



# Honors Program 2015 Newsletter

**MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**  
<http://www.mwsu.edu/academics/honors/>

## *The Future Looks Bright Edition*

### WORD FROM THE PROVOST



This summer I had an opportunity to reflect on my time at Midwestern. I thought about all I have experienced and how I have seen the university evolve since I first arrived on campus. I am honored to work with talented and committed faculty, staff, and students who care about this university and its future.

In August, 2015 the campus will begin a new era as we welcome our new president, Dr. Suzanne Shipley. Not only will there be changes in leadership, but there will also be a number of significant changes across campus. Our academic programs are changing constantly to meet the needs of current and future students, and members of the campus are beginning to plan and build new facilities. In the area of academic affairs, three new interdisciplinary minors will be offered in fall 2015: Women and Gender Studies, Spanish for the Professions, and Medical Sociology. A new certificate program in Radiologic Sciences, Computed Tomography, and a new Master's program in Geosciences will be offered. The campus infrastructure also will begin undergoing major changes. A new residence hall, a mass communication wing of the Fain Fine Arts building, and a new health sciences building are in the planning stages. These capital improvements represent the largest construction initiatives in the history of the university. These are a few indicators of a bright future at Midwestern State University.

The Redwine Honors Program is also experiencing growth and excitement. The Honors Program at Midwestern has a rich history. I am very appreciative of the faculty leaders who have worked to build a great program and of the professors who have taught challenging and exciting honors classes to enrich the minds of our students. The foundation has been laid, and we will continue to build upon it to provide the best opportunity possible for our students. Each year I am excited to see more Honors students taking on campus leadership roles and excelling in their classes, research and creative projects. The voices of the Redwine Honors students are rising on campus as new ideas and new initiatives from this talented group of students are presented. Redwine Honors students are making a difference in the campus community, and from my view, the future looks bright.

## Students in Honors Leadership Seminar Pave the Way for Future Changes

Since fall of 2013, new Honors Program students are required to take Honors sections of Leadership MSU. As part of the course requirement, students must complete a campus improvement proposal and present it to MSU administrators. The Honors sections of the course join together with the President's Distinguished Scholars section, taught by Mr. Matthew Park, to present their ideas before a panel of evaluators.

Proposals must include a budget as well as a plan for implementation. The fall 2014 proposals included a few items that have not only been considered by the university, but one idea was implemented as a pilot in spring 2015. A new bus route was proposed by the students with stops for shopping and entertainment purposes, as well as later hours for students who utilize the public transportation system. The new Mustangs Entertainment Shopping & Attractions (MESA) route proved a success during its April pilot, and students should enjoy the benefits of MESA again during the 2015-16 academic year. Additionally, the administration is looking into implementing a fall break after Honors students took their improvement proposal to the Student Government Association (SGA) for formal support. Both of these ideas started as projects for the campus improvement proposals in the Leadership seminar. Other ideas presented during the proposal presentations included, but were not limited to, powering the university by use of wind turbines and solar panels, starting a campus-wide peer mentor program, creating a version of Craigslist exclusively for MSU students, and expanding the undergraduate research program. These examples are a small glimpse at how Honors students are taking the lead on campus, and we hope students will continue to push for positive changes in the future.

# New University President



The Redwine Honors Program would like to wish President **DR. JESSE ROGERS** well as he retires from MSU after 48 years. He was a great ambassador of the Honors Program, and he will be missed by the MSU community. Enjoy your retirement, Dr. Rogers!



**DR. SUZANNE SHIPLEY** will take office in August 2015, and the Honors Program would also like to welcome her to the university. She has past experience with Honors education in particular, as she was the Director of the Honors Program at the University of Cincinnati for four years. We

cannot wait to see what the future holds as she takes the lead. Welcome, Dr. Shipley!



**DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?**

**SEND US AN E-MAIL!**

We would love to hear from more alumni at [Honors@mwsu.edu](mailto:Honors@mwsu.edu)! We hope many of you will continue to keep in touch with us, and we look forward to sharing your stories in the future.



## **BRAINS AND BRAWN**

*Alexis Arrieta - Tennis*

*Skye Catletti - Basketball*

*KD Kyle - Softball*

*Cara Mack - Cross Country and Track*

*Lizzie Navarette - Soccer*

*Jennifer Sissel - Basketball*



Richie Bates, Nathan Jun, Brinton Coxe and Adam Lynskey. Photo by Lauren Roberts

## EXTRAORDINARY COINCIDENCE LEADS TWO HONORS PROFESSORS TO FORM BAND

*Two Honors faculty members recently started a band called Time Image—Nathan Jun and Brinton Tench Coxe came together with two other musicians to form the group. Coxe has lectured in the Honors Leadership Seminar and will be teaching an Honors section of “The Ancient World” in fall 2015. Jun has served on the Honors Faculty Committee for a number of years, and he will be lecturing in the Honors Leadership Seminar in fall 2015, as well as teaching an Honors course over “The Gilded Age” in spring 2016.*

**NATHAN JUN**, Chair and Associate Professor of Philosophy, wanted to start a band.

“I came to this conclusion some time toward the end of last year that I wanted to play music again,” Jun said. “I wanted to be in a band in an effort to improve my quality of life.”

