



# The Aggregate

The UWM Honors College Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1 | Fall 2020

## Black Lives Matter



Samantha Brusky  
Architecture



Avery Dedjoe  
Engineering



Olivia Wilson  
Criminal Justice

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Throughout the summer and fall of 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement dominated U.S. news coverage and social media feeds, bringing the issue of violence against Black people to the forefront of our national consciousness.

Amid a global pandemic and an intense political climate, citizens took to the streets across the country to insist that George Floyd's murder not be ignored.

The calls-to-action challenge institutions to look within and evaluate their efforts to end the perpetuation of racism and UWM's Honors College is no different.

UWM Chair and Professor of Social Work Dr. David Pate shares, "I didn't know there was an Honors College presence on campus before I was approached by [Honors College Director Dr.] Peter Sands to teach my Black Lives Matter course."

Professor Pate believes that "marketing to faculty, especially faculty of color, could be improved because faculty of color don't understand the platform that a place like the Honors College could provide."

"There has to be a willingness and a readiness, but I find that people are still scared to talk about race issues," says Professor Pate.

He explains, "I'm amazed at how quiet our students are. I would love to see them demand more of the faculty and specifically the administration because this is one of the times in [their] lives where [they] can work towards advocacy and learn activism as well as skills to change the world at the scale of a smaller institution."

UWM Professor of Public Policy and Political Economy Dr. Gladys Mitchell-Walthour studies a wide range of issues relating to race and sees similar problems within UWM's culture.



Black Milwaukeeans comprise 40% of the city's population but under-represent in positions of social, political, and economic power.

At UWM and across the country, Professor Mitchell-Walthour feels that more "Black faculty and Black senior administrators are needed to address issues, such as Black students and faculty being treated differently [because of their race]."

She adds, "essentially, Blacks are missing in high level managerial positions and employment opportunities. There is also intersectional inequity that has an impact on women, LGBTQ+ people, and other minority groups. Unfortunately, universities throughout the country mirror these disparities."

In the Honors College, students experience similar frustrations and observe the disparities in representation. Onisha Dale (Accounting) sees this as an injustice and the result of inequality.

She believes that "the source of inequity is simply lack of knowledge and awareness. It could be hard to properly identify obstacles for other groups, when your group itself has not experienced the effects of these obstacles."





## Black Lives Matter (continued)

Onisha feels that UWM as a whole is reasonably diverse. “I have been able to meet so many different people, people who look like me, even people from the same country as me, Senegal,” she says. “However, this same variety isn’t reflected as strongly within the Honors College.”

The personal toll of cultural inequity is significant. “It’s been daunting, to say the least,” being a part of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, says Kayla Sherrod (Psychology). “When you’re watching these things on the Internet, as a Black person, you don’t realize how much it is going to take a toll on your mental health.”

Kayla is encouraged to see the resurgence of this movement reaching and “targeting groups that it hasn’t in the past.” At the same time, she is angered to see misinterpretations of what the Black Lives Matter movement represents and is working towards.

“The bottom line is that Black people are peacefully protesting,” she asserts,

“because too many of us have died by the hands of the police and we won’t stand for it anymore.”

At UWM, she says, “I haven’t faced discrimination or anything like that, but as far as diversity in the Honors College, it kind of seems like there really isn’t any.”

One of the first things Kayla notices when she walks into her classes is the lack of diversity among her classmates. “It’s not a constant thought or anything,” she says, “but it crosses my mind a lot that I am the only student of color.”

UWM History Professor Dr. Greg Carter uses his role as an educator to teach students about equity and diversity. “College is the last moment you’re going to get a formal, structured way of learning,” he explains. “I hope that by teaching the history of diversity I can impact at least a couple students’ understandings of why it’s important.”

Regarding diversity at UWM, Professor Carter explains, “There are definitely ineq-

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## Director’s Note



Dr. Peter Sands  
Honors College Director

This issue of *The Aggregate* addresses one of the toughest and most intractable issues in higher education today: race.

I’m proud to say that the Honors College works every semester to improve our teaching and climate around diversity issues, and especially proud that we as a group have not shied away from the responsibility to confront our own biases and the gaps in our curriculum and practices.

This issue of the newsletter gives readers some idea of how we have worked to impact the Honors College culture, not just with showcase courses like Professor Pate’s Black Lives Matter seminar, but also by diversifying readings and assignments throughout the curriculum, by our annual spring break service trip to New Orleans, and through the spirit of volunteerism and engagement that infuses our community.

This semester, a years-long effort to better our connections with MPS and other schools in the area moves into a new phase

with our Chancellor’s antiracism grant activities, which began on December 3rd, and will continue through the year.

We all hope that we can build a more diverse community in the Honors College at UWM and that every member will join our discussions and outreach.

The remainder of this issue highlights alumni, staff, and faculty, the experience of being online during a pandemic, and even a ghost story.

I hope that you’ll read through and maybe even let the staff, who worked harder than ever before to put this issue together at a distance from Honors House and each other, know that you’ve done so and appreciate their fine work on *The Aggregate*.

I hope to see you all back in Honors House, safely, and soon, ready and able to continue the fine work of learning and sharing and building a better Honors College community.



## Black Lives Matter (continued)



Samantha Brusky  
Architecture



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Criminal Justice

unities on campus. It's hard to be a minority and that's most apparent when looking in a classroom. [UWM] does not match the demographics of Milwaukee." He adds, "students from disadvantaged groups can feel as though they aren't getting a 'fair shake' in relation to their white counterparts."

"The Black Lives Matter movement is a current event that many Americans are invested in," Professor Carter explains. "Getting people thinking about police brutality is important because it causes them to think more critically about our society."

Through teaching classes about community organizing and civil efforts for political change, UWM Chair and Professor of Educational and Community Studies Dr. Aaron Schutz knows a lot about equity.

