



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Honors College



Letter from the Dean

I'm a historian. Thus, it should surprise no one that my interests include the very history of the Honors College that I serve. As the first Honors College in the State of Indiana, and one of the first in the nation, the Honors College at Ball State University has a long and storied past. It is a history of innovation, prestige, and collaboration.

When I started this job in Spring 2023, Dr. Warren Vander Hill reached out to share his wisdom and history of the program. I could not pass up the opportunity to meet. After all, he founded the Honors College in 1979 and established the Whiting Scholars program a few years prior in 1976. How, as a historian, could I pass up the opportunity? That meeting over coffee in the Ball Honors House turned into many subsequent meetings and email exchanges. Over the course of the past year and a half, Dr. Vander Hill became a mentor and friend. The Honors College and Ball State lost a titan and one of the University's biggest supporters this past July, when Warren Vander Hill passed away. What you will read in the pages that follow builds upon his long legacy and is dedicated to his memory.

In the coming years, the Ball State Honors College will both build upon its history and continue innovating to meet the needs of 21st century learners. As the University adopted a new core curriculum this past Spring, faculty in the Honors College are already developing a new and engaging interdisciplinary curriculum that aligns with new University requirements and helps prepare students to pursue fulfilling careers and meaningful lives. In addition, the Ball Honors House, a fixture of the Honors College since 2009, will undergo an expansion and renovation project that will add much needed offices and a state-of-the-art classroom.

The content that follows represents a snapshot into the successes, collaborations, and future direction of the Honors College. We hope it will inform as much as it encourages the reader to reach out and join us in serving honors students now and into the future.

Best,



Jim Buss,
Dean of Honors College, Director of the Virginia B. Ball Center for Creative Inquiry,
and Associate Professor of History

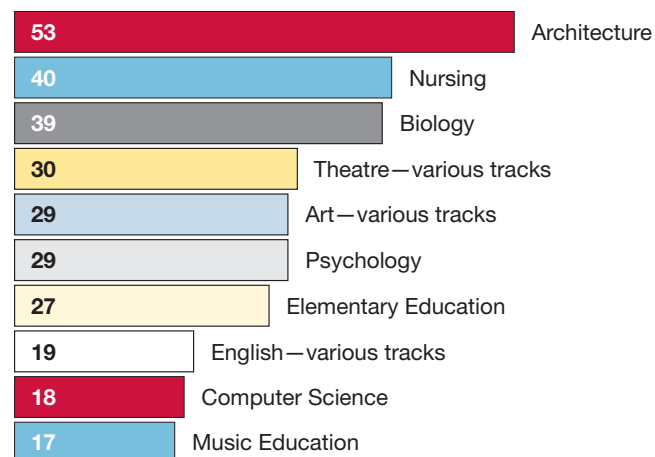


Located at the heart of our campus, the Ball Honors House is a vibrant hub for academic discussions and events. This historic space is a symbol of the University's commitment to intellectual curiosity and collaboration and offers visitors a unique blend of tradition and modern academic spirit.



HONORS STUDENTS AT A GLANCE

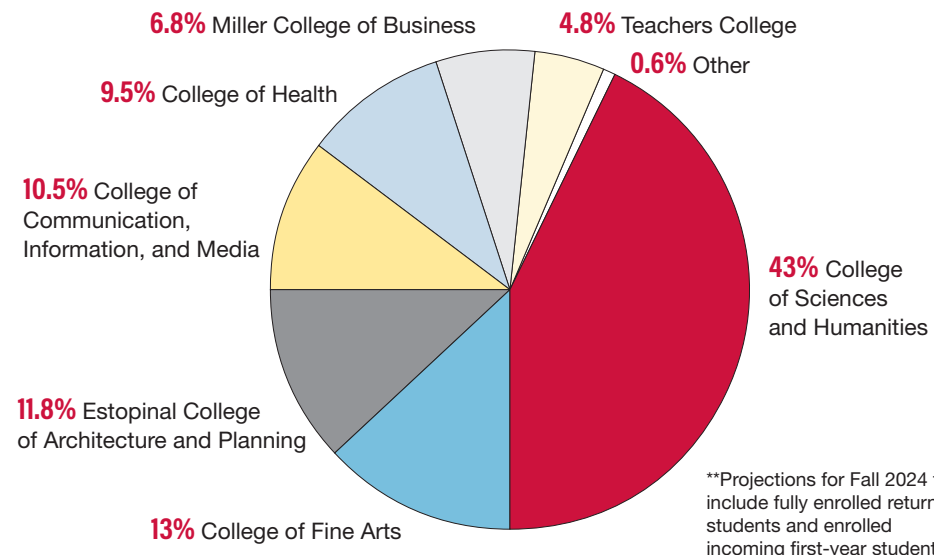
Top Ten Majors of Incoming Honors Freshman Class (613 total students*)



*Includes students enrolled in classes as of July 17, 2024.