While Jun said he wasn’t too serious about his desire to start another band, he also didn’t expect to meet a musician he once idolized—and he certainly didn’t expect to be working around the corner from him.

Two professors joined the Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences as full-time faculty members this fall, one of whom, Brinton Tench Coxe, Associate Professor of English, also wanted to start a band. Coxe wasn’t completely new to the university, however. He taught in the Intensive English Language Institute before he was hired as a full-time professor.

“I didn’t really know him very well until he joined the department,” Jun said.

Jun said he and his wife hosted a party last summer and Coxe and his wife, Kirsten Lodge, assistant English professor and humanities program coordinator, were invited.

“We got to talking about music and I mentioned Bedhead just in passing and he’s like, ‘Oh yeah, I was in that band.’ And I couldn’t believe it. I did not know that and nobody ever mentioned it, because why would they, I guess,” Jun said. “I just flipped out.”

The reason for Jun’s flip out is simple: Coxe was once a guitarist of the seminal, Dallas-based slowcore band Bedhead.

“The other bands that I had played in had some local or regional respect, but not on the large and national scale,” Coxe said. “When you think about NPR featuring Bedhead, you think about the fact that we were able to play in Europe, Canada, the United States, and we didn’t have to sleep on stages or in the corners of people’s studio apartments. We could actually stay in hotels or motels and be paid and have meals, and yet have the respect of critics that saw the band and what Bedhead were doing.”

Jun said he saw Bedhead perform in Chicago when he was in college, and now, about 16 years later, he said he can hardly believe that he works with one of Bedhead’s guitarists.

“I saw them play once, it was on their last American tour. I’m pretty sure it was ‘98 in Chicago at the Empty Bottle. It’s this small, intimate sort of venue and I was one of these people who had to be right up front so I’m sure I was maybe a couple feet away from him,” Jun said. “It’s just so weird. Who would have thought that however many years later he would end up being my colleague at Midwestern State University. It’s just crazy.”

Crazy indeed, Coxe agreed.

“It’s really just one of those, I don’t know, one of those moments where you think, ‘Really? Could this have happened?’ and it did,” Coxe said.

Coxe said Richie Bates, husband of Cortny Bates, special collections librarian and associate university librarian, is a musician, and he was also at Jun’s party.

After proposing the idea of forming a band with Coxe and Bates, Jun said the three were able to “hobble the band together” after Angela Lynskey, assistant education professor, sent Jun a message on Facebook that her husband Adam played drums.

“We kind of stumbled into it eventually,” Jun said.

But the transition into actually playing as a band, since titled Time Image, was much easier.

“It was like, ‘Let’s just play,’ and it clicked. I tried to count this: I think this is the fourteenth band I’ve been in, I think. Some of which did not last very long at all, either because it wasn’t really serious or because people just didn’t get along,” Jun said. “I can honestly say that this is probably the only band I’ve ever been in where we just clicked from the very beginning. I think a lot of it has to do with being grown up and not having particularly high expectations from something like this.”

Coxe said he felt the same way, that being older helped the four members get along, but he said their musical backgrounds didn’t hurt.

“Because all of us have played in different bands, and in different guises and different styles, it’s very easy for the four of us to read each other musically, and that’s not always the case,” Coxe said. “When you get four people together who don’t know each other very well, either you click or you don’t.”

“This is the nicest band I’ve been in,” Bates said. “Everyone is such a gentleman.”

As soon as they finish playing a song, there is only a flash of self-satisfaction on their faces before they immediately begin critiquing their performance or proposing changes to lyrics, always looking to improve.

“One of the songs we have was simply improvisation. Adam started with a beat, I came in with a bassline, Nathan started adding guitar, Richie started singing, and everything sort of comes together,” Coxe said. “That’s basically how it’s been from the beginning. No one came in saying, ‘OK, this is my vision, here’s what we’re going to sound like.’”

But the most important part, the two Prothro-Yeager professors said, was that they are all having fun.

“It’s just like, we’re old and we like music so let’s have a band,” Jun said.

Coxe said he remembers the anxiety of trying to “make it” in the saturated Dallas music scene, but he doesn’t seem to miss that pressure.

“Because we’re doing this for ourselves there’s a lot less pressure,” Coxe said.