"Inequity is about a certain group of people having a level of privilege and power that they use to maintain their control over resources and opportunity, while other groups are not given access to those same opportunities," he explains. "It's not something that just happens; it's actively maintained by people who have the power to maintain it."

Professor Schutz also acknowledges the importance of diversity in order to make an institution more equitable. He emphasizes that the University "serves an area with a large number of underrepresented students of color, but these students do not attend UWM."

"The Black Lives Matter movement has pushed white people to understand on a more basic level the ways in which racial oppression affects Black students on a daily basis," Professor Schutz continues.

He believes that understanding diversity as well as having tough discussions about race are critical issues in our society. Professor Schutz concludes, "The Black Lives Matter movement is the movement moment of our generation. I hope it has a fundamental impact on how society operates."

One of the prominent concerns expressed by students in the Honors College

is its lack of diversity and Professor Sands knows there is work to be done to challenge the status quo and move toward increased diversity.

"Many minority students self-select out of the Honors College because it is perceived as a white space and they feel as though they have to accommodate themselves to fit," he shares.

"We need to emphasize conditions in which we create value for all students regardless of race or socioeconomic status and we need a cultural shift in the perception of what the Honors College is by modeling welcoming and inclusive practices."

Professor Sands is striving to actively close this gap through outreach. "We're making sure we look very closely at the pool of high-achieving students and intentionally trying to recruit diverse students into the Honors College," he says.

"We've also made a significant attempt to recruit from high schools with limited access – MPS schools specifically. We meet regularly with students and faculty members to showcase UWM and the Honors College as a destination campus."

Professor Sands emphasizes the importance of considering the Black Lives Matter movement in education. "We are a majority white campus in a nearly majority Black city. We have a moral responsibility to serve the entire region and make education available to all students," he explains.

"The table should be big enough to accommodate everyone. The entire UW-System benefits from recognizing that, in fact, Black lives do matter. It honors our mission as a state institution and it is the mission of public education."

Kayla might agree with Professor Sands and she urges everyone to "check in on the people of color in your life, and not because they just posted about needing help, but because you care." She emphasizes, "being genuine is key right now, because while this may be news on your phone, it is real life for many people."



## Guest Faculty Appreciate Experience in Honors



Elia Rodriguez  
Economics

Each semester, the Honors College invites faculty from across UWM to teach upper-division courses as part of its curriculum. Gathered from the many corners of campus, they offer Honors College students unique learning experiences.

Dr. Jennifer Jordan, Chair and Professor of Sociology and Urban Studies, teaches “The Sociology of Beer and Brewing.” The course views beer and brewing through a social science lens with material from multiple disciplines, including History, Geography, and Archeology.

She grounds this interdisciplinary approach in the predominantly chronological structure of the course. However, it would be unfair to assume that the format makes it traditional.

Professor Jordan explains, “it’s important to question some of the conventional storytelling around beer.” She asks her students to consider the people that have been pushed into the background of history despite the primary role they played.

Dr. Rachel Baum, Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of Foreign Languages & Literature, focuses on Jewish Studies and Holocaust history in her research and teaching. Like many faculty, she finds that in the Honors College she can teach courses not offered in her home department.

Her “Cyborg Literature” course questions the presence and function of part-machine, part-human cyborgs. Professor Baum says, “a small seminar with motivated, interesting students makes Honors College courses some of the most rewarding in my 20+ years of teaching.”

She appreciates the benefits of teaching and learning in the Honors College because it “creates a community where students get to know each other and their professors, which is a true pleasure.”

When teaching in the Honors College, Director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Professor of History Dr. Nigel Rothfels has the chance to share his scholarly expertise with our students.

“I particularly enjoy discussing history in a seminar with students who are typically not History majors,” he states. “I like to learn from students who are skeptical about my field, but also open to thinking about problems in new ways.”

Students get to think about problems in new ways in his “Animals in Global History.” The course considers the role of animals in human history through elements like hunting and domestication, food sources, and disease. He also invites students to examine how our current relationships with animals might affect our future.

Dr. Dylan Barth, Teaching, Learning, and Technology Consultant in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning offers “Games and Society” for the Honors College, a course that explores how games are created and shaped by the cultures that produce them.

Professor Barth utilizes an active learning strategy called gamification, which applies game playing elements, like competition and teamwork, to create an enjoyable, lively classroom.

The course isn’t all fun and games, though, as students investigate how game principles affect daily life. Professor Barth likes teaching in the Honors College “because of the thoughtful and engaged discussions [he] can have with bright and talented students.”

Chair and Professor of Social Work Dr. David Pate offered the first Black Lives Matter course at UWM in the Honors College entitled “#BlackLivesMatter: An Analysis and Critique of the Movement.”

He was “very happy to be able to teach such a class because of the small number of students and because the Honors College is a space that allows creativity and innovation.”

Just like Professor Pate, many faculty appreciate working with Honors College students and students benefit from the opportunity to study with the diverse scholars across campus.



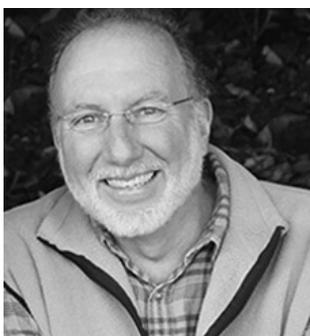
Dr. Rachel Baum. Photo courtesy of UWM.



Dr. Jennifer Jordan. Photo courtesy of UWM.



Dr. David Pate. Photo courtesy of UWM.



Dr. Nigel Rothfels. Photo courtesy of UWM.

## Foreign Correspondence



Zoë Brown  
Film



Photo courtesy of Zoë Brown.

Unfortunately, I have no stories to tell from an amazing trip abroad. No navigating the Paris Métro or visiting Neuschwanstein. This semester, I'm home in Elm Grove, Wisconsin because of the pandemic.