Honors Students by College (1,424 total students)**



**Projections for Fall 2024 that include fully enrolled returning students and enrolled incoming first-year students.

87.7%

Since 2018, the percentage of students who begin in the Honors College and who either graduate (or are on track to graduate) by the end of their fourth year.



Honors Association for Community Engagement

565 HOURS
of service in 23-24 Academic Year

Honors Students and Ball State Top 100

28 of the Top 100 students were enrolled in the Honors College.



Student Success and CHIRPS Week

25% of CHIRPS Week presenters were Honors College students.

75% of the undergraduate awards for CHIRPS Week went to Honors College students.

Honors College and University-Wide Senior Recognitions

Provost Prize—
Jackson Ketchum
(nursing, College of Health)

John Emens Leadership Award—
Monet Lindstrand (political science and women and gender studies, College of Sciences and Humanities)

Honors Core Faculty

Core faculty in the Honors College teach approximately half of the Honors College curriculum, which includes interdisciplinary courses focused on Global Studies, American Studies, Science and Society, Humanities, and wide-ranging colloquia topics.



TIM BERG

Teaching Professor of Honors Humanities

Recent Honors Courses: "Ways of Knowing: Feeling and Thinking"

and "Creative Acts/Creative Lives"



BETH DALTON

Teaching Professor of Honors Humanities

Recent Honors Courses: "A Fabric of Words" and "Jane Austen"



OBED GATICA FRAUSTO

Assistant Teaching Professor of Honors

Recent Honors Courses: "Thinking Mexico" and "Latin American Thought and Decoloniality"



GALIT GERTZENSON

Assistant Teaching Professor of Honors College

Recent Honors Courses: "Music and Politics" and

"Music of the Holocaust"



ALEX KAUFMAN

The Reed D. Voran Distinguished Professor of Humanities and Professor of English

Recent Honors Courses: "Food and

Feast" and "Contemporary Food and Film"



BRIDGET LESTER

Assistant Teaching Professor of Honors

Recent Honors Courses: "Movement for Health and Wellness" and "The Impact of

Scientific Innovation on Human Health and Longevity"



JASON POWELL

Teaching Professor of Honors Humanities

Recent Honors Courses: "Ancient Selves and Societies" and "American Consumerism"



JAMES RANKIN

Assistant Teaching Professor of Honors College

Recent Honors Courses: "Everyday Data Analytics" and "Medicine and

Health Beyond Western Traditions"



KELSEY TIMMERMAN

Assistant Teaching Professor of Honors College

Recent Honors Courses: "Doing Good, Better"

and "Where Are You Eating?" (based on his *New York Times* best-selling book of same title)



Ball Brothers Foundation Honors College Faculty Fellows

The Ball Brothers Foundation Honors College Faculty Fellowships were established with a generous gift from Ball Brothers Foundation. These fellowships provide fellows with time to create innovative classroom experiences and co-curricular activities. Fellows are provided with funds to support engaging student activities in and out of the classroom. In recent years, those funds have been used to engage with community partners in the Muncie area, as well as take students on class excursions to places like Detroit and Chicago. Fellows are asked to use these funds to enhance the student learning experience.



MOLLY FERGUSON

Associate Professor of English, as the 2024-26 Ball Brothers Honors College Faculty Fellow.

Recent Honors Course: "Folklore and the Power of Stories"



BRANDON MILLION

Assistant Director of Inclusive Excellence, as the inaugural Ball Brothers Honors College Professional Staff Fellow for a two-year term.

Recent Honors Course: "Creating a More Inclusive World"



GABRIEL TAIT

Associate Professor of Journalism (2023-25)

Recent Honors Courses: "Visual Black Empowerment through Public Art" and "Global Black Studies"

Major Honors Scholarships

Honors College has been lucky to support several major scholarship programs over the course of its history, some of which have been offered by the college for nearly five decades. While many people know about the Whiting Scholars Program—the most prestigious scholarship offered by the University—fewer people know about other major scholarship programs in the Honors College.

