of the 20 students who participated, 13 were first-generation college students, seven were from geographic areas that are less well-represented on campus, and 10 reported having financial need. The average score on the practice MCAT for participants increased 5.87 points over the length of the program.
  - The Futures Hub worked with several campus and community partners to offer Lunch & Learn sessions throughout the year. Several focused on pre-medical students. Timothy Muldoon, professor of biomedical engineering, and Guadalupe Rodriguez, instructor and student advocate in health, human performance and recreation, offered a session specifically for first-generation college students who want to attend medical school. Dan Kallenberger, assistant dean of recruitment, admission and whole health initiation, and Stephen Nix, assistant professor of pathology from the Alice L. Walton School of Medicine offered a session discussing the new medical school's curriculum. Every Lunch & Learn had more registrations than spots available, and the Futures Hub will continue to expand these in the future.

## Nationally Competitive Awards

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the University of Arkansas continued a long tradition of students winning competitive awards, as U of A students received nearly \$3,058,319.00 in fellowships and scholarships. Approximately, 134 students earned awards that resulted in this figure at both the state and national level and were recognized for their commitment to academic excellence, research, public service, leadership, and community involvement.

- The highly competitive Goldwater Scholarship—considered the nation’s preeminent scholarship for students in the STEM fields—has been awarded to three University of Arkansas students: **Abhinav Komanduri**, an Honors College Fellow and honors electrical engineering major minoring in mathematics, **Jared Noel**, an honors chemical engineering and mathematics major, and **Ian Popp**, a Bodenhamer Fellow and an honors chemical engineering major with a dual degree in finance. To date, 67 U of A students have received this esteemed scholarship.
- **Abdullah Asif**, an Honors College Fellow and honors chemistry and Arabic major, and **Nina Thomas**, a triple major in Spanish, international and global studies, and Latin American & Latino studies, received the Critical Language Scholarship as part of the National Security Language Initiative. This is Thomas’ second CLS award.
- **Clarrisa “Claire” Walker**, an honors biology and biochemistry major, and a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, was named a Morris K. and Stewart L. Udall Scholar for her commitment to tribal healthcare, as well as demonstrated leadership connected to this issue on campus and in her community. **Amelia Southern Uribe**, an honors journalism and political science student, was a Udall Scholarship finalist.
- **Cassie Riddick**, a communications major, was a finalist for the Harry S. Truman Scholarship. Riddick is the 19th Truman finalist to come from the U of A over the last 11 years
- **Abigail Bordelon**, an Honors College Fellow and honors public health and Spanish major, **Isabella Sotlar**, an honors English major, and **Gabrielle Vatthanatham**, were finalists for the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.
- **Ethan Batey**, an honors chemistry and physics major, and **Nicholas Rovito**, a mechanical engineering graduate student, received the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to begin in the 2025-26 academic year. In addition to Batey and Rovito, eight U of A students received honorable mentions.
- Fifty U of A undergraduates were awarded the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. This program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, allows undergraduates with high financial need to study or participate in an internship abroad to develop career and language skills.
- Honors College students continue to earn competitive internships both locally and nationally. In Northwest Arkansas, they gain hands-on experience with major companies such as Walmart, Tyson Foods, J.B. Hunt, SupplyPike, the Scott Family Amazeum, the Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, as well as with innovative local startups. Many also support the work of area nonprofits, including Canopy, WelcomeHealth, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Children’s Therapy Team. Nationally, students have secured internships with organizations such as NASA, EY, J.P. Morgan, Ardent Mills, and others. Washington, D.C., remains a popular destination for summer placements, including in the offices of Senators Boozman and Cotton, as well as with various congressional representatives and federal agencies.

## **Path Program**

The Honors College Path Program recruits students from underrepresented backgrounds (first-generation, significant financial need or geographic area of the state that is less well-represented) who have exemplary records of high school academic success, but who lack the requisite 28 ACT score required for automatic Honors College admission as an incoming freshman. These students become top-performing college students through a bridge program before their freshman year, intensive staff and peer mentoring throughout their college career, and a growing scholarship program. Updated honors admissions requirements have meant that some Path Scholars are honors eligible as incoming students. To date, 52% of Path students enroll in the Honors College after achieving the required 3.5 college GPA. The honors enrollment rate for Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation-funded students is 52%.