Being home is hard. Too quickly, I can get sucked into the mentality that I'm missing out on "real life," whatever that means. I'm stuck in my childhood bedroom; my only socialization is with my immediate family or through a screen.

I'm here in the two square mile village where I've lived for ten years, and it feels like I've exhausted every possibility of this community.

Around every corner is a memory I've created over the past ten years, though the most potent ones are from my last year of high school.

It's weird being here now, when all of those people are far away, the people that helped me create many memories I cherish, and some I don't.

In my little village, we have one grocery store, one public school, one bar, and somehow three churches. I've heard new visitors say that it looks like it's right out of a Hallmark movie. This time of year particularly, that seems to be true.

I find that Elm Grove is easier to love in the fall, when the leaves change color. The cool autumn air invites a crispness I craved

all summer. To me, changing weather is always nice because I enjoy the sun, but I also appreciate the rain.

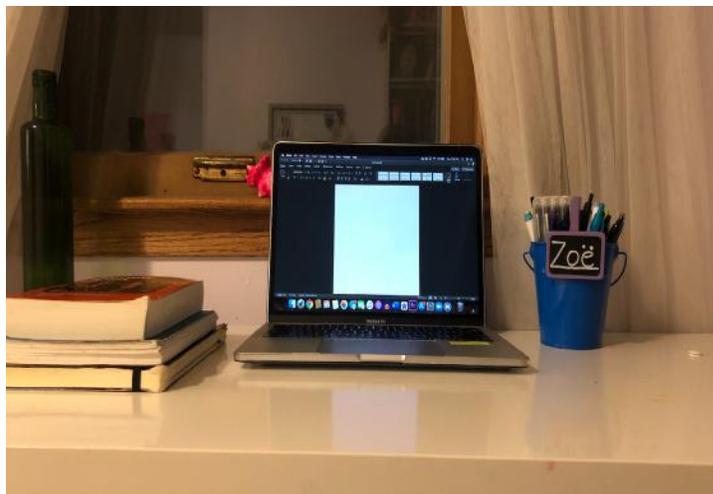
Recently, I have taken to reading more often, because I am able to transport myself somewhere else in a book, even if only for a little while.

I feel like I am bound by this two square mile border sometimes, even with several surrounding towns nearby. The illusion of claustrophobia is something I have created myself, though it does seem less oppressive when I acknowledge that it's all in my head.

Currently, I'm making more of an effort to enjoy my time here, because I'm sure I'll be moving on before I know it. I'm trying to take this as an opportunity to appreciate time with my family and create new memories in my little village, ones that will outshine the old ones I try to forget.

I'm trying to find joy in small things, like the blanket of leaves now making up my lawn, the free library boxes people put in their yards, the holiday celebrations that happen way too early in the year, and even the mean librarian I usually try to avoid.

Soon, I'll fit in here even less than I do now, moving on from college limbo to fond memories of my childhood home. This little village will always be my home, and my time here now reminds me to cherish that fact the best I can.



My workspace. Photo courtesy of Zoë Brown.



## Starting Out: Onisha Dale



Olivia Wilson  
Criminal Justice



Photo courtesy of Onisha Dale.

Onisha Dale (Accounting), a transfer student from Milwaukee Area Technical College, is determined to be successful at UWM regardless of this year's added challenges.

Currently, she is enrolled in a mix of online and in-person classes. She enjoys her online classes because the asynchronous course design makes it possible for her to work ahead on her own time.

This format is important to Onisha because, not only is she a full-time student, she also works outside of school and relies upon the flexibility to manage her busy schedule.

With plans to be a lawyer, Onisha knows what she does now will impact her future. This semester, she joined both the Black Student Union and the African Student Union. She enjoys taking part in the current discourse around race as well as discussing significant events happening all over the world.

In these meetings, the members not only talk about important issues, but they also manage to make the time fun, even if they can't see each other in person.

Besides the impact of COVID-19 on her college experience, Onisha has had to adjust to class sizes at UWM. She was accustomed to small classes at MATC and is a bit shocked to see how large they can be at UWM.

This is one of many reasons why she has found comfort in her experience in the Honors College. The small seminars create a much more personable environment than the rest of her courses which makes building peer relationships easier.

This semester, Onisha chose to take Honors College faculty member Benjamin Schneider's "Growing Up." The class focuses on coming of age and the experience of that process.



Photo courtesy of Onisha Dale.

She is more than satisfied with her first Honors College course: "I'm getting a lot more out of it than I thought I would."

She especially likes the course's free-flowing discussion which doesn't narrow the scope of the conversation, but allows for it to develop naturally.

Onisha chose to join the Honors College in order to push her learning even further. Having been in accelerated and advanced classes most of her life, she has found that her first Honors College course continues to foster a high-achieving environment.

"I always try to challenge myself and do more," she explains. "Being a college student is already a heavy workload and being a part of the Honors College challenges me even more to improve."

She already sees the impact on her writing and reading even though her time here has just begun, and she looks forward to further developing these skills.

Despite the success she has found thus far, Onisha acknowledges that COVID-19 has disrupted the "full college experience." In the future, she hopes to participate in the annual Study Abroad trip and other extracurriculars.

While she feels like she has missed out on typical college activities and events, she's excited to see where her time in the Honors College takes her.



Liberty Ansoorge  
Biological Science



Advertisement for an antiracism event.  
Photo courtesy of Honors College.

## Answering the Call for Antiracism

Earlier this year, UWM Chancellor Mark Mone solicited projects and mini-grants under the heading “Towards an Anti-Racist Campus.” Faculty and staff were asked to apply through the Office of Research and the Division of Global Inclusion and Engagement.

Recently, the review committee granted a proposal lead written by Honors College faculty member Jill Budny, along with faculty member Alan Singer, Assistant Director Laura Blaska, Enrollment Coordinator Morgan Mattly, and Director Dr. Peter Sands.