Beginning this past Spring, the Honors College held the first major scholarships banquet to honor the recipients of all these awards, including the Dr. T.M. Anderson scholarships and the Bruce and Ildiko Meyer Memorial scholarships, which provide the equivalent of in-state tuition to incoming honors students. All of these scholarships are competitive, and the recipients represent some of the most active and engaged students across campus.

In addition to these scholarships, the Honors College is host to the John and Aline Emens Leadership Scholars Program. The Emens Scholarship program focuses on incoming students who demonstrate leadership experience and the potential to become leaders on campus, in their communities, and in their careers beyond their college experience. The award is annually presented to 15 incoming freshmen and recipients participate in a semesterly banquet where they update donors and University leadership of their previous year's leadership experiences. Scholars also participate in activities throughout the semester that help build leadership skills and network with alumni and community mentors. With nearly 60 Emens Scholars on the Ball State campus, these students have a major impact on campus leadership, whether they are engaged in student government, participating on athletic teams, or performing in campus ensembles, plays, or musicals.



Collaborations With Affiliate Faculty Across Campus

Faculty and professional staff from across Ball State support our students' endeavors. These Honors College partners and affiliates advise Undergraduate Honors Fellowships, guide students through the Honors Senior Project process, teach innovative courses within our curriculum, and participate in the Honors College Community of Practice series, among other forms of engagement.

Teachers College



In Spring 2024, **Dr. Maria Hernandez Finch**, associate professor of educational psychology, offered an interdisciplinary colloquium course, "Bringing the Science and Healing Power of Play to Children, Families, and Adults," that enabled honors students to co-create plans for inclusive play designed to tailored to wide-ranging career and learning pathways.

College of Sciences and Humanities



Every Fall and Spring, **Dave Largent**, senior lecturer of computer science and the 2022 winner of the Ball State University Outstanding Faculty Award, offers "Computer Science and Algorithms to Live By," a course that engages Honors College students in considering the various roles algorithms play in their personal lives and professional pathways.



Since 2023, **Dr. Bowen Zhang**, assistant professor of natural resources and environmental management, has served as the Honors Undergraduate Fellow advisor for Whiting Scholar Ian Kowalski, whose research focuses on greenhouse gas emissions from dam-reservoir systems. With Dr. Zhang's support, Ian presented his research this Spring at both the Indiana Academy of Science Annual Meeting and CHIRPS Week, where he was honored with an oral presentation award.

College of Communication, Information, and Media



In Fall 2024, **Dr. Robin Blom**, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Strategic Communication and former Ball Brothers Foundation Honors College Faculty Fellow, taught "The Honor of the Nobel Peace Prize." Students in the course learn about all the U.S. recipients of the prize and submit their nominees to the Norwegian Nobel Committee. In Summer 2025, Dr. Blom is also offering "Disney Culture and Culture in Disney," a high-impact study away course.

Estopinal College of Architecture and Planning



In Spring 2024, **Craig Farnsworth**, Roan Distinguished Professor of Practice in Landscape Architecture and Ball State University Honors College alumnus, co-taught the colloquium "Making Marks" with Dr. Tim Berg, teaching professor of honors humanities. This course engaged students in considering the nature of human creativity—our collective drive to "make marks"—via thought-provoking texts and hands-on projects.

College of Fine Arts



Dr. James Helton, professor of music performance, advised Whiting Scholar Josh Novak's stellar Honors Senior Project on "The Music of Frédéric Chopin."

College of Health



Dr. Jane Anyango, assistant professor of nursing, recently planned and taught an Honors course focused on "Rural Healthcare in Uganda and Implications on Community Health," which was offered for the first time in Fall 2024. Professor Anyango also led a field study trip in Uganda in Summer of 2024.

Honors Around the Globe

Chasing Northern Lights and Exploring Culture

In Spring 2024, 10 Ball State students embarked on a journey to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada to witness the breathtaking phenomenon commonly known as the Northern Lights, as part of the course, HONR 176: Inquiries in the Physical Sciences (Exploring the Northern Lights).

Led by Dr. Sundeep Rayat, professor of chemistry, and Dr. Patricia Lang, professor emerita of chemistry, the course delved into the scientific intricacies behind the aurora borealis, covering topics including heat transfer, chemical bonding, geomagnetic storms, and atomic structure.