- In May 2025, the seventh cohort of Path Scholars graduated from the University of Arkansas. Across all cohorts, the program maintains an 82% six-year graduation rate, and 52% of students have enrolled in the Honors College. To date, 67% of Path Scholars are first-generation college students.
- Many Path graduates have gone on to pursue graduate studies in fields such as public health, accounting, education, and sports management. Two graduates chose to take a gap year before beginning graduate school—one will teach English in Japan through the JET Program, and another will serve as a Teach for America fellow in Tulsa, Oklahoma. One graduate is attending medical school in Texas, another is pursuing a master's in sports management at the University of Arkansas, and one is teaching in Rogers while completing a master's in education.
- During the 2024–2025 academic year, Path welcomed its eleventh cohort, with all 19 students receiving scholarship support. More than 87% of this year's Path Scholars are first-generation college students, and 74% have enrolled in the Honors College.
- Several Path Scholars obtained notable internships. Luis Maya, an honors political science major, is completing an internship in Washington, D.C. with Congressman French Hill. Studio art and public relations major Brylan Cole is completing a Global communications internship with Walmart. Mar'Quavis Stuckett is completing a supply chain internship with P&G at their California office.

## **Grants**

### **Study Abroad**

This year, the Honors College awarded \$1,131,580 across 284 student grants for study in 33 countries. Breakdown by program type is as follows: Five academic year 2025-2026 with \$56,700 awarded, 58 January/May/August 2025 intersession with \$152,130 awarded, 39 semester (spring and fall 2025) with \$281,650 awarded, and 182 summer 2025 with \$641,100 awarded. The vast majority (81%) of the students traveled to Europe. However, travel to Central and South America (11%) is on the rise.

Travel has returned to its pre-COVID-19 peak, and awards are up nearly 8% over the 2023-2024 academic year. As in the academic year, the Honors College offered grants at two award levels (40% and 20% of program costs). This newer 20% award level allows us to offer a greater number of awards. Actual award dollars were down slightly (1%) compared to last year, but like

last year the Honors College spent more money than the endowment has earned. Total award dollars next year will continue to decline, as the Honors College spends nearly all the carryover from the unspent funds for the 2019-2021 academic years.

### **Research Grants**

Research grants include six different types of awards used to support faculty and students in undergraduate research. In both FY24 and FY25, the Honors College received record-level requests, in terms of dollars, as compared to previous years, allowing us to utilize the carry forward from the COVID years. As much of the carry forward was used in FY24, award dollars declined in FY25 but still exceeded annual earnings. However, total award dollars next year will sharply decline—even more so than Study Abroad—as student requests for research funding represent about double the dollars of earnings available in recent years.

The Honors College awarded 335 grants totaling \$1,227,013.

- **Traditional Research Grants** (144 grants, \$688,000)  
These grants continue to be the Honors College's main form of support for campus research. This year, 144 grants were made to students totaling \$472,000 with an additional \$216,000 awarded to their mentors. Awards were made to students in all colleges across 51 majors. The largest number of awards went to chemistry and biochemistry (17.4%), psychological sciences (14.6%), and computer science and electrical engineering (11.8%).
- **Student Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF)** (41 grants, \$122,875)  
SURF grants are competitive state grants like the Honors College Traditional Research Grants. By coordinating grant cycles with the state's SURF program, the Honors College leverages its own research funds to make awards to more projects. In all, SURF awarded \$103,375 to students and faculty augmented by Honors College grants of \$122,875. As in previous years, high-quality proposals not funded by SURF were reviewed for Honors College Traditional Research Grants.
- **Conference and Workshop Travel Grants** (89 grants, \$103,408)  
There were 89 Conference and Workshop Travel Grant awards, up almost 62% from last year. Nearly all (86) destinations were domestic, with two in Canada and one in Portugal. Students from five colleges and 21 majors traveled to present their research throughout the year. Students studying psychology (14) comprised the largest cohort by major, followed by biomedical engineering (9, biology (8) and communication sciences and disorders (8).
- **Faculty Equipment and Technology Grants** (15 grants, \$95,100)  
Faculty Equipment and Technology Grants help faculty purchase specialized equipment and software for projects staffed by honors students. This year's call resulted in 15 awards totaling \$95,100 for projects related to minimizing meat waste, enhancing fashion merchandising research, using the social robot Kebbi to explore initial interactions and relationship formation between humans and robots, combining regenerative and rehabilitative medicine to combat volumetric muscle loss, and using Hexoskin smart garment technology to enhance physiological monitoring and data collection in human research.
- **Internship and Research Travel Grants** (32 grants, \$129,630)

