



Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Cook Honors College Annual Report

July 2022 –June 2023

Submitted to
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Provost and
Vice President of
Academic Affairs

Report Editor: Dr. Chauna Craig, Director

Credits for cover photos:

1. Student presenters Estefani Sanchez Fonseca, Magali Ortiz-Ayllon, Jorge Tapia Becerril, and Milady Lagunas at the national NCHC conference in Dallas, November 2022 (Chauna Craig)
2. Renallan Neckles, winner of an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship (IUP news story)
3. CHC Alumni Gathering in Pittsburgh, March 2023 (Chauna Craig)
4. Spring Break Sailing Trip in the Florida Keys, March 2023 (Ken Sherwood)

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College Mission, Vision, and Values

The Cook Honors College at Indiana University of Pennsylvania enrolled its first class of scholars in 1996 and has always focused on a mission of facilitating excellence in academic achievement and community service/engagement in students (especially first-generation college students) most likely to thrive in a program with small, seminar-style classes centered in critical inquiry and creative thinking.

OUR MISSION

To recruit, retain, and engage high-performing and high-potential students within a diverse community of scholars, and to inspire students to become effective leaders on campus and in their major fields and future careers.

OUR VISION

To be recognized locally, regionally, and nationally as a home for a diverse community of scholars and creative, critical thinkers and a leader in honors education and student engagement.

OUR VALUES

The Cook Honors College is committed to cultivating a scholarly community that values accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion. We strive to create and actively promote a welcoming and supportive environment where diverse perspectives and identities are encouraged, recognized, and respected.

Organizational Structure

The Cook Honors College (CHC) is staffed by 1) a faculty director, Dr. Chauna Craig, with half-time administrative release who reports to the Provost and is part of Academic Council, 2) a full-time associate director, Kevin Berezansky, and 3) a full-time administrative assistant, Lisa Halmes. The staff in these positions are affiliated with three different unions at IUP—APSCUF, SCUPA, and AFSCME—and together coordinate and support the recruitment, retention, and overall success of all students in the CHC.

Faculty assigned to teach in the honors college meet weekly during the semester and serve as the Honors Committee to discuss, debate, and vote on all aspects of the curriculum. Our admissions committee, composed of the director and associate director, two to three faculty, and two to three

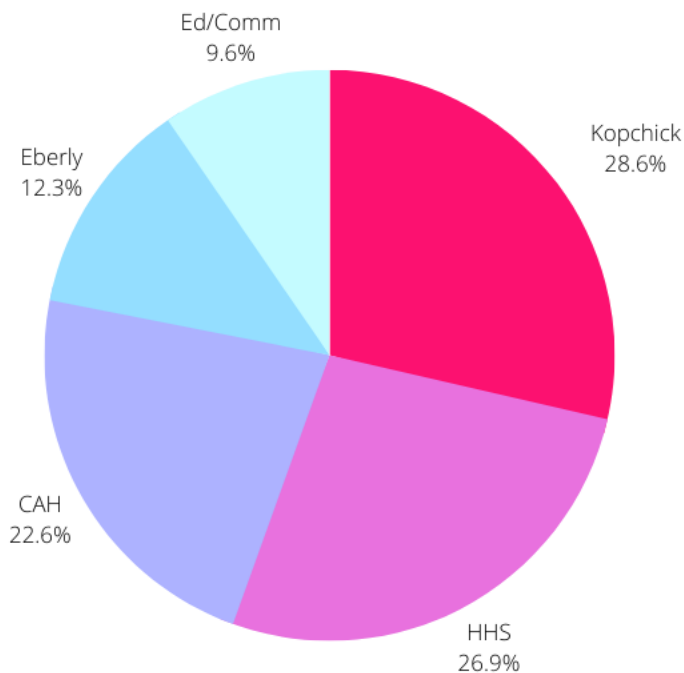
current students, meets weekly to review applications and assign holistic ratings drawn from multiple measures, including short and long essays, transcripts, etc.

Additionally, a student-elected Honors Executive Board of eight (two for each class year) works with the staff to plan and develop community-building events such as Fall Fest, Nerd Prom, service activities, etc.

