

ISSUE 3 | NOV 2019

NERD HERD NEWS



INFORMATION ON
THE HONORS
PROGRAM FEE
FOR FALL 2020



THERE'S
SOMETHING
FISHY ABOUT
SEAQUEST
INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTING

ART,
PHOTOGRAPHY,
AND MORE!

Handwritten signature

COVER PAGE

submissions

ABOUT.

Nerd Herd News is now opening cover page submissions! Get the chance to submit your art or photo to be featured on the cover with a special page dedicated to you.

RULES.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Keep the composition and colors relatively simple.
- The dimensions must be 8.5" by 11".
 - There should also be enough space for the title, the elk logo, and any additional subtitles.
- All submissions must be sent in by 11:59 p.m day of the deadline.
- You must follow all university and Honors program policies.

Deadline.

**MARCH 20TH, 2020
AT MIDNIGHT.**



Nana Heo

SEND.

After you completed your art piece or photography, please send your submission to our email!

HonNews@msudenver.edu

We will contact the winner through email, so make sure to check for any updates! You can submit your art/photograph to be on the cover and/or in the newsletter.



Care for a cup of Coffee? We partner the love for caffeine and lively conversation every two weeks at the "Morning Buzz. Honors students have coffee and a chance to relate with fellow students in open discussion.



Honors conferences are a place to get out of your comfort zone and meet new people. Through this, many students have created wonderful friendships and had the chance to get plugged in to more of what Honors is all about.



Our summer camping trip is available for Honors students and their families. Many students are looking forward to this new event that allows for fun, games and community building without the looking feeling of homework due dates.



If you enjoy chatting it up over a little friendly competition, then Game Night is for you. Students get together at the Honors house every last Thursday of the month to play board games, video games, card games and appreciate other's company



The Honors program is all about community and joining forces to create the greatest college experience possible. We want Honors students to be up to date on what is happening and share the excitement for what is to come.



WELCOME TO THE HONORS COMMUNITY



TEACHERS SHOULDN'T DICTATE GRADES

by Andrew Peña



Last year, I had a class where the teacher assigned a book with bi-weekly book reports. The assignments didn't seem heavy; each chapter was about 20-30 pages and the reports themselves didn't even have to be 2 pages long. She also assigned a research project, sort of a "get it done by the midterm" history essay on a pre-approved topic. While each individual assignment wasn't that big of a deal, I ended up dropping the class by the fifth week because when combined with her other assignments, the overall workload became overbearing. It wasn't uncommon for me to spend in excess of 20 hours each weekend on that class alone and I was far enough behind that I would have been lucky to pass with a 'B'.

I retook the class in the summer with a different professor and although the compressed semester should have meant that I was working harder each week, I never spent more than 4 or 5 hours each week on homework including the time that I would spend helping some of my classmates when they got stuck on their own assignments. In the end, I passed the course with a high 'A'. But how is that possible?

Because the course was Computer Science II and the professor in the summer only required that we learn the actual course material — computer science.

"...the overall workload became overbearing..."

It's hardly a unique problem. As a tutor here on campus, I'm often introduced to overwhelmed students seeking help after being confronted with bizarre and overcomplicated assignments. Some of them are students in a math course being forced to write essays or reports. Sometimes it's a computer science student whose professor is so used to teaching the second course in a sequence that they teach the first course of that sequence the same way. Each time I encounter one of these beleaguered individuals, I feel a massive pang of sympathy for them — especially when I have to tell them, "I don't know how to do that. When I took Trig, all we did was, well... Trig."

It honestly seems like it should be a no-brainer. My grade should be a reflection of how well I've learned the material, as well as how capably I can recall and apply that knowledge. Yet how many of us have been bogged down by an avalanche of tedious, pointless assignments that extend far beyond the necessary scope of the course?

Homework can be a useful tool to ensure that a topic is successfully retained, but only if it's targeted correctly. I'll hardly be a better mathematician because my teacher insists that I need more practice writing business proposals. Perhaps more pertinently, all the business proposals in the world won't save me if I move into my next math course without the required knowledge base.



It's not global warming, fake news, gender inequality, or anything like that (I'll leave those bigger issues to the rest of you to sort out), but professor overreach: The willingness of individuals with the autonomy to take it upon themselves to act as the sole gatekeepers of their chosen field of study, is nonetheless a serious blight that plagues this and many other institutions in the country. At its best, it does a serious disservice to the students affected, by depriving them of a full education; at its worst, it all but invalidates the legitimacy of the academic institution in question by delivering unto the world a vastly different array of graduates. After all, my degree will only get me so far; when it comes out that I never did a history report on processor speeds from 1980-1999, what software developer would hire me?

I sure as heck wouldn't.

"Homework can be a useful tool to ensure that a topic is successfully retained, but only if it's targeted correctly..."

TOO

BRIANNA WINKLER

I made up my mind ten minutes ago

While I stood there in my too-big dress
And my too-small heels that blistered my feet.

I told myself I couldn't wait another second

While you sat there in your too-big coat
And your too-small pants that hug your legs.

I took a deep breath to calm myself

While the crowd rushed by with their too-full bags
And their too-empty brains concerned with their thoughts.

I looked at you again and my body betrayed me

With my too-warm cheeks
And my too-cold hands swaddled in soft red gloves.

I walked up to you and opened my mouth

With my too-shaky hands
And my too-tremulous voice hovering in the air.

I waited for your answer

With your too-stoic face
And my too-fluttery stomach threatening to empty itself.

You pulled me in close

With your too-strong arms
And your too-soft hands wrapped around my waist.

And you said you loved me too.





Vehement

Isabella Nieves


"This is a character from an anime called Claymore and her name is Claire. I drew her for many reasons, but the reason I am submitting this is because I only recently started painting. People told me I couldn't do it, so I wanted to prove them wrong. And it is actually quite therapeutic."

Medium: Painting




Welcoming Zeira Mabel O'Dell!

It was the night of a full moon. May 18th, a full month before my due date. I left Meredith Nation's graduation party, a night of reverie! Little did I know that one short hour later, my life would change forever! I was in a meeting and went to the bathroom and thought, "Huh, that's a lot of liquid." I tried not to worry about it. Then my back started hurting and I thought, "This is probably just a pregnancy symptom that I have yet to experience," but then it started hurting more. After 45 minutes, my husband Sean insisted that we go to the hospital to get checked out. I was scared and crying because I did not want anything to be wrong, as I already knew from a previous ultrasound that my child was in the breech position. I was not ready. I called my sister and my daughter Sophie to meet us at the hospital, and I was consistently leaking on my way there. There I found out that the leaking was indeed amniotic fluid, so it was showtime.

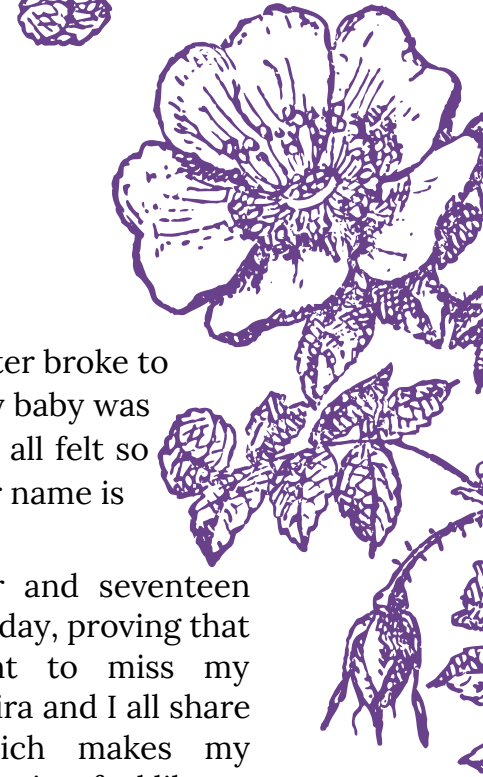


An ultrasound showed that the umbilical cord was wrapped around the baby's neck, but instead of telling us, the doctors just told us that they had to do an immediate C-section. I did not realize the whole time that it was an emergency, which was definitely for the best (because otherwise I would have been freaking out). Sean and I did a little prayer and we got prepped. I got into hospital robes and Sean got into a paper-like body suit- even over his shoes! I was taken to a back room for the epidural as Sean waited in the hallway. That long needle was relieving because I was really feeling the contractions at that point. Sean came in when I was moved to the delivery bed. Sean sat in a chair in the corner of the room, but the doctors instructed him that he could sit right next to me. After crying so much, it was nice to laugh a little bit at this.



