



Idaho State
University

University
Honors Program

Weekly Update

February 14, 2022

It is About More Than Finishing First

A letter from UHP Acting Director Alex Bolinger

Have any of you been watching Winter Olympics over the past couple of weeks (in all of your “spare” time, that is)? I admit that I have tried to catch glimpses whenever I can. It is fun to watch the American gold medalists such as Nathan Chen, Chloe Kim, and Lindsey Jacobellis. However, for some reason I have been giving just as much thought to the hundreds of U.S. Olympians who will never get anywhere near the medal stand.

Twenty years ago to the month, when the Winter Olympics were held in Salt Lake City, I had the opportunity to watch one of the Olympic cross-country ski races at Soldier Hollow in Midway, Utah. The race length was 50 kilometers, which works out to over 31 miles. As you can imagine, it took a while; the winning time, from Spain’s Johann Muhlegg, was a little over two hours (which is amazing in its own right!).

What I will always remember from that race, however, is the last-place finisher: Alexander Penna from Brazil. As you can imagine, it is hard to find much snow to train on in Brazil, so Penna was at a significant disadvantage from the start. Then, that day was particularly warm, with highs soaring into the 40s, and the wax on the bottom of Penna’s skis started to stick to the snow, slowing him down even more.

Undeterred, he kept going, even though everyone else had finished the race before he started his last lap.

As Penna worked his way to the finish line, nearly an hour and a half after the winner had finished, the public address announcer exclaimed, “Let’s cheer for Alexander Penna. He is still an Olympic athlete!”

I remember that when I heard the announcer say that, my face turned red from embarrassment for Penna. I have finished last in my share of races over the years – one time, I finished so slowly that the organizers had already taken down the finishing area before I crossed the finish line. I have won occasionally, but I have lost much more often – and I prefer winning.

As I thought more about that day, however, it struck me that more of our lives are like the experience of Alexander Penna than that of Chloe Kim. Only one person can be the “gold medalist” in their field, so to speak. So what motivates the rest of us to keep going, even if it is long after the other competitors have already crossed the finish line?

Believe it or not, I think that the story of Alexander Penna raises an equally valuable question for you, the Honors students of Idaho State University. Many of you have had your

share of “gold medal” experiences – and with good reason. You have been conscientious and you have put in the time and effort to succeed in your classes. Many of you have also been very successful at other parts of your lives (e.g., music, drama, fine arts, sports, leadership opportunities, hobbies, jobs, event planning, and the list goes on and on). Although I know that all of you have faced your share of challenges, I am delighted that some of you have had the experience of being at or near the top of your classes in high school and here at ISU.

However, what happens when you give your very best but still fall short? If it has not happened already, there is a strong likelihood that there will come a time (e.g., in graduate school or in your career) when you are not at the top of your class or your work group or your set of peers, no matter how hard you work. It is a humbling experience when that happens, but that sort of outcome also gives you an opportunity to rethink and broaden your motivations for obtaining good grades and pursuing your career goals. Here are some questions to consider:

- Even if you did not come in first, what have you been able to learn from the experience that could help you personally or

professionally?

- Even if you are not the “top” in your field, in what ways will your work enrich the lives of others?
- What parts of this work do you intrinsically enjoy (i.e., for the sake of the work itself, for the feelings of accomplishment that comes from a task well done, etc.) that can sustain you even when the results are not what you had hoped for?
- In what ways would you benefit from focusing on self-improvement and challenging yourself rather than comparing yourself to others?

Footnote: In a deliciously ironic twist, Johann Muhlegg, the winner of that 50-kilometer cross-country ski race at the 2002 Winter Olympics, tested positive for a banned substance and was stripped of his gold medal. Thus, in the final standings, Alexander Penna is officially listed as finishing ahead of Muhlegg. Whether we are flying over the snow or plodding along, I encourage you to run (or ski) your own race. If you continue to put in the work, I guarantee that you will make a contribution here at ISU and in your career that is unique and something for which you can be proud.

Special Event with General Motors (GM)

Do you have an interest in the automotive industry and all things car-related? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to work for a major corporation such as General Motors (GM)?

To kick off National Women's Month, join us on Monday, February 28th at 5:30 p.m. for pizza in PSC 140. ISU alum and GM Senior Information Technology Business Analyst Bonnie Hill will be speaking at 6:00 p.m. (via Zoom) about her career in the automotive industry. She will also talk about her involvement with the interest group GM Women and exciting initiatives that GM is pursuing toward a cleaner, safer, and more inclusive future.

Additionally, GM is hiring (including several positions with remote work flexibility)! A representative from GM will join Bonnie to describe career opportunities and to answer questions from the audience. Please join us!