*Story written by Ethan Metcalf and originally published in The Wichitan.*

# Faculty Highlight



**KRISTEN GARRISON** earned her Ph.D. in Rhetoric from Texas Woman's University; her BA in English, MA in English, and MS in Education come from the University of Kansas (rock-chalk Jayhawk!) Her research passions are writing centers and feminist rhetoric, and she

takes any opportunity to recruit students to share in these loves. She is also a certified scuba diver and swam with sharks in Florida. When asked what she loves most about teaching Honors students, she replied: "As a teacher, I draw energy from my students; when they are engaged, curious, and inquisitive, they reinforce my own passion for learning and exploring the world. Although students do not have to be in the honors program to possess these characteristics, working with Honors students not only increases the likelihood of such energy, but often delivers it in a concentrated, powerful dose! When I reflect on the times I have worked with Honors students, whether in the classroom or at campus events, one overarching impression comes to mind: smart conversation. An engaged, active participant in intellectual inquiry is a teacher's dream, and the conversations that arise in these meetings give everyone, myself included, a chance to learn and grow."

## STAFF UPDATE

**LUKE SAUNDERS**, Honors Program sophomore, began working in the Honors Program Office in May 2015. He is 19 years old and from Lawton, Oklahoma. Luke is a Psychology major, with a minor in Sociology. He started attending MSU last fall and joined the Honors Program at the same time. Luke says that his favorite things about the Honors Program are the small class size and the fact that the courses are more engaging: "I feel like I learn a lot more while I'm in the Honors courses, and I know my peers better. Getting to know professors better than I normally would is also a plus." We would like to welcome Luke as our newest staff member!



## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS FROM CURRENT STUDENTS

**JOSEPH HADWAL**, 2015 Redwine Honors Program graduate, and **LAURA GALBRAITH** were chosen to participate in a Spring 2015 Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) digital humanities research seminar and completed the course in the spring of 2015. The Century America course was initiated in the spring semester of 2014 and began building a digital record of 11 different COPLAC institutions and their communities during the era of the Great War. In spring of 2015 the course included pairs of students from six additional COPLAC schools working on projects about their home communities during the Great War. The MSU project "Wichita Falls at War: The Great War on the Homefront" considers topics such as the Call Field airbase, the Oil Boom, the Spanish Flu epidemic, and women's role in the community.

Joseph and Laura's research combined interviews with local residents such as John W. Zimmerman and more traditional print sources to create their digital history. Local archives and libraries including the MSU Moffett Library Special Collections, the Wichita County Archives, and the Wichita Falls Public Library were instrumental in creating a comprehensive story.

The seminar leaders were Ellen H. Pearson (UNC, Asheville) and Jeffrey McClurken (University of Mary Washington). Leland Turner, Assistant Professor of History, was the MSU faculty advisor for the project.

*The remainder of our research highlights this year are focused on the students who presented at the Honors Program Symposium:*

**THE NINTH ANNUAL HONORS PROGRAM SYMPOSIUM** was held on Saturday, March 28, 2015. Following the annual tradition, the Honors Student Committee organized and implemented the event. Students voted to select a faculty discussion panel in place of a keynote speaker, due to the popularity of the panel discussions in the last couple of years. Dr. Nathan Jun, Philosophy, and Dr. Michael Vandehey, Psychology, discussed the topic of "gender equality." The student presentations from March 2015 are as follows:

### **"Fixing" the Writing Center by Emily Baudot, spring 2015 Redwine Honors Program graduate**

From the texts you send, from the statuses you post, to the essays you write, to the novel you never finish – if you have ever put words on a page or a blank screen, then congratulations! You are a writer! Being a writer is a wonderful thing. What could be cooler than putting your thoughts, your self, down on a physical page? I have dedicated two years to helping students become more aware of themselves as writers at Midwestern's Writing Center, where student writers collaborate to help each other improve as active contributors to

*~ continued on page 5*



MSU's literary community. The relationship the Center establishes with student writers is unique and beautiful...more importantly, it is incredibly complex. My presentation explores this relationship and how it affects tutors, tutees, and the University as an organic and continually changing community.

#### **Removing Restrictions: Unchaining the Creative Mind for Artistic Freedom by Jonathan Henderson, Honors Program senior**

Dipping the bristles of a paintbrush into paint as the artist prepares to create her work, ink stained fingers gripping a feathered pen as it scratches on scraps of parchment, and the composer sitting for days at his piano scribbling notes on paper; such are actions of creativity and unbridled passion for the arts which we take for granted in a more modern society. Yet, the historical situation has never been as kind as our contemporary one. Artists who find themselves in the avant-garde or those who work outside of the norm have historically dealt with censorship, suffering, and degradation. The philosopher René Descartes, now considered one of the most important philosophers of the period we call "The Early Modern Period," faced the same sort of censorship himself. His views, though controversial at the time, are considered extremely conservative in their message today. So too did David Hume, the man behind the skeptical movement which began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; so censored was he that he was unable to ever receive a position at a reputable university. Artists, writers, philosophers, musicians, and any number of people to whom we might attribute a "creative mind" have been historically marginalized by the state and society. But another form of censorship exists, a much more heinous and underhanded form of censorship which forces the individual into intellectual slavery. Such is the focus of this paper. It is perhaps the motives for which we create art, literature, and music that matter most, as well as the position in which the artist finds himself during the creation. The question has to be asked: Is art created for art's sake more valuable than art created under restriction or out of necessity?

