Twenty UMass Lowell Honors College Students Study Abroad

This past summer 20 Honors College students, led by Honors professors Sean Conway and Julian Zabalbeascoa, traveled to Spain where they lived in the coastal city of San Sebastian for three weeks, studying Spanish and immersing themselves in the history and culture of the region.

The two Honors professors eschewed conventional classrooms and instead held class throughout the city, near beaches, and on hilltops, using San Sebastian not only as their article of study but also as the backdrop to their lectures.

“While reading and researching about other cultures should not be dismissed,” Honors student Kathleen Cameron, a nursing major, said, “the only way to truly learn about a culture and its people is to live how they live.”

During those weeks the summer sun did its daily loop around the sky, setting for only several hours, the students visited local museums, a txakoli winery, the city of Balboa and its Guggenheim museum; experienced a pintxo-tasting tour of San Sebastian’s old town; were invited to one of the city’s oldest cooking societies where they were given a Basque cooking demonstration, and, among many other activities, given a tour of a cider house in the Basque countryside.

“We crammed in much more than three weeks’ worth of experiences,” Music Studies major Eric Miller said. “What I experienced in Spain could’ve otherwise fit into a whole semester, maybe even two, back home.”

It was a sentiment echoed by Music Business major Rachel Driscoll. “The classes,” she said, “gave me the knowledge needed to take San Sebastian on in my own unique way…. [I was] able to look at myself through a different lens, lose myself, and ultimately find myself.”

Professors Conway and Zabalbeascoa are excited to be taking another group of Honors students to San Sebastian this July and are just as eager to hear about the international adventures their former students embark on next.

“As corny as it sounds,” Sophomore Leighton Moylan said, “this trip did in fact change my life. I’m definitely a different person now than I was before I went to San Sebastian. I met some amazing people and formed some really close bonds, I had an overall incredible, amazing, game-changing experience. And my favorite part is that it’s just the beginning. This is merely the first chapter in a whole novel of possibilities. The adventures are out there to be had; now I just have to go find them.”

“The best education can smother if the burden of it is to tell the young that they need not bother being young, to distract them from discovering the pleasures of their own brilliance, and to persuade them that basic humanity is an experience closed to them.”

– Marilynne Robinson

“When all is said and done, nothing is more valuable than the knowledge and experience that can be taken away from a trip like this. I will say once again how grateful, privileged, and proud that I am to have been a part of such a fantastic study abroad experience, and how I hope that this “travel bug” is never satisfied.” — Honors Student, Kathleen Cameron

iRobot Hires Honors College Alumni Jacob Kinsman

Fabiane Kelley Earns Commonwealth Honors—Twice!

Honors College Students Give $10,000 to Three Lowell Non-Profits

Winter 2016
iRobot Hires Honors College Alumni Jake Kinsman and Intern Kevin Dibble

Burlington native, Jacob Kinsman, Loves His New Full-Time Job! Westford native, Kevin Dibble, Loves his internship too!

The Honors College celebrates Jacob Kinsman and Kevin Dibble. We also celebrate iRobot as they hired Jacob as a full-time employee and Kevin as a 6-month student intern.

In May 2015, Jacob graduated with a degree in Computer Science and he also earned Commonwealth Honors. His Honors Project was entitled: Symbolic Regression via Pareto Genetic Programming.

Jake’s manager, iRobot’s David McSweeney, commented:

“It’s been nothing short of wonderful to have Jake on our team. Jake embodies the qualities that every manager enjoys; he is smart, thorough, conscientious, and kind. He quickly came up to speed on a project with complex components, and quickly became the “go to” person on two important subsystems for one of our next generation robots under development. We have every confidence that he will continue to grow into a highly valued contributor.”

Kevin, a junior Computer Science major who is in the Honors College, took full-advantage of UMass Lowell’s Professional Co-op program as he has been a full-time, paid intern for iRobot since June 2015. He will return back to UMass Lowell as a full-time student in January. Kevin says, “I have had fulfilling and meaningful work, the iRobot work environment is great and I like my co-workers. I am being challenged and I am learning an awful lot.”

Briannah Larsen and Kelsey Henderson Each Awarded $1,000 Honors College Reading Fellowships

Two business majors stretch and enrich their education beyond the classroom

Two honors marketing majors and an English professor with specialties in African and American literature now share a love of Toni Morrison novels. Kelsey Henderson (Chelmsford, MA) first heard about the Toni Morrison Honors Fellowship during a visit to the UMass Lowell Honors College.

“This one stuck out the most because I love reading,” Kelsey explained. Briannah Larsen (Boothen, NJ) was looking for a way to cut the cost of higher education.

Both students eagerly await their meetings with Professor Keith Mitchell to discuss the assigned reading.