International Internship and Research Travel Grants held steady this year (up one from last year). Twenty students participated in international internships with the majority heading to Belize (8), and Ireland (9). One student each chose Australia, England and Scotland as their destination. Twelve additional students participated in short-term (less than 22 days) or extended (22+ days) travel within the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma for their research. Students from five colleges were awarded these grants. The Walton College of Business and Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences sent the largest number of students on these experiences with 12 students each.

- **Research Team Grants** (44 students in 14 grants, \$88,000)  
Research Team Grants included seven projects and funded 44 students (\$49,000) and their mentors (\$39,000) across three colleges. Project topics spanned a variety of disciplines, including developing an acoustic sensing and data acquisition model for flow tests on the international space station, women's experience with managing diabetes amidst their menstrual cycle, developing a voting information site for students moving to Washington County, Arkansas, and funding research conducted during the Honors Summer Humanities Research Scholars program.

## Impact

The Honors College remains dedicated to attracting talented students to the University of Arkansas, providing them with essential resources for their success, and launching them into leadership roles both within the state and beyond.

## Student Success

- **Steicy Lopez**, an Honors College Fellow and economics major, is headed to the University of Chicago to pursue a master's in economics, where she'll build on her research into school choice and education policy. Her honors thesis, conducted under the guidance of education reform expert Gema Zamarro and supported by an Honors College Research Grant, analyzes national shifts in enrollment patterns—public, private, homeschool, and non-enrollment—during the pandemic and other disruptive periods. Drawing from a nationally representative sample, Lopez examines how factors like income, political affiliation, and media preferences influence school-switching decisions. Her findings raise questions about public school retention, data gaps and regulation as Arkansas and other states expand school choice through legislation like the LEARNS Act. Inspired by Milton Friedman's economic philosophy and her experience as a CAPITAF Scholar and intern, Lopez aims to shape education reform through evidence-based policy, experimental research and long-term impact studies.
- **Jaylan Brown**, a Path Scholar from North Little Rock and honors sports management major, is continuing his education at the U of A and pursuing a master's in education with a focus on recreation and sports management. His honors thesis, *The LAB (Life After Ball)*, explores how college athletes can use name, image and likeness (NIL) opportunities to build authentic personal brands and prepare for life beyond sports. Supported by an Honors College Research Grant, Brown interviewed athletes across sports and institutions and analyzed high-profile case studies to identify key branding strategies rooted in purpose, values and long-term growth. His work is shaped by his internship in player development with Razorback Football, attendance at the Black

Student-Athlete Summit in Los Angeles, and his broader commitment to student success. On campus, Brown has served as vice president, public relations chair and membership intake chair for Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, founded The Yard to highlight Black culture and opportunity at the U of A, interned with the Honors College communications team, and represented the Path Program at the National Society for Minorities in Honors Conference. He plans to continue building inclusive, empowering spaces for student-athletes as he advances in the field of athletic administration.

