

# BYU

# HONORS PROGRAM

# 2020

## Year in Review





# OUR MISSION

**We aim to develop student-scholars from across the university who will become broad thinkers, creative problem solvers, and influential leaders.**



## **“At the Crossroads”**

**The Honors Program nominated outstanding Honors student-scholar Moe Graviat as the 2020 graduation speaker. Though graduation exercises were cancelled, you can read the text of her message at [honors.byu.edu/message-2020-graduates](https://honors.byu.edu/message-2020-graduates).**

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

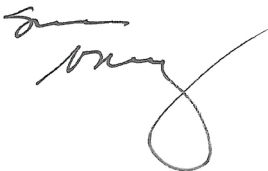
I feel like even the venerable Karl Maeser, guardian of the entrance to the Honors Program Student Commons, would have found 2020 a challenging year. But also in the spirit of Dr. Maeser, Honors students stepped up to overcome obstacles and collectively had a strong year. Exceptional efforts by our staff, Honors faculty, department coordinators and thesis advisors helped to make this possible, and I offer all of them my personal appreciation and acknowledgement.

In 2020, Honors adopted the theme **"We will ACT!"** That is, we will Adapt, Connect and Transcend. The theme is drawn from the teachings of Lehi to his son Jacob in the Book of Mormon as he expounds on the concepts of agency and choice in this life (see 2 Nephi 2:13 and 2 Nephi 2:26). In this report you will see examples of students, faculty and staff choosing to ACT. Let me highlight a few that especially impressed me:

- ◆ Faculty modified their classroom and teaching strategies to accommodate virus restrictions but retain face-to-face interactions key to the Honors Experience.
- ◆ Students completed 70 Honors theses, reflecting extraordinary efforts of students, advisors and staff.
- ◆ The Honors Student Leadership Council adapted their usual community-building activities and events to focus on smaller groups and individuals.
- ◆ We launched a new introductory course (HONRS 110) in the fall. More than 400 incoming students participated.
- ◆ We redirected funding into Summer Honors Fellowships, giving students who lost internship or other opportunities alternative research options.

We look forward to implementing new leadership development courses in 2021 and returning to the usual sociality of the Honors Program. I hope to see you unmasked at an engaging Honors event this fall.

Spencer Magleby,  
Honors Program Director





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Honors students learned to **modify viewpoints, attitudes, and behaviors.** They sought opportunities, rather than roadblocks.



## A New Look

This year, Honors students and faculty proudly wore the Honors logo emblazoned on facemasks as we joined the campus-wide effort to “**vanquish the foe.**”

## Honors Classes

After moving online mid-semester in March, Honors classes returned to campus in the fall, but they looked very different! Students found “full” classes with empty seats everywhere as **social-distancing** took effect on campus.



## Peer-to-Peer

Our team of **remarkable Honors teaching assistants** grew this year to keep up with added demands of incorporating new technology, changing instruction modes, and the need for smaller group instruction.



Students, faculty and staff made an extra effort to build our Honors Community in a time of isolation by **staying connected with individual students.**

## Student Ambassadors

Student representatives in each Honors class took the initiative to keep the lines of communication open. Each tailored services to the needs of the class, sometimes with something as simple as providing pre-packaged treats!



## Across Campus

Honors students served their peers around campus, extending beyond the Maeser Building to club leadership, peer mentors, research and lab assistants, and pictured here, BYUSA 2019-20 President and Honors Graduate Robert Borden.

## HSLC

Our Honors Student Leadership Council led online activities, service campaigns, virtual "chocolate chats," and social media posts.



# T

# R A N S C E N D

Students rose above challenging times and prepared to make a lasting impact for good in a world in need.



## Emilee Carr

had observed the challenges of women in STEM fields first hand. Determined to help others, she launched the Women in STEM Peer Mentorship Program which connects younger students with older ones to help overcome barriers.

## Bryan Colgrove

paired his skills as a statistician with his interest in biology to pursue an ambitious Honors thesis project, creating the "Intermountain West Lichen DNA Reference Library." He and his team have catalogued more than 6,000 lichen DNA sequences so far.



## Skylar Van Horne

is using techniques common to one field of study and applying them in unique ways to another discipline. His thesis project seeks to demonstrate how well pretreatment bacteria can "pre-chew" different wastes, leading to better waste management options and a renewable energy source.







## Bridger Woods and Bethany Parkinson

surveyed individuals around the state to measure satisfaction with measures taken by religious institutions and universities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Their research is ongoing and they hope to publish results in the near future.



## Amanda Gach

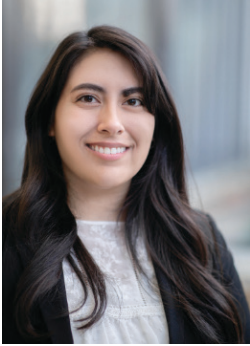
was drawn to immigration issues, having grown up with an immigrant mother and then observing the surge in refugees while studying in Europe. Her research focuses on determining which methods of communication best trigger empathy towards "outside groups" from native populations, with specific emphasis on "reciprocal empathy."



