



Idaho State  
University

University  
Honors Program

# Weekly Update

May 2, 2022

## Congratulations...and Thank You!

A letter from UHP Acting Director Alex Bolinger

As I began writing this, my final introductory letter to the Weekly Update of the semester, I couldn't help but reflect on how different things were back in August when I wrote my first letter. That day, the temperature topped 100 degrees. The air was an acrid brown from wildfires that were burning all over the western U.S. Masks were required in anticipation of a surge in infections from the spread of the highly contagious Omicron variant of COVID.

Today, the temperature is a delightful 70 degrees with bright sunshine and clear blue skies. (But just in case we were to get too comfortable, it could snow overnight tonight.) COVID infection rates have subsided dramatically. What a difference nine months can make!

Nine months can also make a huge difference in your educational journey. Back in August, I was getting to meet several of you for the very first time. Since then, many of you have successfully completed your first (or next) two semesters of college. Others have written and defended an Honors thesis, gone through the application process and accepted offers to join (at least one of) the programs of your choice, or made significant strides in your program of study.

I would wager that you have (a) experienced surprises – some of them fun, others hard; (b)

learned many things – both academically and about yourself; and (c) grown as a person over these past nine months. I know that all of the above have certainly been true for me.

As most of you already know, I will be stepping away as acting director of the Honors Program at the end of this month to officially hand the reins back to Dr. Shannon Kobs Nawotniak. The chance to work with Dawn Brooks, Miriam Dance, Lori Tapanila, Dr. Cindy Hill, and all of you throughout this year has been the privilege of a career.

I am pleased to announce that we have extended offers to Jacob Andrysiak and Conner Suddick to join Shannon and Lori on our University Honors Program team in June. We are really fortunate to add such enthusiastic, creative, and caring Instructors/Coordinators to continue the great work of Dawn and Miriam. This is a time of transition and opportunity and I am delighted with the bright future ahead for the Honors Program!

To close out a year where our theme focused on gratitude, I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank you (and leave you with two pieces of advice):

Thank you to the leadership of the Honors Program: our envoys, mentors, and the leaders of the Honors Club, which was just named the

2021-2022 Student Organization of the Year!

Thank you to Tawna, Marilee, and everyone in the Rendezvous 323 Suite for their support, timely answers to my (many!) questions, and encouragement.

Thank you to all of our Honors faculty and the members of the University Honors Advisory Committee for mentoring Honors students, offering timely advice to the Honors leadership team throughout the year, and promoting the Honors Program in your colleges/units.

Thank you to Cindy Hill, one of the co-founders of the Honors Program, for your vision and dedication to the value of ISU's Honors Program.

Thank you, Honors students, each and every one of you. Here's where I can't resist offering two pieces of advice:

**Play both the short and long games.**

**Short game:** I have learned that Honors students are really good at planning ahead, which is a definite strength. At the same time, please don't become so preoccupied with thinking about the future that you don't take opportunities to enjoy this unique time in your life.

**Long game:** Finals week can be absolutely grueling, so this is also a good time to

remember that the sacrifices you are making now are setting you up for greater opportunities in the future. Your degree is not the end, of course – we have never lived in a time in history where continuously learning and updating your skills is more important – but earning your degree is an achievement that can never be taken from you.

**Don't let what (or how) you do define your value.**

Forgive me if you have heard this from me many times before, but it is the message that I want you to most take away from this year. It is true that, as part of the Honors Program, you are a remarkable student, whether you feel that way right now or not. But make no mistake: What makes you valuable has nothing to do with what you accomplish.

**You are valuable to me, to the entire Honors family, and to the many people in your lives simply for who you are.**

Your willingness to be a part of this Program means the world to us and to me. Thank you again for the opportunity to work with you as the acting director of the Honors Program this year and I look forward to seeing many of you around campus.

## Benny Award

The Honors Club received the Benny Award for **Student Organization of the Year!**



It is an honor to be recognized, and we thank everyone for their role in the club!

## Scholarship Opportunity

The Pocatello chapter of NAACP is providing a \$500 scholarship to a college or university student with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Follow the link to apply or learn more.  
<https://forms.gle/hmcusYA6frHfPkWx8>

## Idaho Conference on Undergraduate Research

ICUR is a state-wide undergraduate research conference for all current and aspiring student researchers, mentors, research partners, and anyone interested in research. Attend this two-day conference featuring student research talks, panel discussions, and networking.

Register Here:

<https://sites.google.com/boisestate.edu/icur2022/register?authuser=0>