- **Shivani Koundinya, Ryan Rouse and Cade Kilambi** turned a shared commitment to health equity into Art Medic, a digital platform that uses visual communication to improve healthcare access for patients with limited English proficiency or low health literacy. The trio—biomedical engineering majors and Honors College students—launched the initiative with support from the McMillon Innovation Studio and the Honors College Futures Hub. Art Medic’s growing database of illustrations covers medical procedures, symptoms, and treatment instructions, offering healthcare providers a clearer way to explain complex information. Koundinya, who drew inspiration from translating medical concepts for her immigrant parents, leads outreach, Rouse manages finances, and Kilambi oversees operations. With plans to translate the platform into multiple languages and eventually form a nonprofit, the team will continue building Art Medic remotely as Koundinya and Rouse begin medical school at UAMS and Kilambi pursues his M.B.A. at the Walton College of Business.
- **Gavin Miller** graduated from the U of A with honors degrees in public health and biology, along with minors in psychology and medical humanities, and will attend the Alice L. Walton School of Medicine in Fall 2025. Originally from Bryant, Arkansas, Miller first became involved with the Volunteer Action Center (VAC) through the Passionate About Literacy (PAL) program. He went on to serve as a PAL volunteer, communications coordinator, PAL chair, and ultimately president of the VAC, where he focused on empowering student-led service initiatives and fostering an inclusive, supportive environment. During his time on campus, Miller also served as a student ambassador for the Honors College, a Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) ambassador, and an undergraduate representative on the All-University Academic Integrity Board. He was a member of Schola Cantorum and Alpha Epsilon Delta, and worked as a research assistant in the DREAM Lab. His honors thesis, supported by an Honors College Research Grant, explored how language barriers affect visit satisfaction in pediatric primary care, with a focus on families who prefer languages other than English. He also received a Study Abroad Grant to examine healthcare policy in Sweden.

### Alumni Successes

- **Corbin Stinnett** (B.A., history, *cum laude*, '17) embodies the interdisciplinary spirit of the Honors College—bridging the humanities and healthcare to shape a more thoughtful future for Arkansas. He is now completing a family medicine residency at UAMS Fort Smith, Stinnett has consistently drawn on his background in history to inform his medical training. As an undergraduate, he researched Arkansas medical history under the mentorship of Trish Starks and Michael Pierce, earned a grant from the Society for the History of Medicine and the Health Professions, and later completed a master’s degree at the University of Cambridge in the history of science. He recently returned to campus as a guest lecturer in the Honors Arkansas course Health and Wellness, sharing his insights

on the historical roots of healthcare inequities with honors students from across the state. “Bringing together students from different parts of Arkansas—it’s unlike anything I’ve seen,” he said. “I only wish I could have experienced it as a student.”

- **Nicholas Drake Broadbent** (B.S.M.E. and B.A. German, *summa cum laude*, '20) is racing into the future of mobility—and he hasn’t forgotten where it all began. Now a Ph.D. student at Stanford’s Dynamic Design Lab, Broadbent is developing AI-based autonomous driving algorithms tested on some of the world’s most extreme tracks, from Portugal to the Arctic Circle. But his path to cutting-edge research began at the University of Arkansas, where he pursued dual degrees in mechanical engineering and German, conducted undergraduate research in multiple labs, and participated in the International Engineering Program. As an intern at Mercedes-Benz headquarters in Stuttgart, Broadbent laid the groundwork for a global career that continues to draw on the mentorship and opportunities he found in the Honors College. He returned to campus for International Education Week to share that journey with students, offering insights into building a competitive graduate application and cultivating a long-term vision. “The quality of opportunities and mentorship our students have is among the very best,” he said.
- **Teni Rane**, Honors College Fellow and alumna (B.S.Ch.E., *summa cum laude*, '16), has forged a remarkable path that spans athletics, engineering, and music. As a Razorback student-athlete, she helped lead the women’s soccer team to the NCAA Tournament while conducting undergraduate research and studying sustainable energy abroad. After graduating, she played professional soccer in Sweden and began a career in engineering before ultimately returning to her lifelong passion for music. Her debut album, *Goldenrod*, has received national recognition—including nominations from the Hollywood Independent Music Awards and Folk Alliance International, as well as a pre-nomination for a 2025 Grammy Award for Best Folk Album. Rane has since expanded her impact through an artist residency at the Idaho Fine Arts Academy, where she collaborated with students and teaching artists to create Echoes of Compassion, a multidisciplinary performance exploring empathy and connection. She continues her educational outreach with partnerships such as the Creative Discovery Museum in Chattanooga, helping children write and record original music. Currently, Rane is working on her second studio album, which explores themes of place, belonging, and cultural heritage.
- **Courtney Winterhill** (B.S.C.E., *summa cum laude*, '14) earned a Ph.D. in civil engineering from the University of Virginia. She is a Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Department of State and currently works as the Political Officer at the U.S. Embassy in the Dominican Republic. She also serves as a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.
- Honors College Fellow **Cole Bockenfeld** (B.A., political science and Middle Eastern studies, *summa cum laude*, '08) completed a master’s degree in global diplomacy at SOAS University of London. He now serves as senior foreign policy advisor to U.S. Senator Chris Murphy.
- **Brady Cress** (B.S.Ch.E., '07 and M.S. Ch.E. '10), an Honors College Fellow, went on to complete a Ph.D. in chemical and biological engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He now leads the Microbiome Editing Technologies group as a principal investigator at the University of California, Berkeley.