## Caleb Johnson

began interrogating the implications of anonymity in social media during his Honors Leadership Fellowship. Analyzing more than 100,000 Twitter accounts, he shed light on the behavioral shifts that occur, and identified both benefits and pitfalls of masquerading anonymously in his thesis.

# HONORS SCHOLARSHIPS 2020 - 2021



**MARISA GONZALEZ- MABBUTT**  
International Relations; Latin American Studies

"One of my Honors classes discussed nation-building, imagined communities, and the way culture is defined and developed. This class prompted me to take part in a research program in Thailand to examine the relationship between cultural values and democratic support - which later turned into the basis of my research for my Honors Thesis."



**LORIANA GOULDING**  
Pre Law, Psychology, and Korean

"My Honors program training to look for unexpected connections has influenced me in applying to specialized combined JD/PhD programs this fall. My experience as a primary researcher and author of my Honors thesis has aided me in the graduate admissions process, allowing my passions and interests to shine through."



**DEMITRI HADDAD**  
Information Systems

"The Honors Program has fueled my creativity more than any other classes. I'm making my own connections and learning through a carefully guided approach. The program has also allowed me to make research a top priority in my education. Through my Honors thesis, I've learned everything I can about buying and selling homes and am determined to find a better way to transact property."



**AUSTIN HEATH**  
Statistics

"The Honors Program has served as a point of departure from static learning and pushed me to start the journey of proactive, interdisciplinary learning. For my thesis project, I worked with the BYU Center for Teaching and the Statistics Departments to develop a new pilot course with the goal of improving statistics education."



**CALEB JOHNSON**  
Computer Science and Statistics

"The Honors program has given me far more than I would have imagined when I began, and the interdisciplinary atmosphere has drastically altered the way I view the world. I have loved the ways my fellow students have stretched my mind and challenged my world views. For my thesis, I quantified and observed the effects that anonymity has on human communication."



**JACOB REESE**  
Interdisciplinary Humanities

"The classes and research opportunities I've had through the Honors Program have easily been among the best at BYU. The interdisciplinary approach encouraged me to open my mind to new ways of thinking, and when it came to my thesis, I knew that I wanted to continue that. I decided to write about ecological representation in literature, film, and video games."



# FORGING AHEAD

In the midst of national and personal difficulties, members of the Honors community found catalysts for learning. We opened our minds to the thinking of others and embraced opportunities to reflect on our own intellectual journey.

## Honors Conference

Our third annual Honors Conference in March was a great success! We celebrated students' academic achievement in Honors thesis research and Great Question essays as participants considered new and impactful ideas from a wide variety of fields and disciplines presented by their peers.



## Program Updates

Beginning Fall 2020, incoming students began enrolling in Pre-Honors! This gives students a chance to learn about the Honors experience through a new introductory course and “try it on for size” before completing the Honors enrollment process. More than 400 students enrolled in HONRS 110, a half-credit hour class that provides a general introduction to Honors, an overview of program requirements, and introduces students to the Honors community.

## Book Wrap-Up Event

Literally the day before campus closed due to the pandemic, we welcomed best-selling author Charles Mann to wrap up discussions of *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*. He led us through a journey that crossed the globe, illustrating the wide-reaching impacts of the Columbian exchange – including the spread of disease. Little did we know just how timely his book and presentation would be when we selected it.

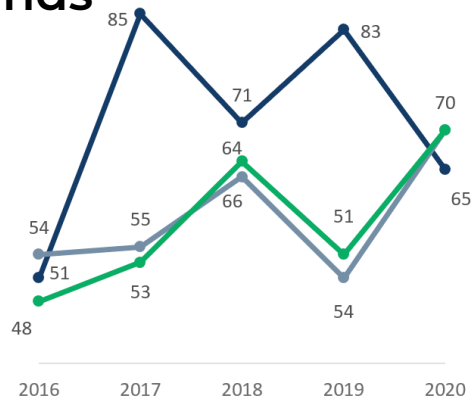
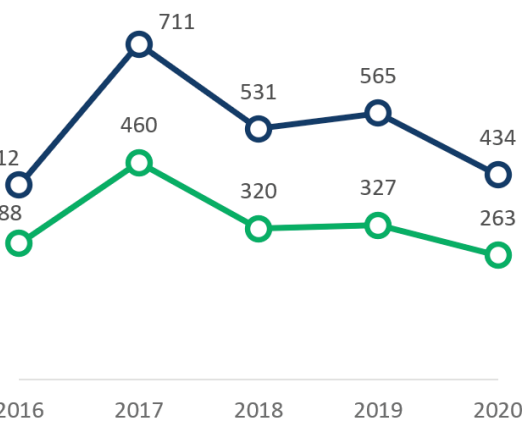


## Racial Equity & Inclusion

As a program, we stand firmly against racism and violence in any form and are committed to promoting a culture of safety, kindness, respect and love. In 2020, Honors adopted an official declaration of racial equity, justice and inclusion. Our book of the year discussions and guest lectures addressed antiracism, and two Unexpected Connections courses engaged students on matters of race. We continue working to better prepare our students to understand systemic racism, confront their own biases, and work toward racial equity at the university and in their communities.