#### **Parenting Needs Love, Not DNA by Andrea Mendoza-Lespron, Honors Program junior**

Divorce rates are higher each year, and stepparenting is more common every day. However, stepparents are usually represented as mean, unfair, and even willing to send their stepchildren away by the media. Some people think that only genetic parents can unconditionally love their children, but what about all those parents who, without sharing genes with those children, choose to love them anyway? Indeed, this paper will analyze that contrary to what the media has portrayed, stepparents can be warm and affectionate, and many of them play an active role in their stepchildren's lives since they love and raise

the children they did not choose to have, even when they did not have to do it. Therefore, parenting is not always based on DNA; parenting is based on love.

#### **How Research Papers Affect Students by Madeline Parker, Honors Program senior, and Megan Piehler, Honors Program junior**

We set out to research the positive and negative side effects of assigned research papers in undergraduate education. We also focused on the undergraduate curriculum at liberal arts colleges and how they promote active learning. Honors courses tend to have more research papers, which are counterproductive to an engaging liberal arts education. We polled general and honors students from Midwestern State University about the stress caused versus the knowledge gained from writing research papers, and gathered other facts from outside sources. Also, we discovered educational benefits in using alternatives to research papers. It is important to understand how research papers affect an honors student's ability to learn.

#### **Nelson: The Path to Greatness and the Man Who Followed It by Robert Press, spring 2015 Redwine Honors Program graduate**

One historical figure has fascinated me for some time: Horatio Nelson. Born in 1758 to a preacher and his wife, he was seemingly destined for an unremarkable life. Yet by 20 he was a captain, by 38 he was an admiral. As an admiral, he won three of the most famous sea battles of the Napoleonic Wars, at the Nile in 1798, Copenhagen in 1801, and Trafalgar in 1805, the last of which he was shot and killed in, dying at the age of 47. But does Nelson deserve the credit, or were the favorable conditions surrounding the man more important?



~ continued on page 6

continued from page 5 (RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS)

### The Power of the 'Pro Athlete': An Investigation into the Evolution of Basketball as Big Business in America by Gerald Sampson, Honors Program senior

With the money, fame, and popularity attached to professional basketball and its athletes, it comes as no surprise when people wonder about its origins. Therefore, providing satisfactory answers to the questions surrounding the origin of professional basketball is the purpose of this abstract. During my research I have discovered a few iconic personalities who were very important in developing professional basketball. In my presentation, I will explain the unique roles that these selected individuals each played in developing professional basketball. Based on my research findings I will attempt to answer the following questions respectively:

1. What is the role of NCAA basketball in professional basketball (What kind of relationship exists between the two entities)?
2. What is the future of professional basketball?

## HONORS STUDENT COMMITTEE OFFICERS

### SPRING 2015:

*Danielle Schwertner, Chair*  
*Travis Baumann, Vice Chair*  
*Andrea Mendoza Lespron, Senator*  
*Alicia Ward, Secretary*  
*Lindsey Johnson, Treasurer*  
*Jordan Gardner, Judicial Secretary*

## Honors Graduates 2014

### SPRING 2014:

Lance Auguste  
Amy Brister  
Cheyenne Cannedy  
Keba Frederick  
Leanne Henry  
Thanh Hoang  
Connie Kim  
Jamelle McCabe

### Yvonne Michaud

Kylie Parker  
Emily Saville  
Kalynn Smith  
Shelby Willeby

### FALL 2014:

Meghan Folkening  
Saskia Iloba  
Emilienne Kwi  
Michelle Meadows  
Collins Nwafor  
Algerr Remy  
Leona Sandiford

### AUGUST 2014:

Samantha Nichols



Larry Williams in his office in Bea Wood Hall. Williams has been at the helm of the study abroad program for about 30 years. Photo by Rachel Johnson.

## FAREWELL, DR. WILLIAMS!

**OUR STUDY ABROAD HIGHLIGHT THIS YEAR IS DR. LARRY WILLIAMS**, who recently retired from running the MSU Study Abroad program. He has worked closely with Honors students and staff to ensure that the Honors students, in addition to all MSU students, have an exceptional experience when they participate in MSU sponsored study abroad programs. Students may receive up to two Honors course credits by participating in study abroad, and the Honors Program matches the scholarship students receive from the Study Abroad Program for participating Honors students. We will miss you, Dr. Williams, and we wish you a very happy retirement!

After 30 years of visiting Europe each summer, Larry Williams will travel with the Study Abroad Program, his legacy, for the last time. Williams said he won't miss the traveling as much as he will miss providing unforgettable experiences to students.

"You can't memorize college," Williams said, "but everybody will remember the time they spent in France. It is a life changing event, and for me to get to be a part of that, I'm very privileged."