Titled “An Antiracist and Welcoming Community of Practice: Asset-based Equity in Honors,” the proposal describes plans to “make the Honors College a more radically welcoming place” and “form a strong sense of community and belonging, especially for students of color,” explains Professor Budny.

The idea for this one-year grant, which will run through Fall 2021, stems from Honors College relationships with Milwaukee Public School neighbors, Pulaski and Riverside High Schools.

During the summer of 2020, Professor Budny held a tutorial class where students researched systemic racism in higher education.

For their final project, students wrote sample grant proposals that re-imagine what universities could look like if they engaged in antiracist practices. Some of that student work inspired the Honors College proposal, and Professor Budny is proud that it puts students front and center.

In 2021, the program will hold a “summer experience,” where incoming students to the Honors College can come to campus,

get involved in antiracist work, and form relationships with fellow participants, current students, and staff.

Professor Budny hopes this experience will be beneficial because people tend to feel “more empowerment when [they] feel a sense of community.” Another part of the proposal includes a peer-mentorship program with the same group of incoming students. The organizers intend for the relationships formed during summer to continue into the following semester.

During this time, Professor Budny wants students to be able to develop life-long skills, “be more active citizens, and learn how to take their ideas and do something with them beyond the classroom.”

Though the focus is mainly on student participation, faculty will be included too. Professional development opportunities around learning and creating antiracist practices will also be available.

In addition, the grant calls for antiracist events to occur around campus, and Professor Budny hopes alumni and others will attend to contribute some of their own knowledge on this pressing subject.

Both current and incoming students will learn to embrace discomfort, a practice especially important for understanding how antiracism works. Moreover, while this project will begin in the Honors College, the goal is to encourage involvement across campus and beyond.

To continue the development of the grassroots program, the organizers will be looking for participants to get involved soon. Whether as a volunteer student or a willing alum, Professor Budny says, “however much or however little, there is a place for everyone.”



## Moving Forward: Talis Shelbourne



Amanda Niebauer  
English

Talis Shelbourne ('19 JAMS) made up her mind to be a journalist when she was a sophomore in high school. Thus, it's no surprise that she was hired as a reporter for the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) immediately after graduating from UWM.

To get there, Talis earned an internship with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, which led to a job offer with the news organization as a reporter. During her first year as a full-time issues and engagement reporter, Talis wrote about problems affecting smaller neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

While in that role, Talis moved quickly towards becoming the investigative reporter she had dreamed of being. Currently, she is an investigative solutions reporter who looks at issues in the Milwaukee metro area and analyzes the possible solutions to them. Recently, she authored a piece about a UWM report on [racial inequality in Milwaukee](#).

Another recent assignment looks at how pregnancy and pregnant women are affected by COVID-19. Much of her work is sitting at her desk and researching, Talis says, but it is still fun to her.

"It's important to realize it's not the sexy version [of journalism] you see on TV. A lot of it is tedium. It's waiting and trying to see a pattern, but I actually enjoy all of that stuff," she shares.

Even though she had her heart set on journalism as a teenager, Talis notes that young people do need to be introduced to journalism earlier. She said that many young people are not aware that it is a job they can do with a variety of backgrounds and majors, and she would love to see more diversity in the journalism world.



Photo courtesy of Talis Shlebourne.

Journalism is especially crucial now, Talis says, in an age where any information can be found in a few simple taps on a phone.

"We're losing some of that critical thinking. Journalism makes people engaged and has them put content out instead of just taking in someone else's thoughts," she offers.

This emphasis on critical thinking is what Talis admired most about the Honors College courses. She believes all students could benefit from them.

"It was nice to have a small class that you could have a discussion in and dig deeper. I still remember those discussions fondly," Talis says.

Talis believes she would not be where she is today if it were not for the work she put in while attending UWM. She says she constantly took steps toward her goals and is thankful for her mentors for helping her along the way.

Talis also attributes some of her success to the opportunities offered in the Honors College, and she advises students to seize them when they come.

"All you can do is your best," she says. "When you do have opportunities, really take advantage of them."



## COVID-19 Exacerbates Food Insecurity



Elia Rodriguez  
Economics



Photo courtesy of UWM Food Center and Pantry.

As COVID-19 reaches another peak, its impact has posed challenges for current college students. While food insecurity is nothing new, the added complication of pandemic restrictions has made it worse.

A 2016 UWM Student Association study found that “roughly 50% of UWM students report not having enough food to eat.” With the intention to combat this issue, the [Food Center and Pantry at UWM](#) has been providing students with accessibility to food on campus.

Currently, the site is located in the 8th Note Coffeehouse space on the first floor of the Union. Distribution hours are on Mondays from 12pm-3pm and Thursdays from 11am-2pm.

Though the food pantry has helped, COVID-19 has made this resource less accessible to students.

Milo Sieger (Film) lives off-campus and has struggled with this firsthand. Because of his limited transportation options, the food pantry is less convenient. He has relied on the generosity of roommates and careful planning to stay on budget, while trying to remain as healthy as possible.

“If my friends weren’t so generous, I’d be a lot less healthy. I’d just have my bulk rice and noodles,” he says. Many students are in similar situations because of rent and other expenses.

Buying in bulk, though advantageous during quarantine, is often difficult for students with a limited income and a goal to remain healthy. Fresh produce is inconvenient to buy in bulk and spoils quickly. Even pantry items and nonperishables in bulk require some disposable income at the time of purchase.

Haley Kress (Biomedical Science), who was living with five roommates when the pandemic hit, struggles with these constraints. “Most of us were living paycheck to paycheck before the pandemic,” they say, “so you can imagine that five of us being laid off at once caused some issues.”