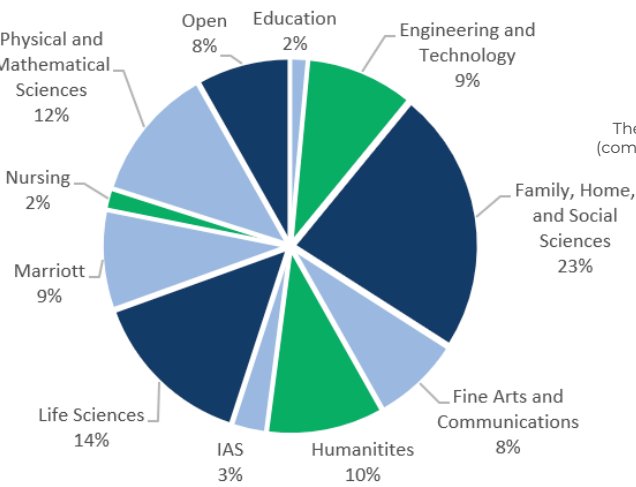
# 2020 STATISTICS

## Enrollment and Thesis Trends

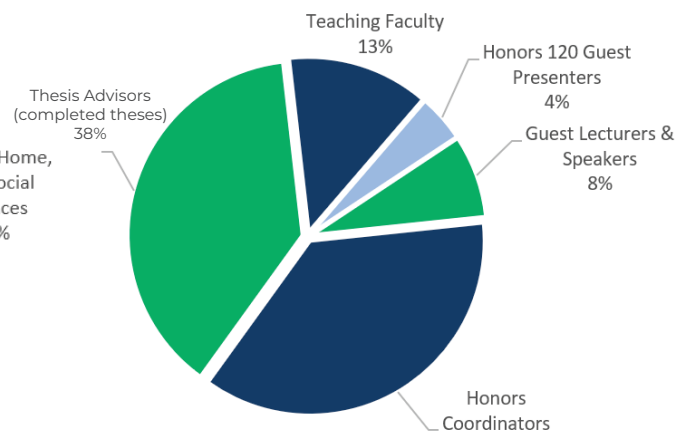


- Students Enrolled
- Students Committed
- Thesis Proposals
- Theses Defended
- Graduates

## Students By College



## Contributing Faculty



1016 Students

183 Faculty



# SILVER LININGS

Sometimes, a little humor was just what we needed to maintain a positive outlook this year. Here are some things we overheard that helped us all put a positive spin on circumstances!

I can find parking on campus!

No need to wear makeup under a facemask.

The resiliency of the human spirit is amazing!

The air quality in Provo is better!

Closed buildings meant time for the bathroom model in the MSRB:  
**Now rated MUST VISIT!**

Remote classes helped me become a better, more creative teacher!

Campus technology got a huge upgrade!

No bad breath conversations.

## Alcuin Fellows | 2020 - 2022

**Natalie Blades | Statistics**

Physical & Mathematical Sciences

**Janelle Macintosh | Nursing**

College of Nursing

**Steve Lindeman | Music**

Fine Arts & Communications

**Marc Olivier | French**

Humanities

**Denise Stephens | Astronomy**

Physical and Mathematical Sciences

**John Talbot | English**

Humanities

## Alcuin Fellows | 2019 - 2021

**Matt Bekker | Geography**

Family, Home, and Social Sciences

**Dean Duncan | Theater & Media Arts**

Fine Arts & Communications

**Luke Howard | Music**

Fine Arts & Communications

**Jacob Rugh | Sociology**

Family, Home, & Social Sciences

**Kurt Sandholtz | Management**

Marriott School of Business

**Kerry Soper | Comparative Arts & Letters**

Humanities

## Alcuin Fellows | 2018 - 2020

**John Bennion | English**

Humanities

**John Colton | Physics**

Physical & Mathematical Sciences

**Aaron Eastley | English**

Humanities

**Julianne Grose | Molecular & Micro Biology**

Life Sciences

**Cynthia Hallen | Linguistics**

Humanities

**Paul Richards | Civil Engineering**

Engineering

**Patrick Steffen | Psychology**

Family, Home, & Social Sciences

**Evan Ward | History**

Family, Home, & Social Sciences

The Honors Program is part of  
**BYU** | Undergraduate Education



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