After taking advantage of an impromptu trip to London in 1985, Williams was inspired to give university students the same experience. But the start-up and administration of such a program was—and still is—very expensive and generally exclusive to private universities. To alleviate those costs, Williams had MSU join an existing group with fourteen to sixteen other larger schools in 1986.

Within the first five years, Williams found it easy to ask other professors of other subjects to allow him to speak to their classes. Through this, he was able to push MSU's recruitment to the top.

~ continued on page 7

**continued from page 6 (FAREWELL, DR. WILLIAMS!)**

However, there were issues. The current London program, though beneficial for all, did not offer MSU credits or say in its proceedings, causing Williams to look at alternative options early on. He approached financial aid and the Vice President at the time, Jesse Rogers, to formulate a plan of action.

"Study abroad has traditionally been a rich-kids' program," he said. "I made a conscious decision to go to the office of financial aid first because I knew that the vast majority of the kids at university couldn't afford the journey."

The turning point came in 2000, two years after the preparation progress began.

"I made the decision that I was ready to do this: I wanted to break away and start a consortium for Midwestern," he said.

To do this, he contacted Tarleton and New Mexico State, which both agreed to join the London program led by Midwestern State. They were later joined by five others. Such membership allows for the university to grow in recognition, on behalf of which Williams was recently approached by what may become the program's ninth university, one that will push the pool of potential student participants to 70,000.

With so many moving parts, he said building the program was "like establishing a small satellite university." Access to food, transportation, and care were all essential, and with so many students, the organization all of that was difficult.

"It's a little tricky," Williams said. At the start, he didn't have any prior background in business or logistics to draw from, learning mostly as he went with the help of Study Abroad Administrative Assistant Dena Hardin and his staff. Even with all those details smoothed out, financial concerns for future development hung overhead.

"We knew we couldn't sustain it because we didn't have any money for long-term scholarship aid," Williams said. "That's where Dr. Howard Farrell came in."

A friend of his for "a million years," Vice President of University Advancement and Public Affairs Howard Farrell approached the Student Government Association with a request to add an "international fee" to tuition. At the passing of the resulting bill, the program was able to survive through funding for students, by students. It grew.

"We started to send a few students to Spain and France through the old consortium," he said. "Again, I became disenchanted because we had no real control, no influence."

In setting up his own program, Williams attempted to ensure the other participating universities didn't feel as he did. He said that universities should act as a team, reviewing the past year and voicing concerns and possible ideas of change for the next. All are allowed to suggest professors and course material. He has also kept the programs' focus on academics, recognizing the danger of becoming an international tour. There have been, so far, very few academic issues, and Williams said he is pleased about that.

Even with these changes, MSU was still dependent on the old program to send language-oriented students abroad. With help from Honors Program Coordinator Juliana Felts, Williams tested the possibility of extending MSU's program to include the same.

Together, Felts and Williams selected the appropriate sites in Spain and France and created a budget, receiving the approval of Provost Betty Stewart to add non-traditional courses for non-language major students.

"She has allowed us to be creative and to offer programs that are unique," said Williams.

The current program has Spanish classes available with emphasis on business, education and healthcare fields. Next year administrators plan to offer one criminal justice course as well. Williams said he sees the knowledge of multiple languages, like a globalized viewpoint, as a marketable skill—one that all students should acquire to put themselves above the competition.

Now, Williams has traveled with his programs all over Europe for twenty years, allowing a thousand students the unique opportunity to do the same and helping award more than \$1 million in scholarships. Now, with his retirement in May quickly approaching, his final week in London this summer takes on new meaning.

"Midwestern is a very good school, they've treated me well. I had a great career here. I've seen more of the world than the vast majority of people ever have a chance to see... I feel honored to be a part of all that. I really have no regrets whatsoever. That's saying a lot."

At the same time, Williams said he feels remorse on behalf of his wife and family.

"I have been gone over four years on the road or in Europe. That's a long time to be away from home, and I miss home," Williams said. "So, when I think about retiring, I think that it is time for somebody like Michael Mills, who is young and bright and full of new ideas and energy, to do it."

He will spend his final days with the program guiding Mills, director of housing and dining services, in the finalization of students' overseas accommodations.

"It is a daunting task—especially for the first time—to make sure that everybody is there, to get everybody in, to get things started," Williams said. "I can't believe it's over."

Mills is happy to take on the challenge.

"Any time I can work with students is important," he said. "I've spent my whole career in student affairs and helping students with their housing issues... [Williams] has built an excellent program. He has taken study abroad from nothing at Midwestern and built it into not only a great program for students, but [something] that should be a strong selling point for this university and I'm just very honored to take over after him."

After leaving London, Williams said he will be content to settle in with his wife and friends in Wichita Falls.

"I never want to go back to Europe. Like I said, I've been doing it for 30 years—that's enough. That's enough for anybody's one lifetime... I wish I had seen parts of South America. I've been to a dozen countries, and been lost in most of them at one time, but I always got found. I've had a lifetime of adventures, enough for me, anyway."