Student Profile

Colleges and Majors

We aim for an incoming class of around 100 new students each fall, maintaining a college-wide enrollment after attrition of around 370. These students represent a wide range of majors from every college within IUP. In spring 2023, our students were affiliated with majors in these colleges:



Fall 2022 Cohort Demographics

Entering number of new first-year honors students: 105
High school GPA: 50.4% have a 4.0 or higher weighted GPA
Gender ratio: 74.3% female/24.8% male and <1% nonbinary
In-state 96.2% (plus 4 students total from Illinois, New Jersey, the Netherlands, and India)

Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity

Asian: 4 [3.8 %]
Black: 7 [6.7%]
Hispanic: 13 [12.4%]
American Indian: 2 [1.9%]
Multi: 4 [3.8%]
White, Non-Hispanic: 75 [71.4%]

Total Underrepresented Minority Students: 30 [**28.6%**]
White: 75 [**71.4%**]

Preliminary Fall 2023 Cohort Demographics (last updated on 5/31/23)

Entering number of new honors students: 107
High school GPA: 57% have a 4.0 or higher weighted GPA
Gender ratio: 65.4% female/ 33.6% male and <1% nonbinary
In-state 88.5% (plus two students from Maryland and one each from Ohio, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Texas, North Carolina, Denmark, Germany, and England)

Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity

Asian: 0 [0%]
Black: 4 [3.7%]
Hispanic: 13 [12.1%]
American Indian: 1 [<1%]
Multi: 2 [<2%]
White: 87 [81.3%]

Total Underrepresented Minority Students: 20 [**18.7%**]
White: 87 [**81.3%**]

Academic Excellence

Student Research and Competitive Awards and Honors

- **Renallan Neckles** (Environmental Engineering, '23) was selected for a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Neckles will continue his studies through the Fellowship at Rice University in Texas, where he has been admitted into the master of science environmental engineering program. From an applicant pool of over 12,000 students, fewer than 15 percent of applicants nationwide are selected for this award, which supports students working to earn a research-based masters or a PhD in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) field. The award provides three years of financial support within a five-year period which includes a stipend of \$37,000 along with a \$12,000 cost of education allowance for tuition and fees.
- **Caio Gomes** (Political Science, '24) is one of 20 students selected from a pool of more than 1,500 applicants for the 2023 TRIALS program at NYU. TRIALS is a five-week summer residency program at New York University, cosponsored by NYU Law School, Harvard Law, and Advantage Testing Foundation. The program is designed to support and help prepare students of underrepresented backgrounds to be competitive for admission to top law schools.
- **Shari Hoch** (Mathematics, '25) was one of nine college students accepted into a National Science Foundation-sponsored REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) hosted this summer at Bryn Mawr College. The MathILy-EST program is an eight-week intensive summer research experience for students who “excelled in inquiry-based learning classes” and “want to try research in mathematics but are too early in [their] college career to have the formal prerequisites that most research programs require.”
- **Victoria Alao** (Biology, '25) was accepted into the Summer Premedical Academic Enrichment Program at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. The rigorous program involves seven weeks of MedBio and Med English courses covering topics in science, scientific writing, and public speaking. The program aims to support students from groups typically underrepresented in the field of medicine.
- **Sarah Brandle** (Theatre/Musical Theatre and History, '25) presented her paper, "Mengele Twin Demonstrates the Power in Forgiving" at the Northeast Regional Honors Council conference in Pittsburgh in late March.
- **Jorge Tapia Becerril** (Political Science, '23), **Milady Lagunas** (Political Science, '24), **Estefani Sanchez Fonseca** (Political Science, '23), and **Magali Ortiz-Ayllon** (Early Childhood Education, '24) presented a panel, “Centering (Our) Community: Student Initiatives toward Recruiting and Retaining Latinx Students,” at the annual conference of the National Collegiate Honors Council in Dallas, Texas. They also participated in an all-day service project at a Fort Worth elementary school, where Milady was interviewed by the local news.
- Several CHC students received recognition at the 2023 Scholars Forum Undergraduate Research Symposium:
 - A. **Wyatt Skaugen** ('26) CAH Dean’s Award “Modern Theism: An Investigation Into the Existence of a Universal Creator Entity, Moral Laws, and the