Understandably, rent takes priority over groceries. While they benefit greatly from the food pantry, its limited options lack many necessary nutrients, such as protein due to its short shelf stability. Haley emphasizes that “all food insecurity matters, even if you’ll be able to afford food for two weeks after your next paycheck.”

The transition to quarantine and online classes has also impacted the diets of students on campus. Brandon Carpenter (Undecided), who is living in the dorms this semester, has seen gaps in residential dining. This semester, students are able to order from 8am-6:30pm on weekdays, but only from 10am-4pm on weekends, which he feels is a notable time constraint.

“I go home a lot and grocery shop there for things I’ll need. It’s especially important because UWM has an extremely reduced menu because of COVID-19,” Brandon says.

Students like Brandon are taking their food security into their own hands, but the reduction in meal options makes healthy eating that much more of a challenge.

“A bottle of water costs \$3 in the Get-Mobile app, but soda is \$1.70 [at Palm Gardens]. It’s cheaper to be unhealthy in the short term,” he relates.

To respond to student need, Honors College faculty member Benjamin Schneider and Alternative Spring Break Club officer Brianna Schubert (JAMS) are proposing to start a pop-up food pantry within Honors House.

The idea is to strengthen the Honors College community while tackling food insecurity. If accepted, the pop-up would be located in the Honors House library and would be open during building hours.

Many details need to be worked out in consideration of the pandemic, but the needs of students have shown that additional efforts are pressing. As students re-imagine their lives due to COVID-19, it is crucial that health is a top priority.



Samantha Brusky  
Architecture

## Looking Back: Drew Morton

The impact of an educator cannot be understated; they have the power to change minds, open eyes, and inspire future generations. That's exactly what Drew Morton ('06 Film Studies and English) was hoping to do when he committed to becoming a Film Studies professor.

"I was sitting on the bus with my girlfriend and she asked me what I wanted to do after graduation," he remembers. "And in that moment, I knew I wanted to be a teacher at the collegiate level."

In addition to his double-major at UWM, Drew earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from UCLA in Cinema and Media Studies. Currently, he teaches at Texas A&M University-Texarkana in the Mass Communication Department.

"From a young age, school was my playground," he explains. After an appeal to his high school administration, they allowed him to create projects he cared about, rather than the prescribed curriculum.

"The best teachers," he emphasizes, "provided me with direction, but also left me to my own devices so I could dig deep and teach myself."

Looking back on his experiences, Drew feels like he "got to learn from the best and [he] didn't feel like [he] got lost in the shuffle." Many methods and connections forged in the Honors College and his senior thesis have influenced his current philosophies and successes.

"What is so great about the Honors College and UWM in general is the direct access to wonderful scholars who are known internationally. [When I was there] we didn't have to fight with 300 other students in a lecture to get to know them on a personal level," he explains.

"I still tell my students about the Honors College courses I took," he says. "One of my first major presentations at a professional conference was actually based on my thesis work. I presented at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference after my first year of grad school. Right after



Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University-Texarkana.

that, I got my first publishing contract," for the book, *Panel to the Screen: Style, American Film, and Comic Books during the Blockbuster Era*.

Now teaching in his own classrooms, he practices what he calls "built in autonomy," allowing students to choose how they would like to engage with their projects, much like he could in the Honors College.

"I try to use newer assignments that still allow students to get at the core pedagogical lessons of older forms of media," he explains.

"For example, one of my favorite assignments is the podcast; I like to call it the Trojan Horse of writing and research presentation." The assignment not only allows for creativity, but it also supports active learning because students need to know what they're talking about for the end product to be engaging.

In class, Drew believes, "it is important to build in a mechanism through engagement where students can talk with you because it demonstrates respect and it allows you to gauge whether or not they're understanding [the material]."

Even with his numerous tools for effective teaching, what Drew loves most about teaching is "sharing knowledge with people and getting them excited and enthusiastic about the subject matter," he says.

"I like teaching for the light-bulb moments, and I live for those conversations when students come to me and say, 'I can't stop thinking about movies.'"



Brianna Schubert  
JAMS

## Behind the Screens with First-Year Students

Transitioning from high school to college is a big step, filled with excitement, nerves, possibility, and uncertainty. The global pandemic has amplified these feelings for first-year students.

Elizabeth Rhinehart (Music, Piano Performance) feels that everything is different for everyone right now. “I’ve thrown all expectations out the window,” she says.

However, “it doesn’t feel that different,” to James Last (Mathematics). He describes the move to college as relatively easy.

“I was very used working online, and I already had a setup and everything, so the transition was smooth,” James relates. Though he feels the transition went well, he still hopes that he will eventually get to experience living in a dorm, being on campus, and having a college social life.

James enjoys the in-person round table discussions he has in his Honors 200 seminar, to which he commutes over an hour. The time is worth it because “I want to have that experience of being able to be on campus,” James says.

Cynthia Hernandez (Business) shares that “sometimes it feels like I’m taking school on by myself.” She has experienced courses differently without classmates to relate to, both in her last year of high school and now in college.

She didn’t get to participate in sports at the end of her senior year of high school, but now she is on UWM’s track team. Cynthia is happy that she can connect with other students on campus through athletics. “I spend a lot of time with the team, which is nice,” she says.

Like many students at UWM, Naomi Raicu (Physics) took college classes during her senior year of high school. When everything shifted online in March, she could compare how UWM and her high school facilitated classes.

While the academic transition was smooth, Naomi has found the social aspects of school more of a challenge. “For



Photo courtesy of Professor Schneider.

first-year students, it’s hard because we haven’t already had time physically on campus to meet people like older students have,” she says.

Chloe Lange’s (Conservation & Environmental Science) courses this semester are all online, except for her Honors 200 seminar.

She says that for classes like math, being online presents challenges. She misses having a professor to walk her through the problems in person, while in other classes there are difficulties with Canvas or Internet issues.