"I was cut open and my child was not breathing."





The paper that was up kept me from seeing anything. I did not feel being cut open. Sean told me she was a girl, but I was not concerned about that because she was not breathing even after Sean watched the doctors unwrap the umbilical cord from her neck. The doctors were working on her and got her on my chest once she started screaming, which was especially important for a late-term preemie. She was where she belonged.

From the time of my water broke to my first time holding my baby was less than 4 hours, but it all felt so fast. She was 5.5 lbs. Her name is Zeira Mabel O'Dell.

She was born an hour and seventeen minutes before my birthday, proving that she really didn't want to miss my Birthday party! Sean, Zeira and I all share the Taurus sign, which makes my daughter Sophie a Sagittarius, feel like an outcast.



Sophie, Sean, Jenn, and Zeira



Zeira at 1 months



Sophie and Zeira



Zeira at 5 months





I HAVE NO NAME



Anna Sanchez

A SHORT STORY

IT HAPPENED ON A TUESDAY

BY: AUTUMN ROSE

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

A groan, a sigh, a click of the alarm to turn it off. Next to me, my wife rolls over. I wish she would not wake up, but sleeping is hard for her when she is fully pregnant. I just hope the little one down the hall can sleep awhile and give her a few more hours of rest.

The daily routine begins. A regular Tuesday morning.

Brush teeth, take a shower, and put on the uniform. Eating breakfast in the kitchen, my eyes wander to the groceries on the counter. It would be meatloaf tonight that I would not be able to enjoy. As if workdays weren't long enough, just waiting for my wife's homemade meatloaf will make the days seem that much longer. Not that I hate my job. I like it. I'm a Sergeant. I drive to the Air Force Base, guard the missiles for a few days, and come back home. It's monotonous, but steady. Nothing ever happens.

I go to kiss my wife good-bye, but she has finally managed to get to sleep. I won't disturb her. I'll say hello to my wife and daughter tonight.

The missile field is far away, but the military drives us out there in military vehicles in the morning and four days later, they drive us back. After the drive, I walk into my home for the next four days. It is like a double wide trailer only not on wheels. I store my belongings back in my bedroom and go to the office to start my shift.

I start the routine task of checking to make sure that all equipment is accounted for so that the team we relieved can get home to their families. After all checks are complete and the other team leaves, I finally get some peace and quiet in the office and turn on the TV to see what is on the news.

Something about a plane crash.

I think little of it. A biplane crashed a few days ago and made national headlines. I do take a moment to think of how strange it is that they are still talking about it, but other tasks become more important, so I stop watching.

My fellow Airman and I are doing training and the phone rings, the commander is on the phone and I immediately sit at attention. We look at each other, confused. This was an ordinary Tuesday, there was no briefing scheduled for today. I listen intently as the commander starts telling me what is going on. The horror of what he is saying flashes across my face as the commander keeps talking about the crash and I look at the TV in disbelief. The headline:

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 8:46:40 FLIGHT11 HITS THE NORTH TOWER OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

The world trade center has been hit! It's a horrible mistake. People mutter about how such a horrible accident could happen. I had hardly had time to process the event when the camera suddenly panned. It seemed that the world almost stopped. The plane didn't even slow down as it hit the second tower. It exploded and shot off over the city, breaking into pieces. The parts of the building falling off like little Lego bricks.

Everyone stared. Both towers had been hit within minutes of each other.

This could no longer simply be an accident.

Would there be more?

Would they hit here next?

Some people stayed and watched the news, some went back to work. Everyone wanted to call their family, but only one phone was available. I turned to think of my family waiting at home for me. We were now on high alert...

and I had only planned on a typical Tuesday.

Attending TEDxMSUDenver:

Promoting knowledge and increasing connectivity.

Reimagining Possibilities

MSU Denver's new promotional logo

BY: BRIANNA WINKLER



MSU Denver's President Dr. Janine Davidson

On September 12th Metropolitan State University of Denver and TEDx held an event planned and coordinated independently, under license from TED. The goal of TEDx is to travel the world, spreading information and making the world more intelligent by adding to their pools of knowledge. Honors students had a particularly special opportunity to purchase tickets at half price through the Honors Program and it was absolutely worth it!

This event was incredibly interesting because it operated in conjunction with MSU, meaning all the speakers were part of the university community. Staff, students and MSU Denver president, Dr. Janine Davidson, presented research. She gave a speech about the cost of higher education and why it is close to impossible for students nowadays to pay for it. Her speech painted a rather depressing view, stating that people are 4.9 times more likely to go to jail without attending higher education and Colorado's government used to pay around 63.4% of tuition but now only pays 29.1%. In addition, the "American Dream" is beginning to drop with only 7.5% of Americans able to reach the upper class. She stressed that we need to fix unequal distribution, push back against the idea that college doesn't matter by reaching out to legislation and senators, and take our time in order to get through our degrees so we don't burn ourselves out attempting to complete a degree in four years or less.

Our very own Student Honors Council President, Colton Lee, gave a speech about anarchy in tandem with Matthew Candelaria, a consultant at the MSU Denver Writing Center. The two of them burst on stage crying "anarchy" at the top of their lungs, then had a hybrid conversation/speech while sitting on a bench placed in the middle of the stage.

They informed the audience about the benefit of checks and balances (to much applause), and Matthew stated that anarchy is about making things “horizontal” and leveling the playing field. Their next subject was “planned obsolescence”, which is a wasteful practice in which products are intentionally manufactured so they need to be replaced because they break down. This comes from companies desiring more money, and this profit motive is wasteful and wrong. Colton then stressed that both relationships and anarchy are about consent, autonomy, and communication.



Matthew Candelaria and Colton Lee

Other speeches during TEDxMSUDenver included a speech by David Bechtold, a Business professor, who spoke about how audacious purpose which goes outside the goals of the company, can keep customers, create value, and make a better company with great people. The example he gave was Blue Star Recyclers, who employs people with developmental disabilities and allows them to work in a safe place with no judgment. Dr. Travis Heath, a psychology professor at MSU, gave an incredibly powerful and moving speech about how it may be beneficial to target systems that put pressure on a person’s identity rather than focus on the distress inside a person. He brought up the fact that removing one cancer cell will not make a person healthy, so why would removing one disturbed person make a society healthy? It was a deeply moving speech that really challenged my original ways of thinking.

The entire event was a time to remember. Between speeches, there was a luncheon, an activity on the lawn outside the Jordan Student Success Building, and the auditorium was completely packed during the speeches. Hopefully, MSU and TEDx decide to host another event like this one, because it truly was one I would absolutely recommend attending.



Dr. Travis Heath

What's The Word Little Bird?

Opinions of current events by Honor Program members.

The Newsletter team sent out a survey asking Honors students to share their opinions on current events. Here are the questions we asked:

- What's your opinion on the global climate strike that occurred on September 20th, 2019?
- What's your opinion on the Area 51 raid that occurred on September 20th, 2019?
- Which presidential candidates are you most looking forward to? Which candidates do you dislike? Why?
- What other current event(s) is on your mind right now? Your thoughts on it?

