

# UHP NEWS

December 18, 2020

Holiday Greetings Fellow Honors Programmers,

I have long believed in the magic of the holiday season and especially hope that this holiday season will supply some. In these COVID days, we need it. 2020 has been a tough year. There is a long-embodied logic to these holidays, when winter darkness yields light—as in the menorah symbolizing Hanukkah or the prominence of the Christmas tree in so many homes. Their light drawing family and friends together in celebration and renewal. This year making us ready for 2021 and better days to come.

Before we get to 2021 though, I should update you on what we have been working on this fall, most importantly strengthening the program's infrastructure for the future.

**Piloting a New Course Model** – Thanks to Professor Cori Day of the College of Education, we have a new model for honors courses that will likely solve two problems and offer honors opportunities to more MSUB students. For her EDU 397 Math Methods, she offered honors credit for any student doing a project on Social Justice Mathematics. We are going to test this model for two new honors General Education options this spring: Professor Haaland's CRWR 240 Creative Writing and Professor Roberts' MUSI 207 World Music. Assuming this experiment works, this means that we will be able to offer at least four Gen Ed options every semester. As importantly, it will allow us to create honors opportunities in colleges and programs, which don't have any honors options, for example the College for Business.

**HONR 194 Honors Inquiry and Research** – With this pilot course, we wanted to test whether we could do a better job of introducing three of our UHP outcomes (problem solving, communication skills, and research) to our first-year students and thus provide a better foundation for their future coursework. It is too early to fully assess how this experiment has gone, but there is one noteworthy outcome—its 13 members have their projects ready to present at the Research, Creativity, and Community Involvement Conference. Congratulations!

**Evaluating the UHP** – The Montana University System has a new mandate: each of its programs must be evaluated every seven years to see if it is healthy and up to date. Honors programs happen to fall in the first year. So, we have just submitted our report (APR Self-Study) to Provost Arnold and to an external reviewer (Dr. Margaret Cotter-Lynch, the director of the Southeastern Oklahoma Honors Program). We will share what our reviewers have to say when we receive their evaluations.



## Scholarship opportunities

Please follow the link listed below to the scholarship portal for the University. There are seven pages listing possible scholarship possibilities.

<https://msubillings.academicworks.com/>



## Snapshots from our Graduation Celebration

**After the UHP** – On Friday, November 20, we had our (virtual) Honors graduation celebration with the 2020 graduates and their families. The event had something of a reunion feel to it, as we caught up on their doings, their jobs, graduate schools, and, sometimes, both. All are firmly on their way to launching their careers or gaining the additional education to do so. To pose an answer we often get before students enter the UHP: does a University Honors Degree provide a guarantee or that next steps will be easy? No, it doesn't. Megi Ivanova (2019) did not get into a Ph.D. program on her first try, but now has successfully completed her first semester at Penn State and has five years of full funding en-route to her Ph.D. in psychology. To a person though, all 21 of 2019 and 2020 graduates are on track toward their career goals.

**Looking Ahead** – Spring like fall will require new (and often virtual) ways to do the usual things. Some we have already worked out, most notably the eighth annual Research, Creativity, and Community Involvement Conference (Friday, April 16). Others we will be asking your help with, more to come on this. Dr. Jana Marcette, Sheryl, and I are already working on another big change ahead, when Jana replaces me as UHP director at the end of spring semester.

To return this holiday season, Christmas stories feature moments of illumination, of new understanding of the meaning of the day and what is important. They remind us to live in the moment, or, as Mother Theresa observed, "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."

Wishing festive and restorative holidays,

David Craig



Call for submissions for the  
EIGHTH ANNUAL  
**RESEARCH, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**  
Conference: Friday, April 16 • Application Deadline: Friday, March 26

All forms of scholarship are welcome: poster, performance, artistic display, poetry reading, artwork, or research paper.

Sponsored by the University Honors Program, the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs, and a grant from the National Institute of Health's MI-INBRE Program

For more information:  
[msubillings.edu/research](https://www.msubillings.edu/research)  
or 657-2364

Montana State University  
**BILLINGS**

### Eighth Annual Research Creativity and Community Involvement Conference Friday, April 16, 2020

What is it and why participate?

It is a chance to showcase work that you have done—creative writing, art, a class or community engagement project, music, a research paper or research you are involved in, or work you have done for an honors contract among other things. It also provides a credential documenting what you have achieved that can be used for scholarship, internship, graduate school, and job applications.

To check out the conference and to find an applications: <https://www.msubillings.edu/research/>