Chloe makes sure to keep track of all her classes and their specific deadlines and schedules to make it all work. “As long as you manage your time and have a good schedule, it’s doable,” she says.

“It’s been weird transitioning to a new school without actually being at a new school,” explains Rachel Oelsner (Geography, Urban Planning). With most of her courses online this semester, she only commutes to campus for her in-person Honors College seminar and her band rehearsal.

“Being in Milwaukee that one day a week has helped me to feel connected to UWM,” she explains. In her free time between her two classes, she explores campus and the surrounding area.

Even though it is a challenge, this year’s students do what Honors College students do best: adapt and continue to move forward with resilience and strength. We are happy and proud to welcome them.



## Honors College Moves Honline



David Deshpande  
Biology



Photo courtesy of Professor Schneider.

Though the Fall 2020 semester marked a monumental shift in course delivery nationwide, the UWM Honors College rose to the occasion and executed a remarkably smooth transition to remote learning.

Honors College faculty member Benjamin Schneider teaches “Nostalgia” in a mixed format where students attend class in-person or virtually via Microsoft Teams. “I love laughing like we did today in class,” he says, “it feels great.”

Professor Schneider also teaches a 200-level class, which meets once in-person and once online in small groups. He is “very happy with the small groups,” and hopes to employ this element in future semesters.

The virtual format has also presented challenges. Honors College faculty member Jacqueline Stuhmiller teaches entirely online, and notes that the biggest challenge is “trying to understand where [her] students are, what they want, and what they need,” when she’s unable to read their faces and their body language.

Alice Apfelbach (Communication) is a remote student in “Nostalgia.” Although her expectations for the semester were “on the neutral side,” they’ve been exceeded.

“[Participation] hasn’t been as complicated as I thought it would be,” Alice says. “I feel like I’m more myself because I’m in my own space.”

Despite many changes, students and faculty agree that there has been little loss in quality or learning. Professor Schneider even finds that with a remote option “there’s 100% attendance.”

Lessons from this semester will certainly improve Honors College course delivery for semesters to come.



Photo courtesy of Professor Schneider.

## Partnering with Lubar Entrepreneurship Center



Zoë Brown  
Film



Photo courtesy of UWM Lubar Entrepreneurship Center.

Starting a business can be daunting or even terrifying and it’s certainly not for everyone. However, Brian Thompson, President of the UWM Research Foundation and Director of the [Lubar Entrepreneurship Center](#), might disagree.

He designed his Honors College course, “Thinking Like an Entrepreneur,” to help students develop the skills necessary to be successful, not just in the world of business.

Professor Thompson is excited to be teaching in the Honors College for the first time this semester. While not his primary role on campus, he has been teaching for about nine years.

“Thinking Like an Entrepreneur” focuses on two facets of starting a business: design thinking and lean launch. Professor Thompson explains that design thinking involves creating a system based on user experience, while lean launch focuses on testing market responses using a hypothesis.

This dual approach helps students learn critical thinking, effective communication, coping with uncertainty, and bias toward action in the context of entrepreneurship.

Professor Thompson’s goal is “to help students be more effective in their careers, whether they choose to be entrepreneurs or go on to other pursuits.”

Carter Tomkins (Marketing) enjoys the course, describing it as “a hands-on, shortened journey through the process of bringing an idea to a business.” He explains, “the course allows us to think creatively and see how an entrepreneurial mindset can be important for any student.”

Kori Rogers (Conservation and Environmental Science) feels that “Professor Thompson has done a great job at easing the intimidation of entrepreneurship for students who had no prior experience.” She continues: “I wish we had more time to learn even more from his expertise.”



## Film Students Rate Festival Submissions



Kaitlyn Diskin  
Film



Photo courtesy of Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Honors College students are often offered opportunities outside of class to further their knowledge and interests. Recently, one came from the [Ann Arbor Film Festival](#) (AAFF).

Formed in 1963, the annual AAFF is the fourth oldest festival in the U.S. This fall, the festival directors reached out to Honors College faculty member Benjamin Schneider, who gathered a group of students to view submissions for the Animated and Experimental Shorts categories.

Pam Westphal (Film) is one of the students who took part in the screenings. “I wanted to partake because I wanted to see the behind-the-scenes details about film festivals,” she describes. As a Film student, Pam thought that the opportunity could “provide a nice practical experience [she] wouldn’t often get.”

For a few of the students involved, this was a chance to look deeper into a possible career path. “I’ve always held such a fascination with film festivals,” says Abbie Esterline (Film). “Working at the Union Cin-

ema, I get some experience with them, but this was a whole new layer I hadn’t taken part in before.”

Ava Kanthack (Film) feels similarly: “I hope to work for a film festival one day and I thought this would be a fun way to gain a little more insight into that world.”

The team gathered on Zoom for a few hours to watch and discuss the films. Then, they rated different aspects of each entry as part of the festival’s judging process.

Not only was this a great opportunity to learn more about the selection process for film festivals, but the students enjoyed meeting other Honors College students interested in film as well.

“Talking with everyone in the Zoom meeting was so empowering,” shares Ava. “Especially because we were all women discussing a male-dominated field, it was so nice to meet more women in the Honors College with similar interests.”

Professor Schneider hopes to continue the relationship with the festival, so more students have an opportunity to participate.

## Cold Read Crew Hosts Virtual Table Reads



Avery Dedjoe  
Engineering



Photo courtesy of Honors College.

At present, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the amount of drama existing outside our personal lives and we’re likely all familiar with the enterprise of seeking relieve from these feelings.

Enter the Honors College Cold Read Crew (stage left), offering drama at the level of the fictitious and interpersonal.

Participants select parts for themselves from a chosen play and meet online to enjoy the spontaneity and hilarity inevitable of a several hour-long first reading.