With a gleam in his eye, he mentioned only one other possible journey.

"If I had one [more new] trip, it would be a first-class cabin in Minneapolis on a Mississippi river boat down to New Orleans. I think that would be cool... a first-class Huckleberry Finn trip," he said.

What he sincerely hopes is that his legacy, not his name, will impact students most.

"What I really, firmly believe is that these kids will always remember their time that they went abroad," he said. "It is not about me, it's not about this office: it's about what they will remember, and they absolutely will remember."

*Story written by Serah Welborn, Redwine Honors Program student, and originally published in The Wichitan.*

# HOMECOMING COMPETITION

The Honors Student Committee participated in the annual Homecoming cardboard boat race this year. Here are some photos of the event, from creating the boat in the Honors lounge, to paddling across the lake and ending up drenched once the boat finally sank. Fall 2014 Honors students Luke Saunders and Jake Miller managed to keep it afloat for a good distance!







## FEATURED ALUMNA

Our featured alumna this year is **KAYSI OVERBY**. She graduated from the Honors Program in 2010, and we took a moment to catch up with her to see what she has been doing since she left MSU. Here are the results of our interview with her:

### **What have you been doing since you left MSU?**

After graduating from MSU, I took a year off debating whether or not to pursue a graduate degree. My childhood dream was to become a librarian, so I chose to return to school to pursue a Master of Science in Library Science at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. While pursuing my master's, I began working in Undergraduate Admissions at UNT. During that time, I found so much joy working with college students that although I received my M.S. in Library Science in December 2013, I began pursuing a career in student affairs after graduation. I am currently the Financial Aid Administrator over Customer Service in Student Financial Aid & Scholarships at UNT.

### **What years were you in the Honors Program?**

2006-2010 - all four years of college! I was a Peer Leader the first year Dr. Farris taught the intro class over the theme of the 1960's (my theme was about the book *Guns, Germs, & Steel*).

### **To what extent were you involved in Honors, outside of the Honors courses?**

I was a Peer Leader for the introduction class, an officer for the Honors Program Student Committee for several years, participated in the Honors Symposium, and participated in the Great Plains Honors Conference.

### **What is your favorite Honors Program memory?**

So much of my college experience was wrapped up in the Honors Program that it is hard to separate a favorite memory from my college memories in general! Some of my favorite memories are just from the times I spent hanging out in the Honors Program office in Moffett Library waiting on an afternoon/night class to start. There was also the time a small group of us got "lost" hiking at Fort Richardson (we were never more than 10 minutes away, but we got a bit turned around...) or the Star Party I went to my first year where we were shown how to use different telescopes and really learned just how wide open the skies are here in Texas.

### **What was your favorite Honors course?**

That is a hard choice! My favorite classes were the ones that gave me opportunities outside of my major. For instance, I took an upper level theatre course which was half theatre majors and half Honors students, and I was able to take an ASL/Deaf culture class my last semester.

### **In what way(s) did participating in Honors prepare you for leaving MSU?**

I learned so many things being a part of the Honors Program at MSU! The two things that have probably benefited me the most are the leadership and public speaking skills that I developed during that time. Being a Peer Leader and participating in the Honors Program Student Committee helped me to work as a team with other students and gave me the confidence to participate in the Student Government Association in my later college years. That confidence is also what drove me to apply to graduate school, which ultimately landed me where I am today. Additionally, being a Peer Leader and leading the intro class on occasion, as well as participating in the Honors Program Symposium and the Great Plains Honors Conference, really developed my public speaking skills – skills which helped me reach the position I have today. As Financial Aid Administrator over Customer Service, much of my job involves presenting at DFW area high schools and UNT orientation sessions on a variety of financial aid topics to groups ranging from 20 people to more than 200. Participating in the presentation and leadership opportunities offered through the Honors Program prepared me for life outside MSU in ways that my official classes could not.

### **Do you have any other comments or anecdotes?**

My greatest memories from the Honors Program at MSU are centered on the director of the program during my time, Dr. Mark Farris. I remember parties at the Honors House, like Halloween when he would shave his beard and no one would recognize him until he started talking! He worked so hard to make that program a success, and I remember how fun and caring he was as a person and as a professor. Dr. Farris made the Honors Program that I loved so much, and I will always be grateful for his dedication, compassion, and sense of humor (all those mathematical pie t-shirts...).

