



# FUSION



Photo by: Michael Natoli

## VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

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A UNIVERSITY HONORS  
STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD PUBLICATION

## Messages from the University Honors Director and UHSAB Chair

“Communication is the lifeblood of any great organization. The University Honors Student Advisory Board is the best connection I have to students in University Honors.”  
--- Dr. Bill Dorland, Director

“This board was founded last spring to serve as a link between University Honors students and the program’s administration. With this mission, we set out to tackle three main goals: 1) foster connections between UH student and faculty, 2) collect student feedback about the UH program, 3) explore opportunities for UH housing. This past year we were successful in organizing the first ever UH student-faculty dinner, conducting a comprehensive survey of UH, and establishing a dialogue with the Department of Resident Life. It is our hope that this board will be able to accurately and humbly represent the interests of the UH student body and we look forward to strengthening UH as both an academic institution as well as a welcoming community.” --- Kai-li Liang, Chair

## Who we are...

Our mission is to serve as a representative student organization that relies chiefly on student input. We, as the University Honors Student Advisory Board (UHSAB), are dedicated to supporting all facets—especially the academic and social components—of University Honors by addressing students’ unique interests and providing the direct link between students and the University Honors administration.



Pictured (Top): William Pratt, Tony Starego, Kai Liang, Peter Barrett (Bottom): Kristen Pellicot, Tim Park, Taimur Chaudhry, Dylan Clay-Devlin, Roshan Talagala, Laura Miller

## Why “Fusion?”

In the course of designing this newsletter, one of the most difficult challenges was naming it. In an attempt for it both to be catchy and to capture the fundamental sense of what University Honors stands for, we ultimately decided on “Fusion.”

Our director, Dr. Bill Dorland, has a strong physics background, which converges with the idea that here at University Honors, we are students studying a wide variety of disciplines, who come together for four years to enhance each other’s lives.

Upon graduation, we continue on separate paths, with the knowledge and pride that we once lived and studied in University Honors here at the University of Maryland.

## Dr. Cathy Barks’ (UH Associate Director) Honors Seminar Recommendations

### HONR218T

Political Theater: On Stage and in Washington  
Nelson Pressley, Art/Theatre Critic, *The Washington Post*

### HONR218Y

How to Think Like da Vinci, Montaigne, and Shakespeare  
Gerard Passannante, English

### HONR229L

Climate Change: Science, Economics, and Governance  
Ross Salawitch, Oceanic and Atmospheric Science

### HONR279B

Social Security in a Changing America  
Scott Szymendera, Congressional Research, Library of Congress

### HONR279R

Faith and Values in Public Life  
D. Paul Monteiro, The White House’s Office of Public Engagement

We would like to extend a special thanks to members of the University Honors administration--Dr. Bill Dorland, Dr. Cathy Barks, Linh Tran, and our advisor, Damien Franze--for their tremendous oversight and wisdom.

## Chris Gaines--An advocate for the masses



On March 27, we sat down with Christopher Gaines, a senior Family Science major with an engineering background. Born with cerebral palsy, Gaines speaks of his achievements, his endless involvement in campus organizations, including serving as President of the Delta Alpha Pi Honor Society, and his vision to become “an advocate for those who cannot

speak for themselves”—all with a humble, calming pride.

Recently featured in a series of short films and personal accounts entitled “12 Terps Who Inspire,” we asked what inspires him. His response resonates. “What inspires me is seeing someone with a big vision who is going to change the world go out there and get what he needs to make it happen. That’s what I try to do in the organizations I’m involved

in. I like to picture how I want the world to be as opposed to how it is and try to change what I can.” Noting that one of the tenants of Delta Alpha Pi is advocacy, he describes how it is paramount to advocate for others before we can advocate for ourselves. He adds, “I like to make sure that I know how to best address the interests of those I’m advocating for and then when it comes to me, I can use those same skills.”

When asked of his greatest challenge, he first soberly chuckles. “Hmm. Besides walking everyday? I guess my biggest challenge is myself. I’ve been told that I can’t accomplish things because of my disability. It’s hard to be my own motivator sometimes when I think about the gravity of all I want to accomplish.”

His message to fellow students is clear and inspirational. “As an Honors student, you’ve already achieved something very great. I hope that other people who have different talents and interests will continue to develop them and not feel as though they’re overshadowed by anything that might challenge them.”

We wish Chris, a young man whose very essence exemplifies positivity in the face of adversity, nothing but the best as he continues on his missions to better our society’s understanding of disabilities and to inspire those who may be struggling in similar ways.

## Dr. Susan Dwyer--Philosophy, life, and satisfaction

Having taught on a wide variety of Honors Seminar topics, from constitutional law to happiness and now to yoga, Dr. Susan Dwyer, a philosopher at heart, is a clear Honors College favorite. “Philosophy is the oldest academic discipline,” she told us on March 31. “It teaches a set of fully transferrable skills of reading critically and writing concisely, as well as skill in argument—especially in identifying when someone has said a lot, but has not made an argument. With the philosophical toolkit, you can turn your attention to any topic and have something to say.” With this toolkit in mind, Dr. Dwyer has designed three successful Honors Seminars here at the University of Maryland, the first entitled Supreme Law: The Constitution, Morality, and the Courts, which has received spectacular evaluations.