Here are the answers we received:

I think it's
[the Area 51
raid] stupid.
People are
dumb.
(Anonymous)

[The global climate strike was] impactful for
today's youth to be able to make statements...
Many of these students aren't old enough to vote
but will be dealing with the consequences of the
votes so this is an effective way to ensure their voices
are heard.
(Aishie Selway, Social Work student)

I also don't believe in peaceful resistance;
the people causing the most harm only
have their own self-interest in mind, and
until their self-interests are actually
threatened... I don't believe that honest
change will occur.
(Andrew Peña, Computer Science and
Mathematics)

I see [the global climate strike] as a step
closer to take action in
our current world, specifically towards
climate change which is something that humanity
should focus on more, rather than less.
(Anonymous)

All of my hope goes
to Greta Thunberg.
(Anonymous)

I think [the Area 51 raid] was
very humorous yet a way to
take action on defining or
knowing what is actually going
on with the governments
secret military bases.
(Anonymous)

What was the point [of the
Area 51 raid]? There are camps
stationed across the boarder and
other areas for ICE that are
becoming dangerously close to
concentration camp levels. The
lack of inactivity and discussion
there is shocking. The myths of
Area 51 can wait while real
people suffer at the hands of
tyrants.
(Anonymous)

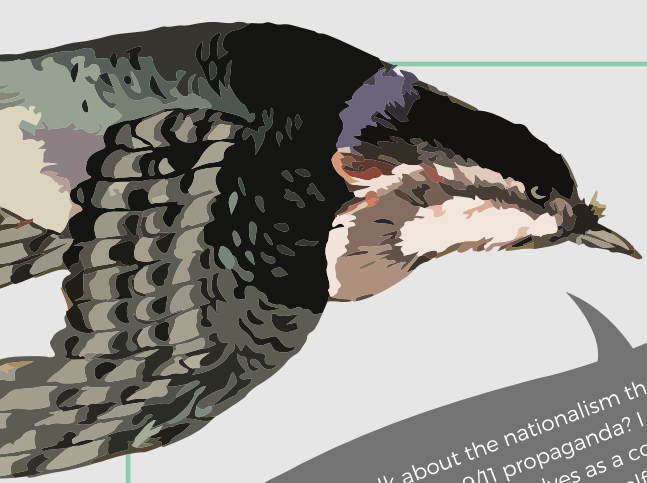
UBI is not the
answer, as
that
addresses
what is equal
rather than
equitable.
Wealth taxes
are the way to
go.
(Anonymous)

I hate hate hate Trump
and if he runs again
(provided he isn't
impeached first), I'll riot.
(Anonymous)

The area 51 raid was a futile and
foolish act in realville, however in
the interest of the cup being half
full- it is good to see people
bringing attention to a subject of
such great mystery, fascination
and fear.
(Alan Williams, Linguistics)

I wish I had been able to go [to the
Area 51 raid]. I can Naruto-run with
the best of 'em. We probably would
have made it in if I'd been part of
the group.
(Andrew Peña, Computer Science
and Mathematics)





Flint still doesn't have clean water.
(Anonymous)

Can we talk about the nationalism that has evolved from post 9/11 propaganda? I feel like we can't look on ourselves as a country anymore without turning into a self righteous mob.
(Anonymous)

I LOVE to ignore the dominant media narratives of the day. Living without the dominate media narratives is an art form unto itself and takes practice, yet delivers a tremendously satisfying life with an open mind, free of cumbersome, biased and untrue political claims and prejudices that rear their ugly head in almost every current subject in media today. Free your mind, your rear end will follow.
(Anonymous)

[Elizabeth] Warren has a really spotty past and has a lot to answer for in former discussions. I'm glad she has come around to a more open dialogue but there is too much there for her to unwrap.
(Anonymous)





I've been impressed by Buttigieg and his courage to be who he is in the face of adversity. I also think the world is changing fast and we need a younger person to represent newer thoughts in the White House.
(Aishie Selway, Social Work student)

I feel [the global climate strike] was very helpful in the discussion of current events. It drives me insane to see how we blame the individual and not the corporations however.
(Anonymous)

Got some good news you would love to share?

Messenger Bird Has Some Good News Too

Check it out!

-  Graduating in December after spending 5 years here.
(Anonymous)
-  The American Choral Director's Association Student Chapter has been started again at MSU! Definitely a good thing!
(Brianna Winkler, Vocal Performance)
-  Hi - my name is Aishie (pronounced I-She) and I was accepted into the MSU Honors Program!! I'm excited to become more and more immersed in this program as I struggle through classes, homework, developing new world views, and building on established ones. I've already met some wonderful people in this program and appreciate the welcoming nature of the environment. Thank you to all of you who have extended a warm welcome to me and I hope to get to know more of you as time goes on.
(Aishie Selway, Social Work student)
-  I've been loving my first semester at MSU Denver and I think the Honors House has to do with how much I've been loving college. The house is super cozy and welcoming! I hope to chat with you all and become good friends! I also joined the Nerd Herd team which is already tons of fun.
(Nana Heo, Art History)

HONORS PROGRAM FEES

AN INDEPTH LOOK AT THE PROSPECTIVE FEES

Written and Designed by Shayla Bischoff



Honors Program Director Dr. Megan Hughes-Zarzo



As the Honors Program continues to grow, it is important for us to find ways to continue to be able to fund the services, resources, and perks we currently provide to our students. Adding a small program fee is one of the options that we are pursuing to better fund the program. At the same time, we are also working with other areas such as Financial Aid and the Advancement Office to provide more financial support for the program and to our individual students. Our goal is to keep the cost to students as low as possible while continuing to maintain (and improve) all that the program has to offer. I was happy to see that 75% of the students who responded to the survey are supportive of the fee. This tells me that our students value the Honors Program and want it to be maintained.

An Interview with Associate Professor Dr. Philip Bernhardt



Q: For those who do not know you, who are you and how are you involved with the Program?

A: I am an Associate Professor of Secondary Education. I also currently serve as one of the Associate Directors of the Honors Program. I represent the School of Education. [You can go to the MSU Denver website and search Philip Bernhardt for more information about his research interests and publications.]

Q: What are the program fees?

A: The fees will be \$10 per credit hour. They will only be charged when a student enrolls in a course with a HON prefix.

Q: How often are students charged for the fee?

A: Anytime a student enrolls in a course with a HON prefix.

Q: Why are program fees important?

A: They help to support on-going costs associated with supporting department/academic program initiatives.

Q: How are program fees used?

A: The new program fee will be used to support a number of costs directly associated with the Honors Program. The fee will support costs associated with Honors Colloquium, Seminar, Senior Thesis & Thesis Symposium, and Honors Program events.

Q: How does the fee affect the future of the program?

A: These program fees will help the honors program continue to expand and enhance a number of specific components - Honors Colloquium, Seminar, Senior Thesis & Thesis Symposium.

University Fees

HERE ARE OTHER SOME PROGRAM FEES FROM AROUND CAMPUS.
WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY PAYING?

Education **\$9.45 per credit hour**

Hotel Management **\$6 per credit hour**

Biology **\$6 per credit hour**

Chemistry **\$15 per credit hour**

Philosophy **\$1 per credit hour**

Anthropology **\$2.32 per credit hour**

Beverage Management **\$32 per credit hour**

Women's Studies **\$2 per credit hour**

Social Work **\$.92 per credit hour**

Aerospace Science **\$54 per credit hour**

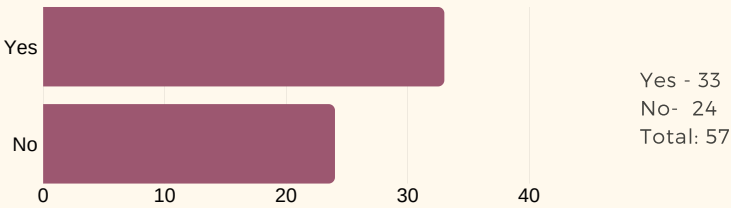
Art **\$10-16 per credit hour**

Industrial Design **\$18 per credit hour**

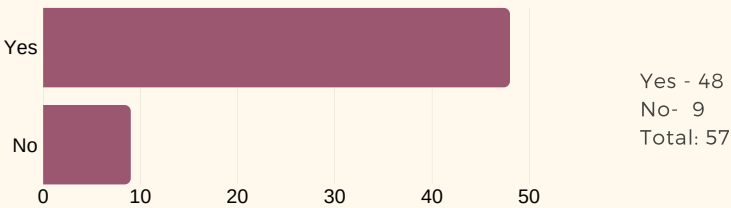
Honors Student Poll Results

HONORS STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN A POLL REGARDING THE PROSPECTIVE PROGRAM FEE. HERE ARE THE RESULTS

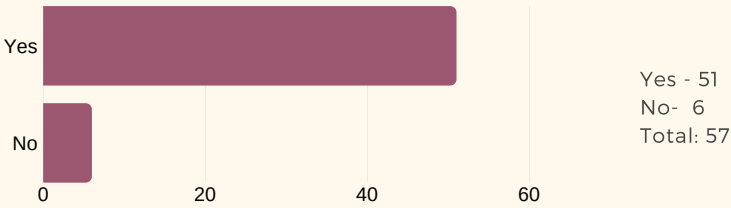
1. Did you know that the MSU Denver Honors Program serves and supports 200+ students?