# WELCOME NEW BABIES!

**THOMAS WAYNE FELTS** was born January 21, 2015, to proud parents Juliana and Mark Felts. He weighed in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 20.75 inches long. Juliana graduated from the MSU Honors Program in 2003, and she is currently the Coordinator for the program. She and her husband Mark love being parents, and who knows? *Thomas just might be a future Honors Program student!*



**ASHLYN THERESE AND DAVIS MATTHEW** were born on February 13, 2015, to Cindy (Prunte) and Justin McCloskey, who both graduated from the Honors Program in 2009. Justin is currently a Human Resources manager at Luminant's Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant, and Cindy has her hands full staying home with the twins. They live in Keller, TX. *Welcome, sweet Ashlyn and Davis!*

## WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES MINOR TO BE OFFICIAL IN THE FALL



**KRISTEN GARRISON** and **LINDA VEAZEY** are pictured here giving a talk on feminism to a group of Honors students at a Brown Bag session in spring 2015

*Honors professor Dr. Linda Veazey is the coordinator for the new women's and gender studies minor. She first offered "Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies" as an Honors course in spring 2014.*

History is in the making at MSU with its first female president, **Dr. Suzanne Shipley**, waiting to take the helm Aug. 8, and starting in the fall, students will be able to declare a minor in women's and gender studies.

Of the 29 member institutions on the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges, 24 have programs on women's and gender studies. Now there will be 25.

Linda Veazey, Assistant Professor of Political Science and program coordinator for the new minor said she is excited to be part of bringing it to the university.

"It's something we've seen an interest in from our students, and I know that several members of the faculty teach classes on gender across campus," Veazey said. "So it seemed like the right thing to do, for us to try and put them together so that students could take a variety of classes that are gender focused, but take them in a variety of disciplines."

Veazey said the minor is unique because it offers classes from many of the colleges on campus, ranging from criminal justice, history, nursing, philosophy, sociology and English.

"There are political scientists, like me, who study gender, just as there are people who work on women's literature, or gender and sexuality in literature, history, mass communication and even healthcare," Veazey said. "We find gender studies in multiple disciplines. It makes sense to put this together, so that people who have an interest here can really explore their interests in learning about gender through different classes, which is one thing that makes a liberal arts college great."

Veazey said studying gender could be beneficial to any student, man or woman.

"Our lives are organized around gender, and we don't even notice it most of the time, it seems invisible," Veazey said. "So part of what gender studies does is to try to make that visible, and think about how society is different, and what kind of effects does it have when the thing we are focusing on is gender? Or if we're talking about women's rights, does that give us a different answer than if we are just talking about issues that affect men, or people? If it does, then that gives something else to talk about, to think about."

MSU offers a Feminist Philosophy class co-taught by Nathan Jun, Associate Professor of Philosophy, and Lucy Schultz, Assistant Professor of Philosophy.

"It helps that the course is being team-taught by both a man and a woman. It challenges the idea that feminism is an exclusively female discourse," Jun said. "It makes clear that men can be feminists as well. Feminism is a way of looking at the world. Although it pertains chiefly to the experiences of women, it also deals with how men relate to women. To that extent, it's a discourse that always and already includes men, whether they know it or not."

Of the 18 hours required for the minor, the only required course is Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies, taught by Veazey, an honors course first offered in spring 2014. There were 22 students in the class in the spring 2015 semester, and starting next spring, it will be offered as part of the core curriculum.

"After the one core class, students would need five more classes to fulfill the minor. Out of the five remaining classes, four of those courses have to be upper division classes, 3000 or 4000 level."

*~ continued on page 11*

Veazey said this will also give students another opportunity to take upper-level classes, because they are required a certain number in the advanced category to graduate.

"Sometimes students get near the end and realize they need a few more classes, so I made sure to construct the minor to be helpful," Veazey said.

The remaining classes in the minor are going to be drawn from a variety of subjects, and there are courses already on the books that can count, Veazey said.

"And now, there might be more classes created in the future to count for students wanting the women's and gender studies minor," Veazey said. "The goal is to have classes in gender taught every semester for students, to be able to count, but also so that they can be taken within a variety of fields. We all work in different disciplines, but we are also a part of this larger discipline of women's and gender studies. That's really the legacy of these programs, they allow students to explore this topic of gender in all kinds of different fields, because it's everywhere, and that's where it should be."

In addition, Veazey said this new program is modeled on the minor at the University of Houston, which started as a core class. Veazey was a postdoctoral fellow in their women's and gender studies program before she came to MSU.

"They are a much bigger school, but they now have a major in gender studies," Veazey said. "So I am really excited that MSU is working on this. We have had a lot of interest from students, and I'm hoping that in a couple of years, we'll have our first minor to graduate."

And that student just might be Honors student Andrea Mendoza Lespron, English junior, who said she is considering declaring the minor in the fall and was enrolled in Veazey's honors course in spring 2015.

"I really want to work with children and women," Mendoza said. "I had a political science class last semester and my project was about maternity leave and that made me really involved in wanting to have better working policies for women."

Mendoza is originally from Guadalajara, Mexico. This is only her second year living in the United States since she got her letter in the mail from MSU.

"There are some good things and bad things," Mendoza said. "For example, Mexico has paid maternity leave, and they don't have it here. I was really surprised by that."

Along with the students, members of the faculty are looking forward to the prospect of the new minor.

"Considering our liberal arts mission, the fact we now have a women's and gender studies minor is awesome," said Todd Giles, assistant professor of English. "It's 20 years behind the times, but thank goodness we finally have one. I'm really excited about it."