- **Victoria Maloch** (B.S., agricultural business, *summa cum laude*, '17) pursued graduate study in the United Kingdom, earning a master's in public policy from the University of Cambridge and a second master's in comparative social policy from the University of Oxford. She now serves as senior policy advisor to U.S. Senator Michael Bennet.
- With support from a Fulbright Scholarship, Honors College Fellow **Anthony Azzun** (B.S., biochemistry, *summa cum laude*, '19) spent a year teaching English in Andorra. After completing his grant, he joined Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, conducting research through the NIH Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program. There, he applied his chemistry background in a nanomedicine lab, working on lipid nanoparticles for immunomodulation. He is now pursuing an M.D./Ph.D. at the University of California with plans to specialize in pathology.
- Honors College Fellow **Samia Ismail** (B.S.Bm.E., *summa cum laude*, '20) earned a master's in public health from Boston University and is now studying for her M.D. at Harvard Medical School.

### College Successes

- The U of A Honors College, in collaboration with leaders from top honors colleges nationwide, is partnering with Routledge to publish a book tackling the most urgent challenges facing honors administrators and universities in the 21st century.
- In May, the Honors College piloted an Honors Summer Humanities Research Scholars Program to make the research process in the humanities more approachable for undergraduates. This collaboration with University of Arkansas Libraries introduced undergraduates to primary source research. This year, the focus was on the historic Black community in south Fayetteville, where students learned to conduct oral histories, analyze archival materials, and document overlooked local histories through workshops with historians, archivists and community members.
- In the spring, the Honors College hosted honors leaders from across the SEC to explore the future of honors education, from undergraduate research and alumni engagement to curricular innovation, and more.
- Beginning in fall 2025, the Honors College will offer 12 additional fellowships for Arkansas students, including the new Natural State Fellowship. This initiative reflects a deepened commitment to retaining the state's top talent and expanding access for students across all regions and socioeconomic backgrounds. It also reinforces the U of A's land-grant mission and supports Chancellor Charles F. Robinson's strategic goal of broadening educational opportunities for Arkansans.
- The U of A sent nine students to the state Capitol to present their research at the STEM Posters at the AR Capitol event. Modeled after the Posters on the Hill initiative at the U.S. Capitol, the event gives students the chance to share their work with peers, educators, and elected officials. "This event showcased the U of A's commitment to research excellence while giving students a valuable opportunity to discuss the real-world relevance of their work with Rep. Nicole Clowney and other state leaders," said Jennie Popp, associate dean of the Honors College. This year marked the U of A's largest group ever accepted to present in the Capitol rotunda.
- The University of Arkansas Rome Center, Honors College and Graduate School and International Education partnered with the University of Tennessee's Marco Institute for Medieval & Renaissance Studies to host an international conference on early medieval

Judaism in the West. Held in Italy, the event drew more than 500 virtual attendees and participants from around the world, reflecting both the global nature of the field and the strategic relevance of the Rome Center, which offered a historically resonant setting for the exchange.