The trip was more than an opportunity to witness a natural wonder in person; it was also an experience that immersed students in the Arctic lifestyle and culture. From ice fishing on frozen lakes to braving temperatures as low as -22 degrees Fahrenheit, every moment was an opportunity for discovery.

Read their full story at bsu.edu/northernlights



Recently, Honors College faculty member Dr. Obed Frausto taught honors students in a new study abroad opportunity in Puebla, Mexico. The semester-long program exposes students to critical challenges and opportunities in international education. Read more at bsu.edu/pueblamexico.

This trip is part of the 'BSU-in' program that operates out of the Rinker Center for Global Affairs. 'BSU-in' emphasizes educational experience combining academic rigor and cultural immersion.



Thanks to the Virginia Ball Center for Creative Inquiry (VBC), two high-impact study abroad opportunities were recently offered.



Drs. Jen Erickson, professor of anthropology, and Molly Ferguson, associate professor of English, co-taught a VBC seminar, "Gender in Post-Conflict Zones," which included a three-week trip to Ireland and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where students engaged with a range of scholars, artists, and community leaders to learn more about gender and conflict in the aftermath of both The Troubles (1968-98) in Northern Ireland and wars in Yugoslav during the 1990s.

In addition, Dr. Sanglim Yoo from the Department of Urban Planning in the Estopinal College of Architecture and Planning led a VBC experience to South Korea, where students studied sustainability and design in an international urban context.

Cardinals Connect Honors Milestone Mentoring Program

The Honors College connects first-year students to honors alumni through the Cardinals Connect networking portal. The Honors



Milestone Mentoring Program includes a more formal mentoring partnership between alumni and the Honors College and is open to all honors students. Students and alumni can join the Honors College Group on Cardinals Connect using the QR code below.



Honors House Expansion

The Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Honors House is undergoing some remarkable changes leading into the Fall 2025 semester. Thanks to the support of donors and friends of the Honors College, the Ball Honors House will feature an additional classroom, several new offices, a redesigned entryway, and exterior landscaping that will invite more people to utilize the lawn and a new labyrinth patio. If you would like to contribute to the project or learn more, please email honors@bsu.edu.



New Staff in Honors College

The Honors College has experienced significant growth over the past two years, with incoming freshman classes of 430 students in 2023 and 620 students in 2024. To support this growing community, the Honors College has welcomed three new staff members.



ASHANTI FIGURES joins us from Indiana University-Indianapolis where she served as student success and first-year initiatives coordinator. At Ball State, Ms. Figures serves as the inaugural director of student

success and Honors College first-year programs in the Honors College. She coordinates the honors peer mentor program, alumni network program, and first-year initiatives.

Honors College Graduates “What’s Next?”

Carlie Merriweather will attend graduate school at Ball State to earn a master’s in psychological science.

Monet Lindstrand will attend graduate school at Wake Forest University to pursue a master’s in political communication.

Jillian Cieslik will attend graduate school at Washington University in St. Louis to earn an PhD in evolutionary biology.

Chloe Whaley will work for Ernst & Young in Indianapolis as a tax accountant.

Amanda Durham will attend graduate school at Ball State to earn a master’s in social work.

Kathleen Donoho will work at Conner Prairie Museum as a living history interpreter and historic textiles specialist.

Cassidy Esch will begin teaching kindergarten at Nancy Hanks Elementary School in the North Spencer County School Corporation.

Cassidy Houston will work for the Indianapolis Zoo as a zookeeper.

Amy Isaac will attend the University of Cincinnati to pursue a PhD in molecular genetics, biochemistry, and microbiology.

Leah Kahana will begin teaching ninth grade geography at New Castle High School.

Dylan Kedra will work for the University of Lorraine in Nancy, France, for the 2024-25 school year and then pursue a graduate degree at Indiana University-Indianapolis.

Carlie Richardson will begin working for Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc, as a staff scientist.



AMANDA HUYNH serves as the inaugural coordinator for honors recruitment and retention. Working closely with the Office of Admissions,

Ms. Huynh coordinates honors recruitment efforts and works alongside honors staff to aid students in enhancing their undergraduate careers.



JON TREADWAY joins the Honors College Office of Advising as an alum from the College of Fine Arts. As the new advisor in the college,

Mr. Treadway aids students from CFA and beyond in navigating their way through the honors curriculum and graduating on time.







Ball Honors House



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Honors College

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  Ball State Honors College
  Ball State Honors

Ball State University practices equal opportunity in education and employment and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community. The information presented here, correct at the time of publication, is subject to change.
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