The Aggregate

The Honors College prides itself on promoting a collaborative nature, which allows students to build relationships while also enriching their academic experiences.

The Honors Association of Research and Publication (HARPY) and their annual conferences are, therefore, a quintessential Honors College experience.

HARPY is an organization for students by students, formed to foster research in the humanities and social sciences. Now a staple in the Honors College community, HARPY provides students weekly opportunities to share ideas with their peers.

HARPY’s emphasis on communal learning makes it natural for the organization to take on the coordination of the Monsters Conference in the Fall semester, and Beastfest in Spring.

Inspired by Honors College Professor Jacqueline Stuhmiller’s classes, the conferences give students a chance to present a variety of scholarly and creative work.

The conferences are intentionally open-ended, allowing students to connect to the theme in their own ways.

HARPY president Elayna Karacan (Anthropology and Marketing) says that the format adds a intimate feel to the conference and encourages variety.

“Presenters can choose to read a poem, share artwork, or share a personal piece,” she says. “They often turn out very personal, so it’s a lot of fun.”

HARPY members work to ensure that the conferences are a positive environment for both participants and viewers. They take on a range of responsibilities, from applying for funding to communicating with other university organizations, as well as working with students to revise their work.

While Professor Stuhmiller offers help where she can, she praises the students for their efforts and independence in coordinating the events.

“For every conference, they start planning four months in advance,” she says. “They do all the work themselves.”

Elayna believes that one of the most rewarding parts of being involved with the conferences is seeing all the hard work come to fruition. On those days, she loves to see how a variety of people come together to hear from students.

“It’s not just for Honors College students,” Elayna clarifies. “We get to see different people from across campus be amazed by different pieces.”

Beyond the work of the HARPY organizers, the willingness of participants to be accountable and engaged makes the conferences successful.

Ronan Carpenter (French and Psychology) has presented at both conferences and plans to take part in more.

For him, presenting at the Monsters Conference and Beastfest has been an opportunity to explore and gain confidence in creative writing.

“I appreciate being able to share a more personal side of my writing, to have the chance to express myself; I just love that opportunity,” Ronan adds.

He also appreciates the other Honors College students and faculty who take part in the conferences.

“The Honors College community is so supportive and wholesome in general, and to include my creative writing is such a good experience,” he reflects.

Honors College conferences are sources of growth and community, fostered by the dedication of HARPY members, as well as the support of those who attend.