

2020 ARETĒ

Aretē is the classical Greek word for “excellence” or “virtue.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 By the Numbers
- 2 The Honors Experience
- 3 Mentoring Program
- 4 Student Research
- 5 Honors Events
- 6 Great Plains Honors Council
- 7 Discovering Urbino

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@Tarleton Honors



TARLETON
STATE UNIVERSITY
Honors College

Freshmen By the Numbers

Student Statistics 2019:

72% Female

28% Male

11% First Generation

Top 3 Majors:

Interdisciplinary Studies 18%

Pre-Nursing 12%

Biomedical Sciences 11%

By Program:

20 Presidential Honors

294 Honors Core

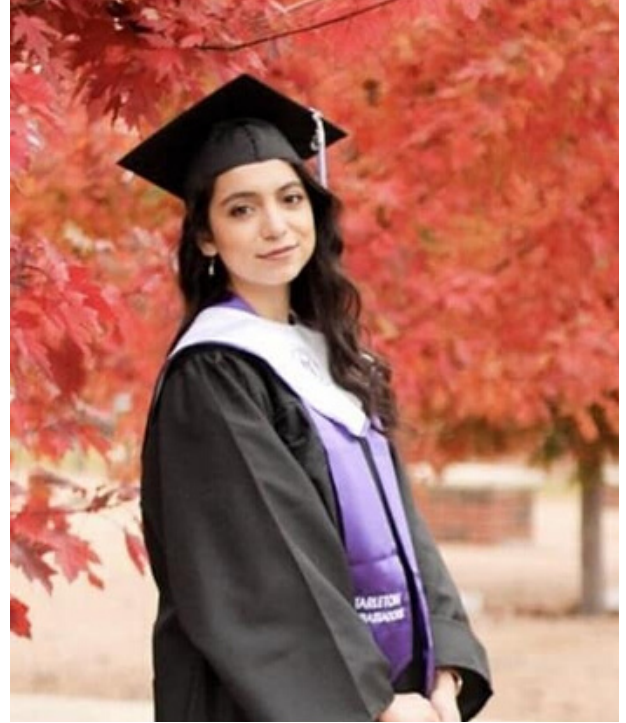
314 Total Freshmen

The Honors Experience

Victoria Villaseñor

"I honestly don't know what kind of student I would be had I not had the opportunity to complete my undergraduate degree as a Presidential Honors student. The process throughout these past three and a half years has been a fluctuating uphill trudge.

Academically and personally, I've learned to turn myself inside out and transform my understanding of the world and my place in it. I've learned to trust myself because I am solely accountable for my successes and shortcomings. And shortcomings do not constitute failure or stupidity, they are opportunities to improve yourself and build a resistance to the many bumps in the road that I am bound to face in life. Much like creating a sculpture from a block of marble: the process is messy, the movements can be brutal,



and the tiniest details can sometimes take hours to perfect. But the finished product is sturdy and what makes it beautiful is all of the hard work and dedication that was put into it. Education is a trying process, but the self reliance, the confidence and the strength that results from years of intense exercise is what makes me feel good about myself. I don't know that I would have had this experience had my journey not been aided by the Honors College and the faculty and staff who have worked to helped me refine my ambition."

*Madison
Barczi*



The mentor program was started in Fall 2018 to help incoming freshman transition into college as smoothly as possible. The program is focused on academic success since a common trend throughout many college freshman is their unrefined study skills. Since the implementation of the mentor program, the retention rate in the Honors College has increased significantly. Incoming freshman are sorted into groups based on major and assigned to a current honors student who has the same or similar major.

The mentors are in charge of setting up biweekly study sessions where they can help the mentees with classes they may be struggling with or simply creating a comfortable study environment. While the program is academically focused, there are also social events held throughout the course of the year as rewards, breaks from studying, and catching up with friends. As a returning mentor myself, the program has given me many opportunities to meet new people and make lasting relationships with those around me.

*Honors Mentor
2018-2020*



BACTERIOPHAGE ISOLATION

BY GABRIELLE SPOTZ

Student Research

In the Fall 2019 semester, Gabrielle Spatz and Skyler Adams, both honors students, participated in the international research project on virus isolation of bacteriophages. Bacteriophages are viruses able to infect bacteria and bacteria only; they have the potential to become the next generation of treatment for antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections, which are a rising problem in the field of medicine.

The Phage Discovery Program at Tarleton State University is part of the SEA-PHAGES national collaboration in bacteriophage genomics. This project is together administrated by the Science Education Alliance group within the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), and Dr. Graham Hatfull and team at the University of Pittsburgh. The program consists of a two-semester set of discovery-based undergraduate research courses:

Virus Isolation and Bioinformatics. Spatz, Adams, and other fellow researchers during the Special Topics Virus Isolation course collected soil or water samples and brought them back to the lab. Spatz and Adams had luck finding one particular phage in Spatz's front-yard in a small ant hill. They named their phage Mr. Fizzles. Both students used direct isolation technique in the lab to isolate this bacteriophage from the soil sample. Next, the viruses were further isolated by serial dilutions followed by plaque assays. After isolating Mr. Fizzles, Spatz and Adams amplified the phage to a high virus titer. Following the amplification process, both students were ready to characterize their phages by using a transmission electron microscope to view their phage and determine its morphology.