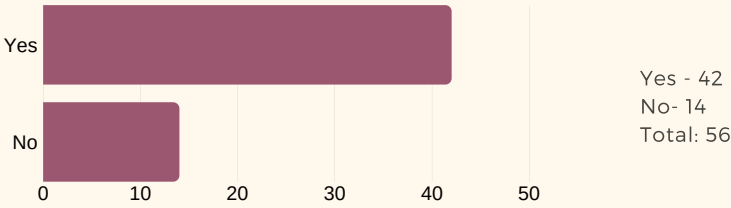
2. Providing technology in the Honors house has associated costs. Are you willing to support the addition of the program fee that can be used to address needs related to the repair, maintenance, and updating of technology



3. Program fee can be used to support expenses related to technology, honoraria, guest speakers, course development, materials provided and used in class, and other instructional related resources. Are you willing to supports the addition of a program fee to support expenses related to technology, honoraria, guest speakers, course development, materials provided and used in class, and other instructional related resources?



4. Are you willing to support a \$10 per credit hour increase for all Honors (HON) pre-fix classes?



Student Voices

THE STUDENT HONORS COUNCIL WERE INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE PROSPECTIVE PROGRAM FEE BEFORE IT WAS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HONORS COMMUNITY. HERE ARE THEIR THOUGHTS:



Colton Lee
SHC President

I, Colton Lee, as Events Chair and President of MSU Denver Honors Program Student Honors Council, hold a position of Pyrrhonian skepticism on this program fee.



Shayla Bischoff
SHC Vice President

I think the program fee is a good idea. I have seen the program struggle financially and know what the program fee could be used for (more funding for colloquium class activities, possible thesis scholarships for students and more). I **do** graduate this spring, therefore, the program fee will not affect me.



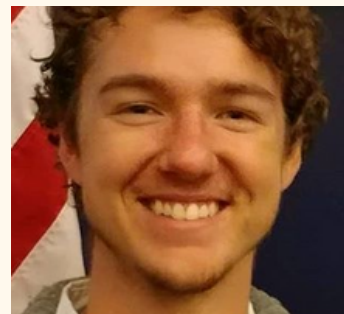
Christopher Erickson
SHC Treasurer

I personally feel that the fee, while not preferred, are a necessary part of our program growing. The overall charge, over the course of a student's time here, is pretty negligible, especially compared to other departments. I am excited to see what additional opportunities this fee brings.



Brianna Winkler
SHC Secretary

I am absolutely for implementing a program fee for the Honors Program! I believe a \$10 per credit hour fee would really help support the Honors Program provide the resources that it provides for a much larger group of people. The Program is really expanding at a very rapid rate, so we should support it in any way we can!



Liam Price
SHC El Comodin

I think that this program fee should have happened a long time ago, in all honesty. This fee is relatively large compared to other departments, but those departments do not support their community nearly as much as much as the Honors Program wants to support us students.

"The American Dream"

Brianna Winkler



Collection of photographs

Reclaiming Humanity

**What "The Matrix" can
Tell Us About Society**



Jose Morales

In society, it's nothing new to hear about the end of this world without mentioning global warming, ecosystems being destroyed, overpopulation, scarce resources, species extinction, social and political problems. We talk about freedom, human rights, helping countries in poverty, about changing this world and making it better but why do we still have injustice, violence, people dying because they are starving, and innocent people imprisoned? We have forgotten what humanity looks like. Some people believe that we don't do anything because fear is everywhere and is paralyzing us. My generation has the pressure of creating a better society or fixing the actual one. We are desperate to be heard. It is true that humans are not perfect and we are not trying to prove otherwise. According to Devamrita Swami, author, "The Matrix" is a film about mammals who are in balance with their environment and humans who are not. Humans multiply quickly, destroy environmental areas and use all the resources. There is only one other organism that does the same actions: A virus. The change starts right here and right now. Remind yourself that you have the power to help the person next to you; you can say something, you can listen, you can open your eyes and see what is happening. It is okay to feel scared about our future because we are humans but we should begin to reclaim humanity in this inhuman world.

Unspoken

Silenced lips and burdened flesh
We fight a war unseen
Secret and humble we live
Quietly damaged but not frantic
From mothers womb
To forgotten spirits
Decorated delicately with beauty
Creation has to be real
To see this
To know it
This pain unspoken

Shun Mosley

"Hurricane"

Nicolette Couture



Pottery

A FIVE YEAR SPAN

WRITTEN BY SAM LUND-BROWN



I arrived at MSU Denver in the fall of 2014. At that time, I met many people: old friends, new acquaintances, and new friends. Each of them added something to this program in some way. From organizing events to planning parties, these people strived to benefit each student of the program and give them a voice.

In the program, I became comfortable enough with my identity. Originally, I came here as Sean Nogrady and I will graduate here as Sam Lund-Brown. The Honors house was intimidating as a first-year student. It didn't feel like a home at first. Then the Honors House worked its magic and I was sucked in. From a heated discussion on politics, we fell into talking about passions, home-life, hobbies, and hiking. In a matter of hours, I became apart of the Honors Program and a member of the house. In my first year, I became a part of a large group of friends and got to know each new person closely.

I even ran into old friends from high school! We started making an endearing joke towards the Honors House, calling it cursed. The Curse of the Honors House was an excuse for us to laugh at the fact that we would enter the house to finish a paper and end up spending hours talking to our friends or being dragged into an enriching conversation, only to see the clock and dash to break the spell.

In my first few weeks or so I would cling to a corner of the couch, hoping to not be asked why I was there. I was shocked the first time someone engaged with me and promptly invited me to lunch with their small group. I would greet friends in the morning, learn to operate the coffee maker, and sit around playing Pokémon or a random game with peers. My first semeste I spent so much time in this place that I started to consider it a second home.

People in this house have always been warm and inviting with only a few arguments here and there. The house changes, students graduated, and new students file in.

At the end of my first year, I was invited to be a part of the Student Advisory Board to the Honors Program (PHABS) and helped to organize in-house events. We did an escape room, trips to the museum, attended a dress rehearsal for the upcoming opera, and more. A semester later, I became the president of PHABS and slowly helped with redrafting our constitution, fusing together Think Tank and our student club with PHABS, and which eventually built up the Student Honors Council and helped make it what it is today.

We had many wonderful events and continue to host some to this day. There would be ice cream socials, barbeques, we even held a small award ceremony and dinner each semester to recognize students. I didn't think I had made much of a splash until two friends and I were awarded colorful capes and were named "The Nerd Herd" just for having nerdy moments around the house. We would slowly see that the title "Nerd Herd" evolve into an identity within the program and I couldn't be more thrilled.