- The halls of Gearhart Hall came alive with roars of excitement as third graders from Leverett Elementary visited the Honors College in October to research dinosaurs—an experience inspired by the Honors Signature Seminar, The Science, Politics and Culture of Dinosaurs, taught by Celina Suarez, associate professor of geosciences. The visit built on the undergraduate experience by inviting elementary students to explore fossils and paleoecology on campus, encouraging them to imagine themselves as future honors scholars and researchers.
- The Honors College leads Honors Arkansas, a statewide network of honors programs at two- and four-year institutions that offers virtual seminars addressing critical state issues. This year’s research seminar focused on Arkansas’s low health ranking, engaging students from multiple campuses to collaboratively study local health challenges, apply research methods, and develop solutions. Teams conducted projects at their home institutions, culminating in presentations at a statewide Health and Wellness Summit for community and government leaders.
- Honors College alumna Rachel Fiori (B.A. classical studies, magna cum laude, ’04) made a gift in honor of Daniel Levine, establishing the Daniel Levine Endowed Faculty Excellence Fund. Inspired by Fiori’s generosity, Levine created endowments supporting both classical studies and study abroad funding.
- As part of the University-wide Giving Day One Day One UofA, the Honors College launched a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign to support faculty-led research, study abroad, professional development, and equipment. The campaign honored more than 50 U of A honors faculty members and exceeded its fundraising goal by 191%.
- The Honors College hosted a Classics Symposium featuring University of Arkansas faculty and alumni to explore the enduring relevance of classical studies and examine how ancient cultures continue to shape modern thought and culture.
- Honors College students gathered in Gearhart Hall to solve a live-action “Murdle” — a murder mystery logic puzzle — alongside bestselling author and Honors College alumnus Greg Karber. The interactive event challenged students’ critical thinking and collaborative skills, setting the stage for an Honors College Mic lecture where Karber discussed his journey from the U of A campus to the bestseller list, and how his honors experience laid the groundwork for his creative career as a writer and puzzlemaker.
- In partnership with the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the Honors College also welcomed Pulitzer Prize winner Dr. Edward Larson as part of the Palmer Hotz Endowed Lecture Series in the History of Science, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Scopes Trial.

## **Conclusion**

Honors education in this country is transforming rapidly, with research at its vital core. Our Honors College Fellows and scholars choose the University of Arkansas Honors College for its intense, sustained opportunities—whether in the lab, studio, or archive. The Walton Family gift propelled us into the top tier of undergraduate research and positioned us to lead nationally.

But our impact extends far beyond research alone. Our alumni have gone on to write award-winning novels, guide work on NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, design national memorials in Washington, D.C., lead pioneering research in prosthetic limb innovation, compose chart-topping folk music, report internationally for *The New York Times*, work in paper preservation at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pursue postdoctoral research in the scientific study of art, and found companies at both local and national levels. These achievements showcase the remarkable breadth and depth of an Honors College education that prepares students to excel across disciplines and industries.

As one of the largest honors colleges in the country, our university is at the helm of honors innovation and best practices. In collaboration with leaders from top honors colleges nationwide, the Honors College is partnering with Routledge to publish a groundbreaking book addressing the most urgent challenges facing honors administrators and universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dean Coon serves as one of two editors, alongside honors leaders from 16 schools, guiding this vital national conversation.

At the same time, we continue to lead honors education at the state level. This August, we will host the seventh annual Honors Arkansas retreat atop Mount Magazine. Honors faculty and administrators from across the state will gather to strategize for this year's Honors Arkansas research seminar and forum. This year's collaborative research course will culminate in a statewide health summit bringing together community and government leaders to address health issues unique to Arkansas.

In the coming year, we're also continuing our groundbreaking courses that immerse honors students in real-world challenges and cutting-edge issues. From an inside look at a top cancer care practice shaping healthcare innovation in Northwest Arkansas, to dynamic discussions unraveling the legal and social battles over alternative proteins, these classes push students to think boldly and across disciplines. Students will also dive into landmark environmental laws and explore how strategic communication drives policy change—equipping them with the skills to lead in an evolving world.

This fall, our student lounge will transform into a concert hall exploring the fusion of AI and music. The performance features Cameron Summers, a multi-instrumentalist and data scientist known for blending creativity with technology, and Nikola Radan, a flautist and composer celebrated for weaving global musical traditions into innovative soundscapes. Together, they will showcase how technology and tradition can converge to create something entirely new and inspiring.

Looking ahead to the new academic year, we are excited about the continued ascent of the University of Arkansas Honors College as a national leader. The Honors College has established a rigorous, adventurous, and inclusive model for honors education, and we look forward to welcoming a vibrant new class of scholars prepared to leverage the Walton gift to transcend the ordinary undergraduate experience. With a steadfast commitment to intellectual rigor, innovation, and collaboration, the college is poised for sustained national distinction.