Grace Feucht (English) participated in Thomas Middleton’s *The Revenger’s Tragedy*: “I signed up to play two characters to fill the cast list and ended up having many scenes where I talked to myself, repeatedly taking on and off a baseball hat to differentiate between the two characters.”

Honors College faculty member Jacqueline Stuhmiller organizes the cold reads: “I love seeing us all come together to create art in the spur of the moment.”

The material itself is full of intrigue, betrayal, murder, and murderers being murdered. The performances elevate the material with unintended humor, untraceable accents, and, with surprising ubiquity, hand-drawn facial hair.

The Cold Read Crew intends to continue in the Spring semester with Honors College students Faith Wrycha (Film) and Emily Fedewa (English) taking up leadership roles.

“All of the cold reads have been so entertaining, both to watch and to perform in. I’m looking forward to keeping it going,” explains Emily.

Faith says that, for participants, “there’s no pressure to read perfectly and no theater experience is necessary.”

The confluence of the exciting material and levitous performances makes for vividly memorable shows. Anyone interested in theater or collaborative art should try out, even for a small part.



## Course Highlights

### “Graphic Memoir”



Haley Kress  
Biomedical Science



Photo courtesy of Mariner Books.

At first glance, comics are certainly not the most obviously academic media. Many of us might pass them by in favor of something more clearly astute. Honors College faculty member David Southward, however, believes they are worth exploring.

In his course, “Graphic Memoir: The Art of Self-Creation,” Professor Southward attempts to use graphic memoirs to explore how we use the story of ourselves to create identity. His students examine a slew of drawn autobiographies to delve deeper into just that.

Professor Southward’s interest in this media was renewed in his adult life when he stumbled upon Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. From there, he noticed a trend: many graphic novels are autobiographical.

The autobiographical graphic novel provides a slightly different exploration of self than a usual memoir because of the visual component. Professor Southward ex-

plains that “These authors don’t just use ‘I,’ they also have to draw it.”

Having to consider how they would appear on the page pulls a deeper awareness of self from these authors, adding another layer of analysis for the students.

Professor Southward asks students to write questions for the readings before they attend class, using them as guides during the discussion.

This semester, however, the course is fully online, but the assignment has transferred well. Professor Southward notes, “I actually think the virtual meetings allow for better listening, even if conversation doesn’t flow as smoothly.”

His “Graphic Memoir” course is poignant because “this may be some students’ first seminar,” Professor Southward says. “The class is a chance to reflect on personal identity as they move into college and beyond.” In many ways, that is what the Honors College is all about.

### “Energy: Sources, Uses, Economics”



Haley Kress  
Biomedical Science



Photo courtesy of U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Energy is everywhere. We use it daily, rely on it to power our world, and frequently hear about it in the news. Professor of Mechanical Engineering Dr. John Reisel’s course, “Energy: Sources, Uses, and Economics,” aims to bring this discourse into the Honors College.

The course looks to educate on complex physics and engineering topics without being technically overwhelming. Professor Reisel “want[s] the students to understand energy enough to get the conversation around it.”

To attain this, the class relies both on Professor Reisel’s knowledge and a textbook that he enjoys, partially for its ample pictures. “You want to see what energy systems can look like, especially if students have never had exposure to these concepts before,” he says.

The class has worked through an overview of both traditional and sustainable

energy sources, using that knowledge to discuss the limiting factors, environmental considerations, and economic impacts of these power types in and on the world.

Given this semester’s in-person restrictions due to COVID-19, however, Professor Reisel adapted his teaching. “A hybrid model seemed to be the best approach,” he says.

“The information that I would have lectured about each day, I now present online during one class, with the next class being in-person discussion of those topics.”

Professor Reisel is happy that the course is going well. Students have had a partially online debate on fossil fuels, learned about nuclear energy, and garnered an understanding of how energy affects our world, our climates, and our lives.

That sort of flexibility in both teaching and learning is, perhaps, an example of the power of an Honors College education.



## Familiar Faces

### Dr. Hilary Snow



Liberty Ansoorge  
Biological Science



Photo courtesy of Honors College.

Honors College faculty member Hilary Snow got her start at Harvard University. There, she earned a B.A. in Social Anthropology before moving on to Stanford University to earn an M.A. in Art History and a Ph.D. in East Asian Studies.

From there, Professor Snow was hired to teach her first class at UWM in 2013 and her first Honors College course in 2015.

The inspiration to pursue Art History came to her when she was young. After learning Japanese in high school, Professor Snow's interest in the culture was encouraged when she received a scholarship to travel to abroad. She spent one year in Kobe, Japan, and the rest was (art) history.

Some of Professor Snow's courses include, "Portraiture and the Self" and "Museums and Society." During Spring 2020, along with the entire Honors College, she had to adapt her teaching due to the effects of the pandemic.

Professor Snow says the "pandemic has offered her an opportunity" in her museums class, because now she can bring the museums to her students through online technology. The socially distant and virtual setup allows her to get students to engage with speakers from museums across the country.

Professor Snow encourages those who are offered admission to the Honors College to accept it, because she believes the experience can be enriching for students who are looking for something beyond traditional lecture courses.

Her philosophy of "finding a silver lining" during the pandemic has been personally rewarding as well, as she has been able to spend more time with her daughter.

Her ability to adapt to change with positivity and passion inspires Professor Snow's students to do the same and is a hallmark of the Honors College experience.

### Kim Romenesko



Kaitlyn Diskin  
Film



Photo courtesy of the Honors College.

For more than thirty years, Kim Romenesko has been working with UWM students in various schools and colleges across campus. Recently, however, she decided to return to the Honors College as a part-time Student Services Coordinator.

"In fact," Kim says, "I had retired when Laura called me and asked me to come back for a short period of time, but that was three whole years ago now."

This isn't Kim's first time working in the Honors College however. Previously, she worked as the Assistant Director for six years, focusing on developing the schedule of classes and organizing Honors College committees.