Within my first year, I was involved with the process of hiring a new honors director. We were all thrilled to have Dr. Megan Hughes-Zarzo as our new director and greatly enjoyed her popping into the common room to chat when she had free time. Jennifer O'Dell, Megan, and the Honors Council have done their hardest to make this program thrive and each of them offers so much of their energy and time to make this house a home.



We would slowly see that the title "Nerd Herd" evolve into an identity within the program..."

Year after year, I saw students arrive, get involved, and graduate. I saw students struggle, overcome, and thrive in this environment. From regular student, to officer, to president and student worker of this program, I have seen so much change. Now it is the fall of 2019 and my time on this campus is almost at an end.

As it stands my partner and I will be leaving for Florida in December. I will be graduating as a Music major and an IDP major in Teaching Vocal Music and Pedagogy. The road can be winding and long for many of us but it doesn't have to be lonely. To the first year and transfer students, I encourage you to get involved on campus now. To the students in their last few semesters, hang in there, it's only a little longer now. To all of you find time to get involved with the Honors Program community and the Student Honors Council. You may even be apart of the history of this program and make your own stories to tell.

Editors Note:

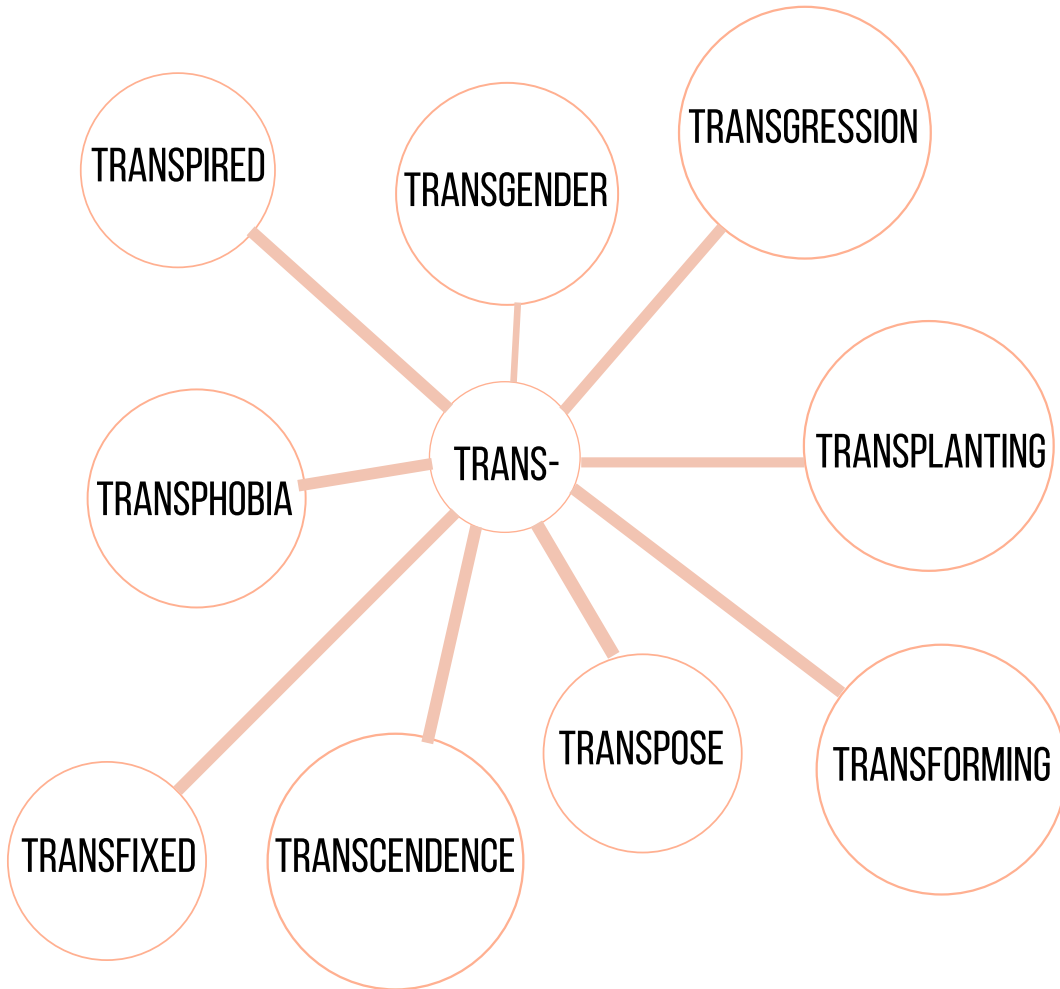
Sam will be graduating this Fall.



TRANS-

SLAM POETRY

EMMA CLEMENTINE



Check out the video at this link: <https://youtu.be/b1Ss6unJwoA>



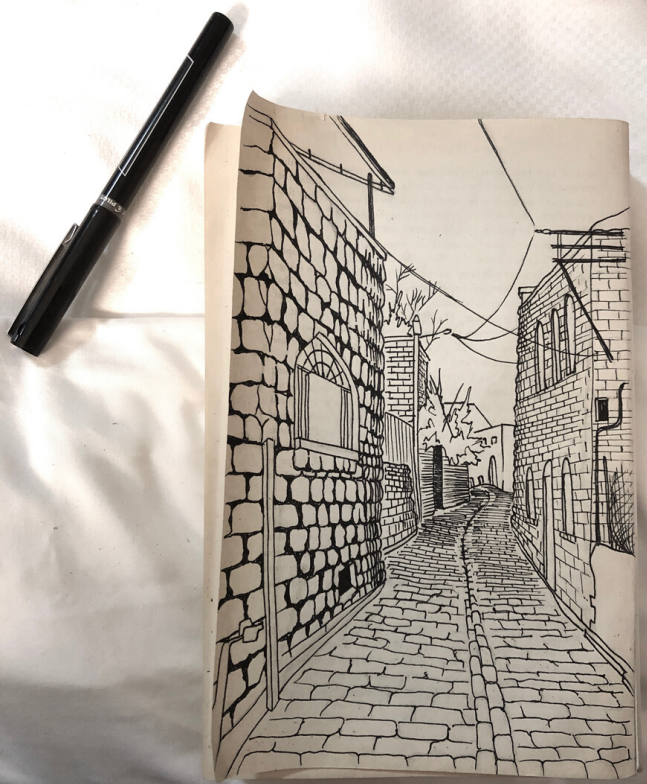
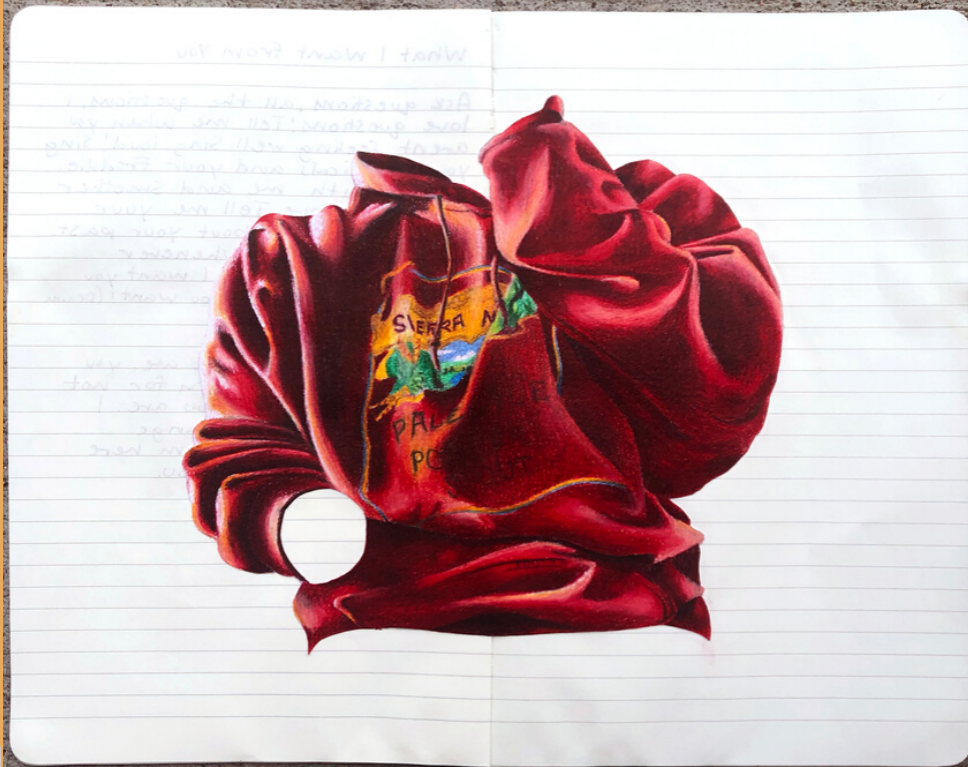
Emma Clemintine presenting her slam poem.

