



The Update in Brief

August 17, 2026

- Welcome to New Leadership! | Dr. Margaret Johnson, Honors Director and Dr. Morgan Musquez, UHP Instructor/Coordinator (Pgs 1-3)
- Fall 2026 Reminders | Honors Credits & Book Bundle (Pg. 4)
- Honors Workshop | Course Contracting (Pg. 4)
- UHP Event | UHP Fall 2026 Meet & Greet! (Pg. 5)

WELCOME SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Margaret Johnson *Honors Director*

Welcome to Fall Semester 2026!

As the summer is coming to an end, I am really excited to be joining the University Honors Program as your new director. I have been getting prepared for my new work in UHP over summer, though I know that there is still a lot to learn!

As I have been wrapping up the last days of summer break, I have been thinking a lot about the importance of community and compassion.

Continued on Page 2

I attended several plays at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon, this summer, including “Come from Away,” an award-winning musical about the events of 9/11. The production tells the story of the people on the 38 planes that were diverted away from the U.S. and sent to land in the town of Gander, Newfoundland, when U.S. airspace was closed after the attacks. Rather than focusing on the horrors of that day, the story centers on how people in the community came together to offer support to their unplanned visitors. This included cooking meals, donating clothes, driving the travelers to run errands, and even opening homes to let people shower in a private space. I found this generosity of spirit truly moving.

As I think about my entry into the role of UHP Director, I find myself drawn to that same spirit of welcome. Starting something new—whether it’s class, a semester, a program, or a diverted flight into an unfamiliar town—can feel disorienting. What make the people of Gander remarkable wasn’t that they had special resources or training. It was that they simply showed up for one another, again and again, in both small and large ways.

Members of the University Honors Program have a history of supporting one another. I want to continue this legacy. Showing up for each other can happen in lots of simple ways. It might look like sharing notes with a classmate who missed a class, checking in on a friend who seems overwhelmed, or celebrating someone else’s success as genuinely as your own. At the start of the academic year, it might also mean being patient with yourself and others as we all navigate a new semester with its own uncertainties.

Honors programs can sometimes feel competitive by nature. We’re surrounded by talented, high-achieving, driven peers, and it is easy to focus on comparison rather than connection. But I’d like to invite all of us, myself included, to choose to focus on support. I think the strongest communities, as well as the strongest scholars, are the ones that understand that excellence and compassion can work together and lift all of us up together.

I don’t yet know your stories, but I’m looking forward to learning them over the coming months and years. As this semester unfolds, I hope that together we can continue to build something that feels like the town of Gander: a place where people take care of each other, no questions asked.

Welcome to a new year of UHP. I’m honored to be on this journey with you.

WELCOME SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Morgan Musquez

UHP Instructor/Coordinator

Hello everyone!

I am so excited to be joining Idaho State University as the new Instructor/Coordinator for the University Honors Program. Having earned my graduate degree at ISU and spending several years teaching and mentoring ISU students, it feels especially meaningful to continue being part of this community in a new role.



My academic background is in Psychology. I earned my BA in Psychology from California State University, Bakersfield. I then came to ISU to pursue my PhD in Experimental Psychology, graduating in May of 2025. During this time, my most meaningful and memorable experiences involved teaching and mentoring undergraduate students in Psychology courses and in the Health-Decisions Lab. This is why I am particularly thrilled to take on this new opportunity. I truly enjoy supporting students as they learn, grow, and figure out what they are capable of!

Outside of ISU, I love spending time with my husband, family, and friends, and I am also kept pretty busy by my three pets. Willow is our Siamese cat who mostly lounges and is uncharacteristically clumsy. Hazel (aka Crazy Hazy), our Calico kitty, keeps things interesting by finding new and creative ways to get into trouble. Then there is Winston, our Border Collie, who loves frequent trips to the park and does not believe in rest days (don't be like Winston!). I am also a homebody. I love to host movie nights (scary movies are my favorite), tend to my yard, cook with my husband, and play games (mostly board games, although I am getting into video games). When I need some fresh air, I enjoy going on walks and stand-up paddleboarding.

While I have been part of the ISU community for several years, I am eager to begin this new chapter and get to know all of you along the way. I look forward to learning and growing alongside you, supporting you throughout your time in the Honors Program, and seeing all that you accomplish. I cannot wait to meet you all!

Honors Contracting Workshops

This semester we are offering five Honors contracting sessions for Honors students who need to contract a class and want a refresher on the contracting process.



Monday, August 24, 5:00-5:30pm (Zoom)

Tuesday, August 25, 4:30-5:00pm (in-person)

Wednesday, August 26, 11:00-11:30am (in-person)

Thursday, August 27, 1:00-1:30pm (Zoom)

Friday, August 28, 9:30-10:00am (in-person)

[Register for a Session Here](#)

UHP Students: Check Your Honors Credits!

Especially all seniors planning to graduate in the Fall 2026 Semester.

Honors Distinction = 18 honors credits + HONS 3391 (19 total)

Honors Degree = 29 honors credits + (HONS 3393 or HONS 4493)
+ 2 HONS 3391 (32 total)



To see more (and for information on the Bobette Wilhem Civic Scholars Program) go to:

www.isu.edu/honors/current-students/graduating-with-honors/

Are You Bundling?



The Book Bundle is meant to save you some time and money, but it might not! Add up the costs of your textbooks and then compare to find out.

Book Bundle Charge = \$25/credit

Example: 15 credits * 25 = \$375

If your textbooks for the semester cost more than the Book Bundle charge, it's a good deal for you!

www.isu.edu/bookbundle

**Opt Out Deadline is
September 4, 2026**

Save The Date!!

UHP EVENT

UHP FALL 2026 MEET & GREET!

Saturday, August 22

2:00- 4:00 pm | Cadet Field

**Join us for soda, snacks, games, and fun on
Cadet Field (between Reed and REND)**



**Idaho State
University**

**University
Honors Program**

www.isu.edu/honors

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