Honors Scholarships Now Open in BOSS - Closing Feb. 15

There are currently several scholarships open on BOSS available exclusively to ISU honors students. The application deadline is February 15th, so apply quickly! Here is a list of the honors scholarships currently open:

- [Heitoff Scholarship](#)
- [SDS Scholarship](#)
- [Lookout Credit Union Scholarship for Community Service](#)
- [Lookout Credit Union Scholarship for Excellence in Business](#)
- [ICCU Perseverance Scholarship](#)

Honors Owl-portunity Scholarships

Open to full-time Honors students with a 3.20 GPA or higher. This scholarship is intended to help students with expenses related to their education. Applicants may request a specific scholarship amount to be used for a specific need and must provide a short bio that will be made available to donors to the University Honors Program. Donors will have the opportunity to select and sponsor individual Owl-portunity Scholarships online and during the UHP annual fundraiser, An Opportuni-Tea.

When applying for this scholarship, you'll be asked to provide:

1. How much money you are requesting and what you need it for. Examples of acceptable funding reasons are book costs, lab fees, specialized equipment for your major, or MCAT/LSAT/GRE fees. Your reason can be outside this list, but please be specific when making your request.
2. A short bio. Include your major, class, a few words about yourself, and what you are requesting support of. Scholarship sponsors will be reading your bio during UHP fundraising. Do your best to keep your bio to 108 characters or less. If your bio is longer it will be edited by Honors staff.

Example Bio – I'm Lily, a 2nd year Geology major. Many of the courses I take include field trips & high course fees. I need \$250 for fees. Thanks! (107 characters without spaces)

Spring Career Fair

February 16, from 9 am to 2 pm

Pond Student Union Ballroom

The Spring Career Fair is open to all students and majors. This is especially an excellent opportunity for graduating seniors to start networking with potential employers. There are also summer job and internship opportunities at this fair.

Save the Date

Honors Students,

You are cordially invited to join us in highlighting the accomplishments of our graduating Honors students for earning their Honors Distinction or Degree, individuals who played a key role in our program's success over the past academic year, and Honors students' contributions on campus.

University Honors Program
Recognition Ceremony
Saturday, April 2, 2022
4:30 PM



Fall Honors Course Sneak Peek: Life and Death (PHIL 2260)

In this course we will discuss some of the most important and difficult questions about life and death. How should we live in light of the fact that each of us will die? Is death really the end? Is there anything special about human existence, and is there one best way to live as a result? If we could achieve immortality, would it be worth it?

We will investigate answers from ancient philosophers both East and West as well as contemporary thinkers still grappling with these issues today. We will also consider perspectives informed by both religious and non-religious traditions. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living, so let's take this opportunity to examine!

Catch this course taught this upcoming fall (2022) semester by Professor Evan Rodriguez.

Join ISU Rugby

The Idaho State University Rugby Team is looking for new players. No experience is required. The ISU Rugby Team has been around for 26 years and has won 5 Conference Championships.



If you're interested in joining a fast-paced, exciting sport, please contact Ram Eddings at eddirans@isu.edu.

NASA Summer Research Internship

The NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium (ISGC) is offering stipends for summer internships and/or research experiences focused on science, technology, engineering, math, or space/aerospace projects in Idaho during Summer 2022.

The maximum amount of funding per student is \$7,300 for a full-time internship equivalent to 400 hours. Smaller amounts for shorter internships are also available and will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. You must be a US Citizen to apply.

Student Application Form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/70aec2f395db4cfb98516d67ab70a68e>

Research Advisor Recommendation Form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/fa68c21ed70a46cd82118d8c5a74b595>

The application deadline is March 4th, and the research advisor recommendation form deadline is March 7th.



Call for Volunteers



An Opportuni-Tea is the premier fundraiser for the University Honors Program. This annual fundraiser grows funds used to support students in the Honors Program through scholarships. The event is made possible with the help of many student volunteers from the honors Program.

An Opportuni-Tea is scheduled for April 2 and we are looking for volunteers from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. to set up, operate and clean up the tea. Volunteer assistance is also needed to prepare for the tea on April 1.

There are several options for volunteering and you can see a list in the sign-up form:

<https://forms.gle/ihuMxSHq4MvkDyYB8>

We appreciate your help! This hallmark fundraising event couldn't happen with you!!

UHP Club Events

February

- 21 Movie Night | 7:00 PM | Bengal Theater
Night at the Museum with the UHP Club!
- 28 Special Event with GM | 5:30 PM | PSC 140
Pizza at 5:30 p.m. and a special guest from GM at 6:00 p.m.

March

- 1 UNO Night | 7:00 PM | Wood River Room in the SUB
Join in the UNO tournament to win awesome prizes!
- 7 Owl Activity | 7:00 PM | Rendezvous, 3rd floor - Honors Lobby
Make your owl for the Owl-portunity scholarship. These will be displayed at An Oppotuni-Tea for donors to sponsor student scholarships.
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