"The will to live alone, is not enough to keep it going. What it needs... it needs truth by a transplanting."

My Sweater

In this piece I explored the many emotions that follow a break up through drawing a realistic rendering of his sweatshirt being worn without anyone inside. The image was pasted on the back of his apology letter to try to transform hard and negative objects into positive and productive artwork.

Medium: colored pencil on journal paper



Tzfat

This is a drawing of the streets of Tzfat, Israel. It was drawn while I was in a state of anxiety and I needed to remember a place that made me happy and calm. Drawing Israel (and sometimes other places) has become a habit of mine to calm any nerves I have.

Medium: Ink on book pages

Ally Berkowitz

Seaquest

The Problematic Aquarium in Littleton Colorado

Written by Olivia Czarnecki



Since it's opening in June of 2018, Southwest Plaza's newest attraction has made quite a splash. SeaQuest is a so-called "interactive aquarium" that occupies 20,000 square feet of the Southwest Plaza Mall and claims to host 1,200 animals- many of which can be touched, fed, and held. In just sixteen short months, multiple complaints and concerns have been raised, dozens of injuries to animals, staff, and patrons have been reported, the facility has been investigated several times, its permits have been denied or revoked, and they have been made to relinquish several animals.

The history of the parent company behind SeaQuest Interactive Aquarium and its owners, the Covino family, is rife with scandal and corruption. The Covinos and several others involved with the operation have been accused of and charged with multiple instances of animal abuse, smuggling, and investment fraud. The company is based in Idaho and currently has locations in ten states. Previous to opening SeaQuest, the Covino brothers had been involved with the San Antonio, Austin, Portland, and Idaho Aquariums.

The family began to draw attention in 2012 when owner Vince Covino faced legal trouble for illicit financial activities unrelated to the business, including the improper appropriation of investor funds for personal purposes. The next highly public blow to the family's reputation and the first for their company

came in December of 2013 when Ammon Covino, who had opened the company's operation in Boise pleaded guilty to federally violating the Lacey Act by conspiring to traffic illegally harvested spotted rays and lemon sharks to the Idaho Aquarium. He served time in federal prison and as part of the terms of his probation was ordered to "not engage in any activity that involves exhibiting, importing, exporting, transporting, selling, receiving, acquiring or purchasing in interstate or foreign commerce any fish or wildlife."

Despite his probation, Ammon Covino continued to operate the Idaho Aquarium, and assisted in opening aquariums in Texas, Utah, and Nevada. For his involvement in the opening of these locations, Ammon was arrested and sent back to prison twice in 2016.

In 2015, the Idaho Attorney General released the findings of an investigation into the business and the Covino family, which revealed not only had the company committed several serious animal welfare violations, it had also been engaged in several questionable financial practices, including the deceptive solicitation and misappropriation of charitable donations; purchasing animals for the Portland Aquarium through the Idaho Aquarium; poor record keeping; and inexplicably generous compensation and benefits paid to Ammon Covino. It also revealed that the company had paid a co-conspirator \$11,000 to replace a pickup truck that was confiscated in his arrest for harvesting corals from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in violation of the Endangered Species Act.

Perhaps the most infamous of the company's scandalous ventures was the Portland Aquarium, whose leaked "death log"

was published in The Oregonian in 2013. The log, kept by employees, revealed over 200 deaths in a span of three months, often as a result of negligence, dirty conditions, starvation, and improper housing. The Aquarium announced a few months later that it would be closing and shortly following the announcement, owner Vince Covino removed his name as owner of the controversial business. The aquarium was permanently closed in February of 2016. Despite his efforts to distance himself from the company, Vince continued to defend its practices.

In 2017, the company's Las Vegas location faced outrage and protests led by its own former employees, who alleged that the animals there were not being properly cared for, were being abused by visiting children, and had died of neglect and improper housing. Demonstrations were held outside of the mall where the aquarium is housed.

Though concerns have been raised, no such organized opposition has been raised against the Littleton location. (Although, to this woman's credit, I did witness one mother and her two children standing at the entrance to the mall holding signs in protest on the day of SeaQuest Littleton's grand opening.)

The potential reasons for this lack of resistance are many and speculative. Perhaps people are unaware of the company's history. Perhaps visitors to the aquarium are unfamiliar with what the ethical housing of these species should do not actually look like. Or perhaps there are more deliberate reasons for the lack of attention being paid to SeaQuest.

Most Littleton residents are aware of the revitalization efforts that have been made to the Southwest Plaza Mall and the

surrounding commercial area. In 2011, a massive pedestrian bridge was built over Wadsworth near the Bowles intersection, between the mall and the shopping plaza across from it. to Jefferson County's transportation and engineering director Keith French in a 2014 *Denver Post* article. Shortly after, the mall underwent a \$75 million renovation over the course of 18 months that was completed in November of 2015. (Construction on the adjacent shopping plaza is still ongoing.) Since then, several new types of businesses open their doors: various fitness studios, restaurants, Round One, a pottery studio, Trader Joe's and others were eager to ride the coattails of the mall's rejuvenation.

It was at this time that, according to the *Denver Post*, the mall "begged SeaQuest to choose it as its next location," despite the fact that several high profile incidents surrounding the company had been recently uncovered.

The regulation of SeaQuest Littleton was a disaster from the outset. The aquarium is policed by several separate entities: the Division of Parks and Wildlife, the Pet Animal Care Facilities Act (PACFA) administration, and Jefferson County Animal Control. Each is exclusively charged with the oversight of certain species. This provides for a massive loophole of which SeaQuest appears to be very aware: any species that is not regulated by any of these entities is fair game to be purchased, housed and displayed with zero regulation.

**"Seaquest
Littleton was a
disaster from
the outset."**

From the beginning, the company has failed to apply for the proper permits required for its operation. In the same month that it opened, the aquarium failed two separate animal welfare inspections, and the Colorado Department of Agriculture cited the company for failing to apply for a permit to run a retail aquarium. The company applied, was denied, and received a cease-and-desist order. Since the Department of Agriculture, who issued the order, only oversees certain animals, the order mainly affected the open aviary exhibit, in which visitors are allowed in a room with dozens of free-ranging birds. In response to being ordered to remove the birds, the company stole eighty parakeets in the garage of a teenage employee that were then advertised on Facebook for free. Eyewitnesses attest to seeing the birds being given away by the employee and their parents in a hardware store parking lot.

Over the following few months, the aquarium failed to report several injuries, several deaths (including 250 trout at once and one protected wallaby), were found to have unlawfully imported and possessed several species, and failed several inspections. What they do manage to report shows that several animals have been injured or died, and injuries to staff and visitors have reportedly been inflicted by a variety of animals including pigs, tortoises, Asian water monitors, iguanas, pufferfish, sloths, stingrays, cockatoos, a pacu fish, horn and bamboo sharks, a wallaby, a Burmese python, and a red tegu.

Between October and November of 2018, a two-toed sloth named Flash suffered multiple consecutive burns to his face and

nose on an exposed heat lamp in his enclosure. Employees made no effort to move the lamp and failed to report his injuries to a veterinarian. Instead, he was treated with honey, coconut oil, and neosporin. When Jefferson County Animal Control responded to an anonymous tip concerning the sloth's condition, they found the animal with multiple oozing scabs, swelling in the lips and eyes, and unable to comfortably eat.