Born in Malaysia, raised in Australia, and an immigrant to the United States, Dr. Dwyer brings a unique perspective to the U.S. Constitution, as well as to life in general. She vividly articulates, expressing her “sense of wonder” at the document, “I haven’t drunk the Kool-Aid of American Exceptionalism. I didn’t grow up with it, so it makes it easier for me to adopt a critical distance than perhaps it is for younger Americans.”

As a world traveler herself, she speaks passionately about what it means to be a global citizen, one of the aims of the Honors College. “Many of our students haven’t left Maryland or if they have, it’s been to Florida on vacation or to Mexico or Costa Rica for Spring Break. Being a good thinker about anything requires that you’ve had the experience of getting into a different place... Unless you’ve put your body and your mind in a different place, it seems to me that you really don’t understand what it means to take a different perspective and to understand fully that you are one human being among billions of human beings.”

For such inspirational messages and her brilliant course frameworks, Dr. Dwyer has been described by students as “kind,” “intense,” and “entrancing.” When asked what makes her so successful, she laughs modestly before replying, “I just love what I do and I generally give a damn about each of my students and the education they are receiving.”

Each of Dr. Dwyer’s Honors Seminars is guaranteed to be enlightening and worthwhile. A professor who challenges students to have the “intellectual and moral creativity to identify human problems and solve them,” Dr. Dwyer says that it takes “both a physical and a moral courage to say what you think is true and do what you think is right.” That is a message for the ages.



# A “smorgasboard” of creativity--Creative People, Creative Practice

Creative People, Creative Practice, an Honors Seminar introduced during the Spring 2015 semester, is not your standard college course. Dr. James Fry of the University of Maryland’s School of Music, designer and professor of this course, calls it his “creative project,” noting that he is taking a risk in teaching something which stands outside the music field, a risk that seems to have been worthwhile.

He emphasizes that its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is not what he calls “professor-centric.” By selecting, researching, and presenting on topics, students themselves digest and then solidify such abstractions as big “C” and little “c” creativity in order to facilitate a better understanding of the creative process as it applies to any field—history, biology, art, or even medicine. Multi-disciplinary by nature, Dr. Fry encourages students to think outside the box and apply their interests to topics that, at least this first semester, have ranged from improvisation to genetics to dreams, to even the neuroscience behind creativity—or what he calls a “smorgasbord of ideas.”

In addition, students must choose a case study on a historical figure and examine his or her creativity. This semester, a number of familiar names have been researched, including Victor Hugo, Abraham Lincoln, Claude Monet, and Isaac Newton, which have led to an array of insightful conclusions about the evolution of the creative process as it applies across various disciplines. Dr. Fry then serves as Webmaster over a site he created for students to present their research and ideas.

With just eleven students this past semester, Dr. Fry has been overjoyed with the depth of discussion and engagement in the classroom and hopes for even more in the future. “I am a student along with everyone else in many respects,” he says. And there’s no place he’d rather be.



Photo by: Dr. Fry

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## UHSAB’s inaugural Student-Faculty Dinner

The University Honors Student Advisory Board hosted its first-annual Student-Faculty Dinner on Wednesday evening, April 1 in the Stamp Student Union Atrium. The dinner event provided a platform to foster student-faculty interactions and relationships in a non-classroom setting. University Honors students dined buffet-style alongside faculty members and all were encouraged to connect on a more personal level, engaged in conversations about Honors Seminars, post-college goals, shared interests, and campus life involvement.

While dining, guests listened to keynote speeches from an Honors College alum, Matthew Popkin, and an Honors Seminar professor, Dr. Colman McCarthy. Mr. Popkin, an energy and climate change intern at the White House Council on Environmental Quality, addressed the importance of networking with professors. He shared his success story in reference to securing his position at the White House, largely because of a professional relationship he nurtured and developed with his professor. As a result, students were encouraged to take the initiative to explore the experiences, wisdom, and connections which professors have to offer to their students.

Following Matthew’s speech, Dr. Colman McCarthy, a long-time peace activist, journalist, and teacher, began his keynote by offering attendees a moment of silence to reflect upon the violence in the world. Dr. McCarthy passionately spoke about challenging the norms of worldwide violence and transforming today’s media into broadcasting opportunities for



Photo by: Linh Tran

peace. He challenged students to find something in which they are passionate about making a positive change and just “start.” Starting is the key to making anything possible that can enhance our lives. Dr. McCarthy’s enthusiasm inspired students and faculty to reflect on their roles in local communities and to look for ways to become activists for causes that impassion them. He closed by reading a poem by Mother Theresa, “Do it Anyway,” encouraging students and teachers to “do good and give your best in all you do.”

Students and faculty alike appreciated the opportunity to learn, network, and socially engage in a night of meaningful conversation, reflection, and inspiration.

**WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Contact us at [uhsab.umd@gmail.com](mailto:uhsab.umd@gmail.com), like our Facebook page at **University Honors Student Advisory Board**, or friend us at **umd uhsab**.