They extracted viral DNA and performed genetic analysis. Mr. Fizzles and some other phages turned out to be of high quality and quantity and were thus sent off to the Pittsburgh Bacteriophage Institute for next-gen whole genome sequencing. The research group is now in the waiting process for these results. In the 2020 Spring semester, the research group continued to annotate the whole genome of the sequenced viruses in the Special Topics Bioinformatics course. I would recommend this course to any student interested in biology or medicine.

A big thank you to Dr. Edwards and Faith Cox who helped each and every student grow in their research methods and discovery. Another thank you to Tarleton State University for supplying students with this incredible opportunity.

Honors Events

Bass Hall

Grant Nickles This year for the Honors College trip to Bass Hall in Fort Worth, the symphony performed selections from Mozart and Dvořák. I participated in a pre-show lecture to learn about the selections being performed. The lecturer discussed and played excerpts of the music we would be hearing in the show. One thing that stood out to me in the lecture was Dvořák's background. The lecturer explained how Dvořák wanted to express the political unrest of the Czech Republic through his music, and how he desperately wanted to establish the Czech music identity in concert halls around the world. This really resonated once I heard how strong and unique his pieces were. The concert portion was split into two portions, 30 minutes for Mozart and 35 minutes for Dvořák, separated by an interlude. The selection of Mozart played was his Piano Concerto in D minor, which featured a cadenza, which is a portion where the pianist gets to show off and do a solo. The piano flowed well with the other instruments in the rest of Mozart as well. Dvořák's selection was his Symphony No. 7 in D minor. In my opinion, Dvořák's piece was much more powerful than Mozart's. The sounds flowing together hit me immediately and kept my attention all the way through. Overall this was an incredible experience and I would highly encourage other students to participate in this opportunity.

Honors Degree Program students are required to attend a minimum of one educational enrichment activity each semester of their first two years of college. The Honors College hosts several educational enrichment activities each semester and many students choose to attend more than one.



Alumni Day speakers 2019

Alumni Day Savannah Henderson

Alumni Day is always one of my favorite honors events to attend annually. This year, in particular, was especially exciting for me, because one of the alumni speakers, Adam Smith, was a corporate accountant. Accounting happens to be one of my minors, which is why I took interest. It was super interesting to listen to him talk about his experiences in his line of work. Afterward, at the reception,

I took the time to talk with him further about what being an accountant is really like, and the educational steps required to get where he is today. This is something I would not have gotten to experience if the Honors College didn't have this event. These networking opportunities offered through Alumni Day, and the Honors College in general, are something that I really value and treasure as part of my college experience.

Ally Johnson

The Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC) boosted my confidence, not only as an individual, but as a student who is representing their school and presenting research. Attending the conference allowed me to see that I am no longer just a college student, but someone who is bringing awareness to my topic of research. It was encouraging to see so many students presenting their research over topics such as: a deep analysis on a book, the correlation between moods and music types, scientific research over malaria. The academia of this convention raised my expectations for myself and other students around me. I encourage students to put forth the effort to participate in the Great Plains Honors Council and witness how students are making progress in their academic careers by putting themselves and their research out there.



Great Plains Honors Council

Dr. Trina Geye

The GPHC is a regional organization for institutes of higher education with honors programs. The annual conference serves as a platform for students to share their scholarly work with one another and to spend time visiting with students from across the region. In 2018, Ms. Cryer and I attended the annual conference hosted by Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, and we quickly realized that this was an opportunity we needed to offer Tarleton students. As a first step, I adjusted the required research project for my Honors General Psychology courses to align with the application requirements for poster and talk submissions. In 2019, one student (Ally Johnson) chose to apply and was accepted to present at GPHC. This year, we are taking eight students, six of whom were in my course last Fall. I have provided them with an example poster and guidance on adapting their papers to that format, and we will meet for a workshop. We also plan to schedule a showcase in order for the Honors College to see their work and to give the students attending GPHC an opportunity to practice. Many of the students in the Honors College will be working on research projects with faculty and will ultimately attend graduate school. Taking advantage of opportunities such as this early on will prepare them for discipline specific conference attendance and presentation later on.

Discovering Urbino

"I wouldn't call Urbino Study Abroad a trip, because it is so much more. My experience in Urbino was one that changed not only my perspective on the world, but the appreciation I have for just breathing every day.



I was able to encounter love, kindness, and new friendships that I wouldn't have been able to if it wasn't for this opportunity. Through the study-abroad program, I gained knowledge and admiration for the Italian culture, language, and history that would otherwise have been just words on a page.



I encourage other students to go, and have their eyes opened by the beauty of the Italian culture, and make memories that only a few are given the chance to make."

Ally Johnson