Following the incident Flash and two capybaras were found being stored in an employee's basement pending their transfer to the company's Minnesota location. In September of 2019, the company's Bird, Mammal and Reptile Manager, Ashleigh Belfiore, was found not guilty of animal cruelty charges related to Flash's injuries. The company plans to apply for the permit to bring Flash back to Littleton in the next 18 months.

The aquarium appears to be well aware of the concerns of the community, and has been reported to meet those concerns with efforts to silence them. After asking about one python's alleged lack of water, one patron reports that SeaQuest called security to have the woman removed. According to an article published by Fox31, a video was taken which shows a guard informing the woman that she had been asked to leave. When asked for an explanation, the guard stated, "I'm not at liberty to say. You just need to leave."

In response to several concerned Yelp reviewers, including patrons who have been injured or whose children were injured during their experience and those with concerns for the animals' care, the company consistently offers some variation of the following response: "We

understand and appreciate your concern. I want to let you know that SeaQuest unquestionably cares for its animals, and actually exceeds compliance requirements in our Littleton location (and all locations nationwide). We encourage you to set up a tour with one of our team members to further address your concerns. Please feel free to email our office manager... to set up a tour."

The regulatory agencies charged with the oversight of SeaQuest may not be enough to combat the blatant abuses to animal life that are occurring there. As consumers, we are morally obligated to step in and provide a secondary level of oversight by choosing to support ethical businesses. For every admission to the aquarium that SeaQuest sells, we as consumers are giving them further indication that we approve of their practices or are willing to disregard them. The more support this company receives, the more likely that these abuses will carry on.

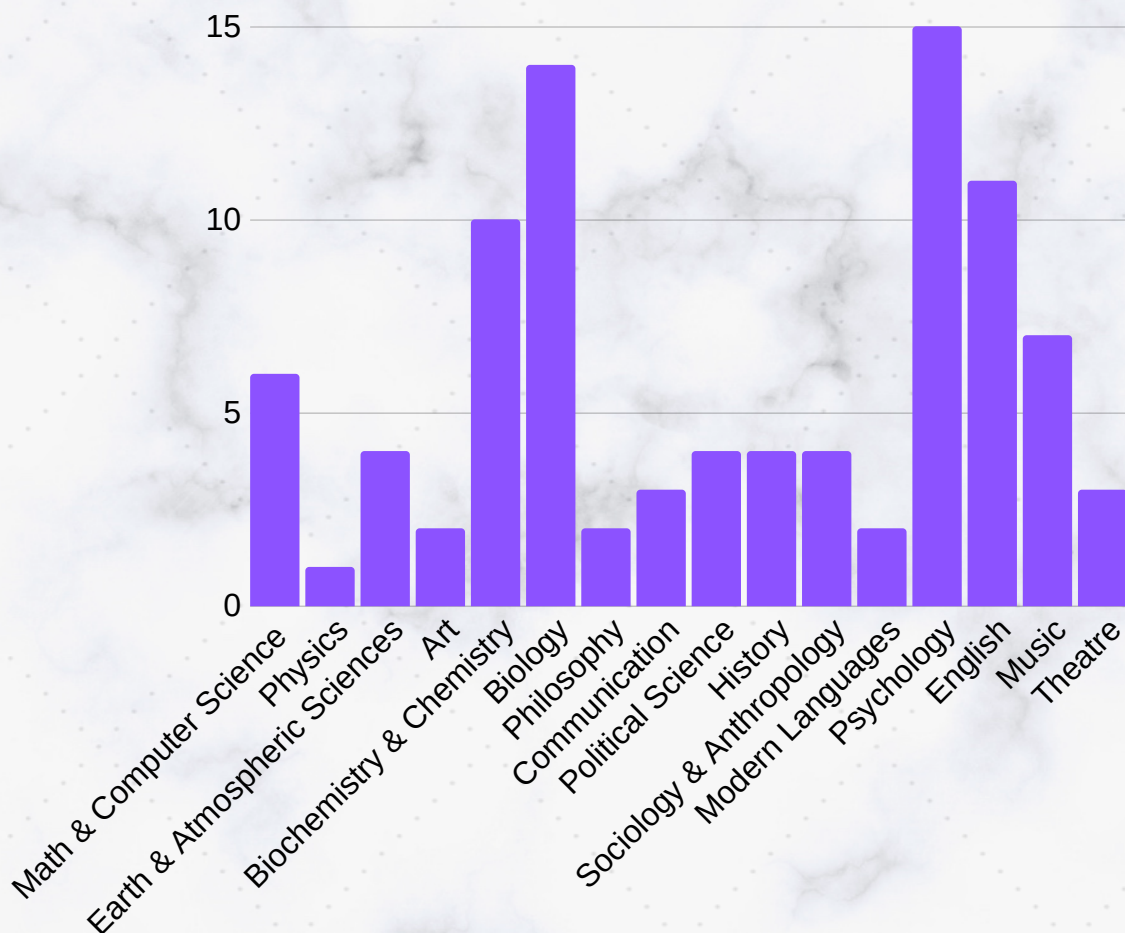
On April 1, 2019, Colorado Parks and Wildlife suspended SeaQuest's exhibitor's license for two years, requiring that the facility send regulated animals—including otters, capybaras, kookaburras, some fish, a sloth, and three types of snake—to other facilities. The hearing examiner's decision states, "The best interest of regulated wildlife and public safety is at the center of this suspension decision. SeaQuest has repeatedly ignored, or failed to report violations, that included human injuries and wildlife care issues." Time will tell if the consciences of Littleton's community members and the regulatory agencies responsible for the welfare of animals and humans will allow this company's flagrant abuses to continue.

MSU HONORS MAJORS

The MSU Denver Honors Program has grown and continues to grow exponentially.

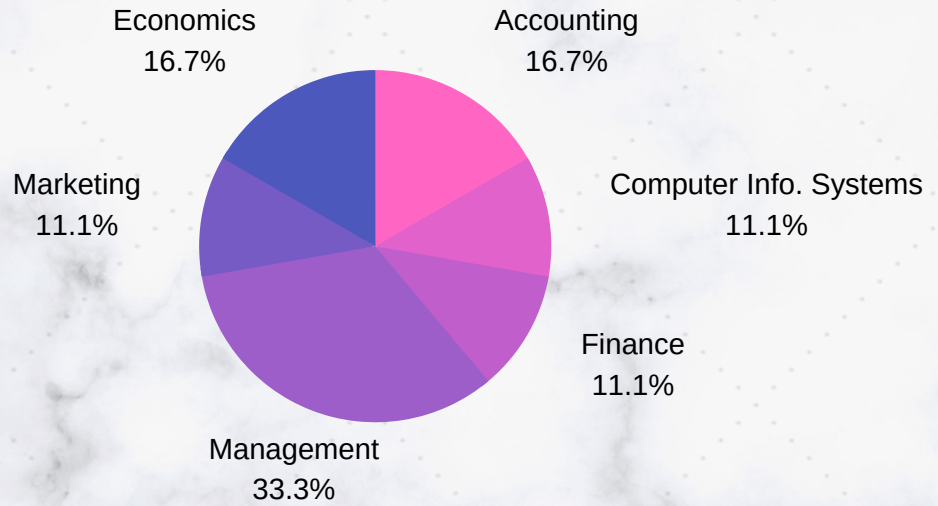
Do you know how many people in your major are in the Honors Program?
Check out the graphs below!