Consequences of the Existence of Such Things,” which emerged from an honors core class with Dr. Michael Schwartz

- B. **Maria Balega** ('23) KSNM Dean's Award, along with two other students, for “Development of IoT Test Bed to Assess IoT Security Using Machine Learning”
- C. 14 other awards went to CHC students including Outstanding Poster, Outstanding Oral presentation, etc.
- Six CHC students were awarded competitive stipends to participate in U-SOAR in summer 2023
- **Taylor Burkholder** (Disability Services, '26) received the 2022-23 Ray Coppler Disability Awareness Award at IUP. She is the first first-year student to receive this honor.

Experiential Learning: Achievement Fund Opportunities

The Cook Achievement Fund provides financial support to help honors students take advantage of research and internship opportunities and, especially, to learn in new locations, nationally and internationally. The following experiences were supported in part by the Achievement Fund:

Honors Faculty-Led Programs

Spring Break 2023, Florida Keys

Five honors students along with CHC faculty mentor, Dr. Ken Sherwood, spent spring break on a sailboat in the Florida Keys. The goals of the non-credit experience were nautical and social. The journey involved personal and team-building challenges – working with peers to operate the boat (hoisting sails, navigating, keeping a watch schedule, and cooking on board) – and immersion in the maritime history and ecology of the Florida Gulf Coast. Dr. Sherwood had spent his sabbatical in Spring 2020 planning such an experiential educational trip and was pleased to be able to offer it.

Summer 2023, Iceland

Ten students from ten different majors are taking HNRC 481: Iceland, Land of Fire and Ice, to be co-taught by Dr. Craig and Dr. Nicholas Deardorff (Geoscience) on site in Iceland, July 11-23. The interdisciplinary course will focus on sustainability, emphasizing how Iceland's specific history, culture, and geography impacts its policies and practices. We will tour geothermal greenhouses and power plants, national museums in Reykjavik, and the glacial and lava fields of southern Iceland.

Additional Study Abroad and Internship Experiences

From July 2022 to June 2023, the Cook Achievement Fund helped support honors students studying abroad, doing internships, and/or performing research in the following countries: Amsterdam, Australia, Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, France, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Additionally, students were assisted to complete

internship programs in Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., and at Johns Hopkins University, and to present research at conferences in Denver, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Dallas, and Atlanta.

Student Civic Engagement and Community Outreach

- SGA President Abigail Hancox (PLSC, '25) was confirmed as a student member of the PASSHE Board of Governors, on which she will serve until graduation.
- Shagufta Haque (Economics/Finance, '25) was selected to serve as a student trustee on the IUP Council of Trustees. She replaces CHC student Maura King, who graduated this spring.
- Cook Honors Students active in the 22-23 AY logged 13,800 community service hours. These volunteer hours ranged from individual commitments to community organizations to events planned by the university on or off campus for which students volunteered their time and represented the university.

Student Successes Post-Graduation

Employers of recent graduates (sample):

PNC Financial Services, PNC Bank of Pittsburgh, First Commonwealth Bank, Diamond Drugs, Walter Reed Medical Center, Forbes Hospital, J.P. Morgan, Towson University, numerous school districts in Pennsylvania and surrounding states, DHL Supply Chain,

Graduate programs enrolling recent graduates (sample):

University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon, IUP, LaSalle University, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, Valdosta State, Arizona State, Rice University, Widener University Law School, Duquesne Law School, SUNY, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Alumni Awards

Stephanie Perkovich Kline ('07, M '13) won a Young Alumni Award from the Eberly College of Business in Fall 2022.

Maddison Hendricks (Music BSED and Spanish BSED, '21) was awarded a competitive Fulbright ETA (English Teaching Assistant) award to Spain for the upcoming academic year.

Additional Recognition of Honors Excellence

Lisa Halmes was recognized by the National Collegiate Honors Council with the 2023 Award for Administrative Excellence, a competitive, national honor. She will receive the award at the annual conference in Chicago this November.

Additional Honors Engagement, Director

Dr. Craig serves on the Assessment and Evaluation Committee of the National Collegiate Honors Council and will finish a three-year appointment to the National Fulbright Committee this fall.