“Toni Morrison has written some of the most beautiful, powerful and interesting books,” Briannah said. “I want to be inspired by her writing as much as I can.”

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Learning By Giving Foundation Funds UMass Lowell Honors Course

In September, fifteen Honors College students enrolled in the honors seminar: HON 3200 Experiencing Philanthropy and met Dr. Nancy Lippe for the first time. From there, Dr. Lippe taught the students how to evaluate non-profits and how to reflect upon their own values for giving. Students then visited many non-profits throughout Lowell and decided amongst themselves to spread the $10,000 across three awards:

- Lowell Boys and Girls Club: $4,000
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Lowell: $3,500
- Lowell High School’s Project Learn: $2,500

The $10,000 was donated to the course by the Learning By Giving Foundation. “We hope to run this course every fall semester.”, said Dean Jim Canning. “It has become an important Honors College tradition.”

UMass Lowell Library Fellowships Enrich Honors Students

Chelmsford native, Alyssa Soucy, Becomes a Change Agent

Last spring, Alyssa Soucy, an Environmental Science major, was one of 10 Honors College students to receive a $1,000 Honors College Library Fellowship.

Library fellowships are awarded to students so they can engage in a meaningful project for 100 hours with a librarian or faculty member who provides one-on-one, personalized guidance. For her project, Alyssa created a “libguide website” that provides environmental science majors with convenient access to the record of human knowledge within their discipline.

Library Director George Hart, was so impressed with Alyssa’s work that they hired her over the summer and again this fall semester to implement a number of other projects. “Alyssa is doing important work for our campus,” noted George Hart. “She is a wonderful example of how honors students on campus serve as change agents. They are not simply consumers of information, but rather they are actively creating a better university.”

30 Honors Students were treated like royalty when Cognition Corporation had an open house just for them! They got to meet the boss.

This academic year, eight more Honors Students received $1,000 Fellowships:

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UMass Lowell Honors College Awards 41 Student Fellowships

Corporate, individual, and administration support combine to bring 41 students and their faculty mentors together. Each student receives $1,000.

We celebrate Rebecca Campelli (Chelmsford, MA) and English Professor, Dr. Diana Archibald, (right photo) for going the extra mile. Rebecca is an Honors College Fellow who will earn $1,000 to carefully read novels written by Charles Dickens. She is not doing this in isolation. Rebecca has Dr. Archibald, an international expert on Charles Dickens, as her mentor. In total, the Computer Science major will read, analyze, and discuss Dickens, in depth, for 100 hours. This activity is being done outside of the formal classroom. In essence, Rebecca is being paid to read while a faculty mentor guides her progress. Archibald enthused, “It’s been fun to see the novel through her eyes.” Three other Honors College fellows are:

• Music Major Martha Robertson (Boston, MA) is being guided by Dr. Elissa Johnson Green as they bring music alive in Lowell playgrounds.

• English major Melanie Taylor Case (Lakeville, MA) received an Honors College Fellowship to work on her novel. Professor and novelist Andres Dubus is Melanie’s mentor.

• Exercise Physiology major Kayla Chan (Newton, MA) is working with Dr. Winnie Wu to improve the mobility of upper extremity joints in stroke victims.

First year Chemical Engineering Honors College Student Fellow, Nermin Ibreljic (Revere, MA), together with his faculty mentor, Dr. Sanjeev Manohar. Nermin is learning how to form specialized graphene membranes to cost-effectively de-salinate salt water. He is doing this paid laboratory work outside of the classroom and will be presenting the results of his research at the end of the year UMass Lowell Research Symposium.

“This has been a great opportunity to learn from professional research scientists.”

-Nermin Ibreljic

Each Honors College Student Fellow will:

• Earn $1,000 for 100 hours of research, creative work, or focused reading.
• Be mentored by a faculty member or a librarian.
• Present either a poster or a paper at the UMass Lowell Research Symposium.
• Strengthen important academic skills.
• Be stretched and enriched.

Thank You!

The following corporations, individuals, and UMass Lowell administrative units, enabled one or more honors students to be FY16 Honors College Student Fellows.

iRobot
James Canning
Progress Software
Marina Whittier
Mercury Systems
George Hart
Airtrans Logistics
Robert Innis
UMass Lowell Provost Office

UMass College of FAHSS
Andrew Ambrosino
R. Eugene Mellican
UMass Lowell
Honors College
Eric Sheldon
David and Lauren Cronin
Balasubramanian Family
Ahmed Abdelal
Zounds Westford

Want to learn about the UMass Lowell Honors College?
Send an email to James_Canning@uml.edu and include the phrase: “Jim, I’m In.”
You will be added to our growing Honors College email list.