Deciding to come back thrilled Kim because of the opportunity to work with students again: "It's so nice to be back, especially in a position that isn't solely admin-

istrative because my favorite part of my job is working one-on-one with students."

Prior to working at UWM, Kim was a student here, earning an M.A. in Sociology. After she finished her degree, she stayed because she "had come to love the school and city of Milwaukee so much that [she] just couldn't leave."

When she is not at work, Kim spends as much time as she can outside, exploring nature around Milwaukee. "During the summer, the beaches are the thing that kept me sane," she says, while her love for rock collecting helped as well.

Although her job looks very different this year as she works from home, Kim says she "just feels blessed to be back in any capacity because there is something so special about the Honors College and the camaraderie found here."



### The Aggregate:

Liberty Ansonge  
Zoë Brown  
Samantha Brusky  
Avery Dedjoe  
David Deshpande  
Kaitlyn Diskin  
Haley Kress  
Amanda Niebauer  
Elia Rodriguez  
Brianna Schubert  
Olivia Wilson

From left to right, top row:  
Avery Dedjoe, David  
Deshpande, Liberty Ansonge,  
Middle row: Kaitlyn Diskin,  
Zoë Brown Amanda Niebauer.  
Bottom row: Haley Kress,  
Samantha Brusky, Brianna  
Schubert. Not pictured: Elia  
Rodriguez and Olivia Wilson.  
Photo courtesy of COVID-19.

## The Aggregate's Voice

As the Honors College community conducted the Fall semester mostly online, students had to adapt and for this issue, our team adapted too.

We talked with students, faculty, and alumni through screens, met with each other from our homes (some of us in our pajamas), and had our foreign correspondent write from her hometown.

This resiliency is the pulse of the Honors College, and we strove to cover it in this issue. Our community members, former and present, found new ways to share their ideas and make the impact we have come to expect.

This issue highlights the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement on education, specifically within the Honors College and at UWM. We support students of color as they face the challenges of racial inequity and we hold accountable those in power who promise change.

Though our lives look a different now, we still find ways to meet with and care for each other: we see students become en-

trepreneurs and judges for a film festival across Lake Michigan.

The Cold Read Crew gives students a way to laugh with each other and try their hand at a little bit of drama. Students look to spread awareness and help with complex community problems, like food insecurity.

Some Honors College students completed their first semester at UWM entirely online, while others navigated an in-person class in the middle of a pandemic.

We miss being able to comfort each other in person, but we are finding new ways to stay connected. The drive, resiliency, and kindness of our community make it easier. Peace.



## Another Perspective



Avery Dedjoe  
Engineering

Black Lives Matter and systemic racism are contentious topics, but seemingly not in the Honors College, possibly to our detriment. My negative experiences with these subjects have inspired me to share my thoughts.

In high school, I was a supporter of Black Lives Matter, as well as the various subsidiaries of the social justice movement.

I wanted very badly to believe in systemic racism and the idea that U.S. society was primarily oppressive. I wanted a final and universal explanation for the problems of inequity, injustice, and suffering, especially in relation to their effects on me personally.

I also wanted the source of these demons to be external; it was too painful to consider that many of my problems might have been largely of my own making.

In that time, whenever I crossed paths with some idea that challenged my beliefs, I would feel threatened and retreat to a more

fundamentalist form of my ideology. For whatever reason, this process of retreat had the effect of increasing my sensitivity to such challenging ideas.

Eventually, I became so sensitive to offense that I could even feel threatened by remarks that were completely unrelated to my belief system, connected only through my own paranoid word-association. Upon reaching this stage, with nowhere left to retreat, I was forced to see my beliefs for the insufficient description of reality they were and to let them go.

While I was under that much ideological influence, I often bent the truth of my experiences and my perceptions to preserve my ability to righteously believe.

Pushing my ideology beyond its breaking point was painful and depressing, and not entirely voluntary, but the freedoms I've felt in the aftermath have made me very grateful for the occurrence.



The Aggregate

## Breaking News

Because UWM now operates at a limited capacity due to COVID-19, *The Aggregate* team feared that it would not be able to continue searching for the nursing students who are suspected of going missing in 1963 and who may be the mysterious ghost(s) of Honors House.

We have tried multiple times to reach our contact J, a graduate from the class of 1963, and our only source to date with knowledge of the mysterious “C.H.”

She continues to avoid our calls and, with no records of the missing students in UWM’s files or in the building archives, it seemed we were at a dead end.

Just days before publication, however, our offices received an anonymous package containing letter fragments and several old photos of the building.

One of the fragments, dated early fall, 1962, reads: “Last months with the class of ‘63. Are you sick of them too?”

The letter fragments also allude to a photo that depicts a discrepancy between the number of students continuing in the Fall semester class and the number of graduates in the following Spring semester.



Honors House, circa unknown. Photo courtesy of anonymous.



Honors House, circa unknown. Photo courtesy of anonymous.

According to the names in the records, either of the absent students may be the unknown C.H., whose name seems to have been erased from the archive. Students with these initials are: Cathryn Hill and Carol Hatcher.

The handwritten note accompanying the package we received claims that “C.H. was murdered and we all saw who did it. It was the fall.” This letter is not dated.

At the time of publication, we have not been able to locate a record of either Carol Hatcher’s or Cathryn Hill’s death.

Our investigation now shifts to answering questions about this new information. Who wrote this letter fragment? Why won’t they come forward? Is the person who sent us the package involved in the disappearance? Do they know anything about the stories of the haunted Honors House building?

Moreover, does the “fall” referred to on the back of the photo refer to the time of year, a specific semester, or did C.H. take a fatal fall.

We vow to continue our search for the unknown correspondent and for C.H. The truth about the disappearance and the origins of the haunting will surface.