Giles teaches Postfeminist Theory and Contemporary Experimental American Women's Literature that will fit within the minor.

"I make a real effort to stray away from the dead white guy canon of American Literature," Giles said. "All of my classes, whether it is freshman comp, an American survey, or an upper level class, I am always very conscientious to include female writers, African-American writers, Native-American writers, gay and lesbian writers. I make a real effort to do that. It's important that this stuff be taught, for me it's a no-brainer."

Giles said MSU is experiencing a sort of intellectual renaissance.

"Schools like Midwestern State are now, because of the economy, able to hire people like Lucy Schultz, Nathan Jun, Kirsten Lodge," Giles said. "It's a real renaissance because we are bringing things to this campus that have never existed here before. It's exciting for us, and I think it's exciting for students too."

Last semester Giles taught MSU's first environmental literature class, called Eco Criticism, a relatively new theory in the liberal arts.

"It's really important that as an institution we embrace courses like Veazey's gender studies this semester, or Jun and Schultz's feminist philosophy, because that's what the humanities and liberal arts are all about," Giles said. "It's about diversity, critical thinking, it's about challenging pre-conceived notions of truth, and right and wrong. I'm excited that we have this, it's a big deal."

Jun agrees, he said the time is right for the introduction of the new minor.

"There seems to be a lot of interest on campus right now on issues related to gender," Jun said. "These classes being offered now are responding to a demand. As opposed to trying to generate a demand, which is the way it used to be."

In addition, Jun said that this program is long overdue.

"That's one area in which MSU has been really behind the times, I'm really glad that were catching up on that particular score," Jun said. "I was involved in a similar proposal three or four years ago that really didn't go anywhere. So I'm glad to see that Dr. Veazey has been able to bring something to fruition."

Jun said he sees evidence of growing interest regarding feminism in the feminist philosophy class.

"I really appreciate it when students are able to connect what we are talking about with their own personal experiences, which happens a lot," Jun said. "Some of the material can be kind of abstract and theoretical until students are able to apply it to their own experiences, then it clicks, and those make for the most interesting discussions."

Jun said there were some students that came into the course already committed to feminism on some level. But those that were just curious about it initially, were interesting to watch evolve.

"They are getting it," Jun said. "It's very satisfying."

The feminist philosophy class is mostly female, but Jun said there are three males enrolled.

"But they are really open to it, and have interesting contributions to make from a male perspective," Jun said. "They're definitely not throwing a wrench into the works. They are adding richness to the discussions by bringing their own perspectives to bear."

"The new women's and gender studies minor opens a door for students that want to explore the topic, but for the foreseeable future there will still be backlashes," Jun said.

"But that's actually a sign of health. There wouldn't be a backlash if feminism were not gaining ground, particularly among men. Feminist discourse is having an impact on the way that men think of themselves, in this culture, as men. And that's a very good thing. But then there are also, sadly, men who tend to think of feminism as some kind of like existential threat to their masculinity... I think that perspective is losing ground. And these classes are attracting students, there is a real interest there."

*Story written by Kristina Abeyta and originally published in The Wichitan.*

# HONORS FUN FACTS FROM SPRING 2015

## 56 TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE HONORS PROGRAM

40 students from Texas

1 student from Illinois

1 student from Michigan

1 student from Oklahoma

1 student from Virginia

### 12 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

1 from Antigua

2 from Dominica

3 from Grenada

2 from St Lucia

1 from Sri Lanka

1 from Mexico

2 from Nigeria

## MSU Alumni Association Outstanding Honors Program Students

<i>Cody Cole</i> .....1994	<i>Jennifer Veitenheimer</i> .....2000	<i>Jonathan Abel</i> .....2008
<i>Chandra Rodgers</i> .....1994	<i>Jeffrey (Mark) Fleming</i> .....2001	<i>Chelsea Humphrey</i> .....2009
<i>Melissa Miller</i> .....1995	<i>Nyian Farrell</i> .....2002	<i>Liam Guthrie</i> .....2010
<i>Paul (Andrew) Fleming</i> .....1995	<i>Shonna Diggs</i> .....2003	<i>Ashley Gravelle</i> .....2011
<i>Jamie Benefield</i> .....1996	<i>Adam McMahan</i> .....2004	<i>Kyle Christian</i> .....2012
<i>Jason Lawrence</i> .....1997	<i>Marie Ibarra</i> .....2005	<i>Kistel Hazel</i> .....2013
<i>Paul Mussachio</i> .....1998	<i>Laura Rachael Kair</i> .....2006	<i>Emily Baudot</i> .....2014
<i>Danielle Roney</i> .....1999	<i>Erin Kathleen Short</i> .....2007	<i>Joseph Hadwal</i> .....2015



In Memoriam of Erin Kathleen (Short) Schrick,  
2007 Outstanding Honors Program Student  
January 1987-November 2014