College of Letters, Arts and Sciences



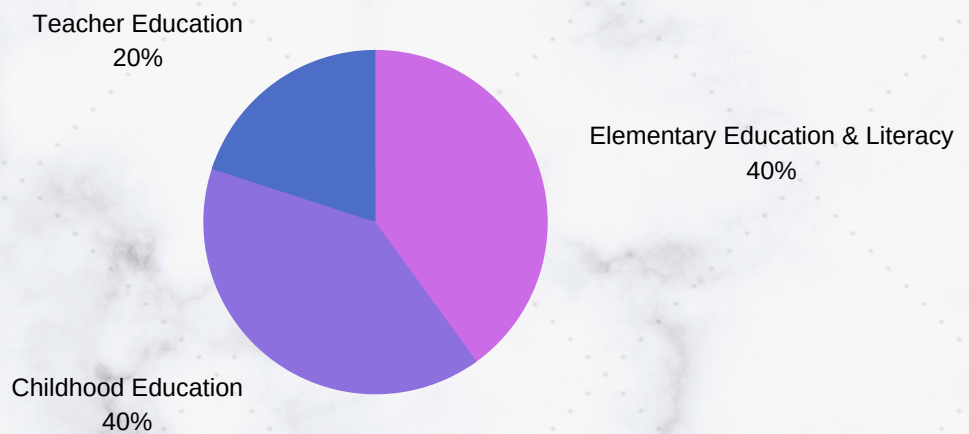
College of Business

Within the college of business there are 18 Honors students

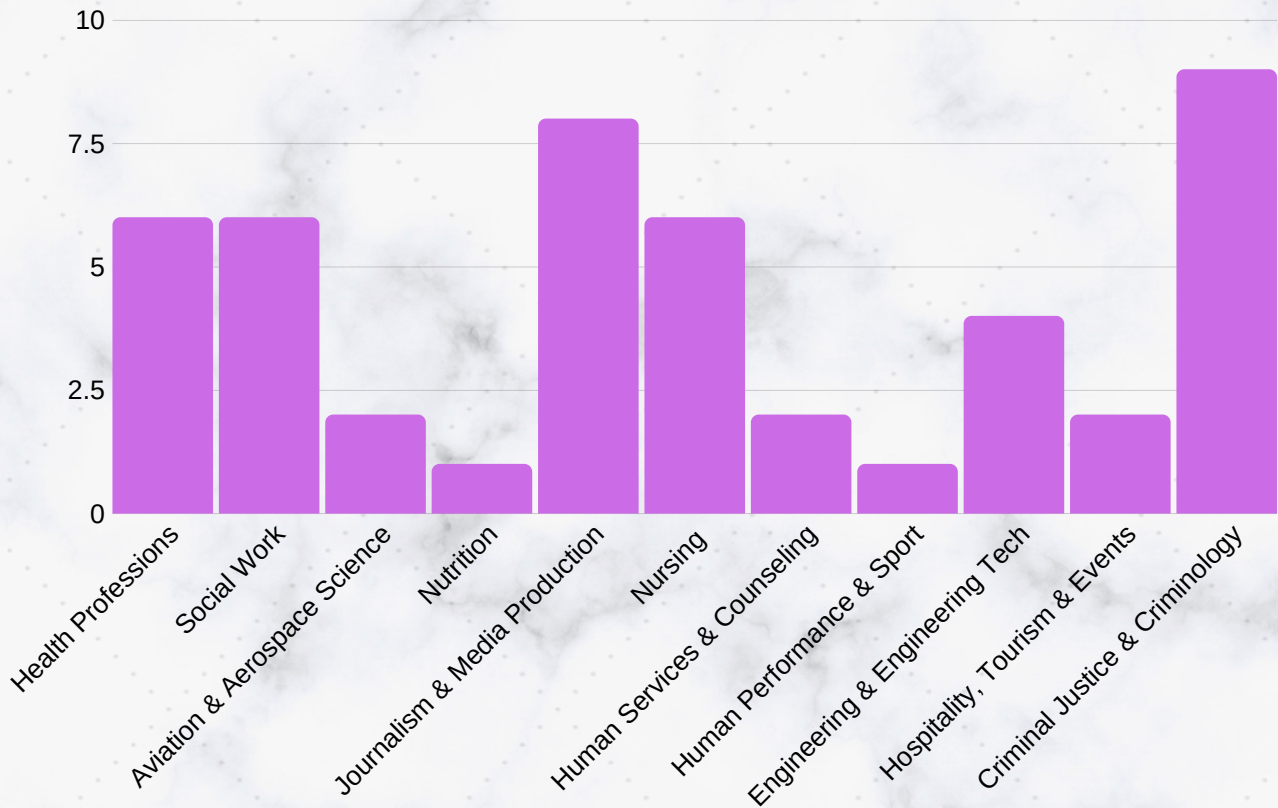


School of Education

Within the School of Education there are five Honors Students

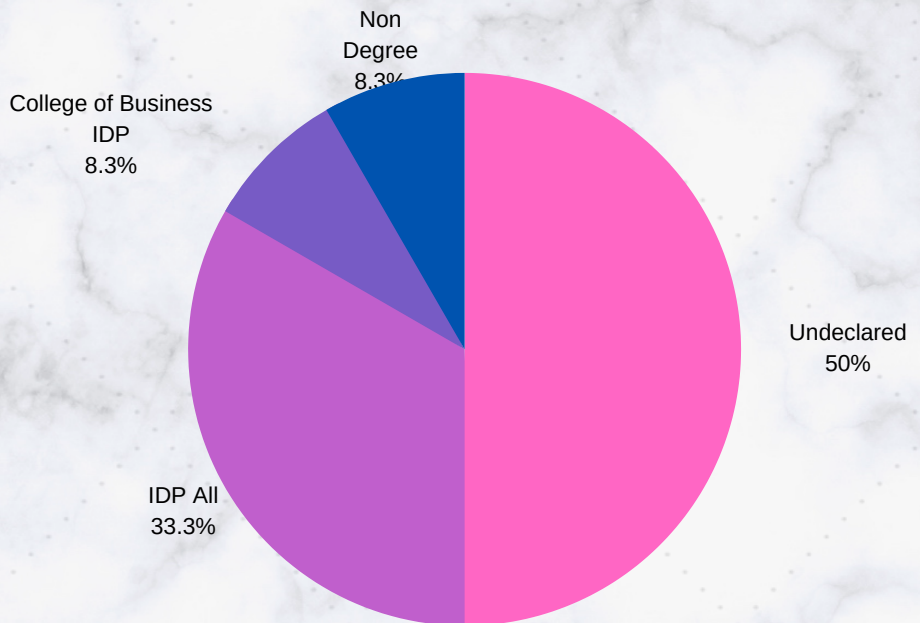


College of Professional Studies



Degree Non-Specific

There are 12 Honors students with Undeclared Majors



THE COMMUNITY PHOTO PAGE

THESE ARE PICTURES SUBMITTED BY VARIOUS HONORS STUDENTS OF THEIR COMMUNITY.



CCA: Where
Everyone's a
Minority

SUBMITTED BY COLTON LEE

We're all
Children at
heart

SUBMITTED BY SHAYLA
BISCHOFF



Chums Just
Palin' around!

SUBMITTED BY LIAM PRICE

PLEASE SUBMIT MORE PICTURES OF COMMUNITIES IN NEXT SEMESTERS NERD HERD NEWS

"ORANGES AND LEAVES"

Nana Heo



I decided to go with this girl, because I was in a middle of an art block and wanted to draw something just for fun. It wasn't stressful and I'm surprised at how well it came out! As a first year in college, I wanted to get involved as much as I could. Nerd Herd News gave me an awesome opportunity to connect with Honors Program members and show off my creativity. I hope you get the chance to showcase your creativity too!

Shayla Bischoff



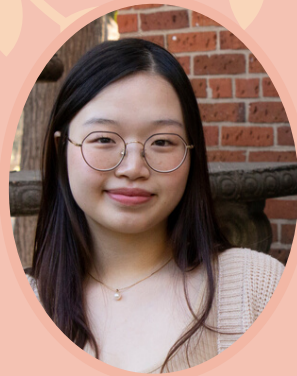
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Submit any creative works, reviews, and other fun activities you are working on!

Submissions are due
March 20, 2020 at Midnight
Send all submissions to:
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