

## TRANSFORMATIVE TIMES

Christian Rubio: a professor, a loving dog owner, and a man-with-a-plan for the Honors Program.

by Asimina Morris '21

The Honors Department saw a bit of a shake-up over the summer. In July, Professor Aaron Jackson announced that he was stepping down from the Honors Program, introducing Professor Christian Rubio as the new Director.

Shortly after that, Professor Rubio then named Professor Rob DeLeo to take over Professor Jeff Gulati's former position as the Associate Director of the Program. In his initial email to the students in the honors

program, Professor Rubio mentioned potential changes to the program that will be made within the upcoming months. I had the opportunity to sit down Professor Rubio and discuss his vision for the Honors Program.

Professor Rubio joined the Bentley community in 2011 as an Associate Professor of Modern Languages. He previously worked at the University of Louisiana Monroe, where also he served as Honors Program Director for five of years. I asked Professor Rubio about his long-term vision for our Program, and he commented on the exciting new times that await Bentley and the Honors Program. Professor Rubio is looking to increase the role of the current strategic plan of the Program, which breaks down into two main goals.

His first goal is to enhance the

honors curriculum. In effort to do this, with the help of the Honors Faculty Council, he is currently conducting a self-study of the Honors Program. This study will adhere to certain guidelines that National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) sets out for all honors programs. He hopes that the results yield some changes to the honors curriculum as well as the capstone process. It is his goal that the capstone is a culminating project that reflects the students' time at Bentley, while at the same time allowing them to work on a topic they are passionate about. Furthermore, he hopes for students to present their capstone projects at various honors conferences, providing them with an opportunity to display their hard work.

Professor Rubio's second goal for the Program is to foster the Honors Program community. He wants to "build on what Professor Jackson began" and have the Program be cultivated "by the students, for the students." When asked how the students could submit their input



Professor Christian Rubio

COURTESY, JESSICA ANUVATTANACHAI

# THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

## The Honors Floor: As Seen Through the Eyes of Other Honors Students

by Carissa Delvecchio '21

The Honors Community, like most defined communities, is an opportunity for incoming first-years to move in early, meet like-minded people, and form friendships during the year through bonding activities.

However, there is one aspect of the Honors floor that makes it different from the other special housing floors — it contains the honors lounge, a place where honors students can relax, get to know each other, and do schoolwork. It includes access to a free printer, TV, and game system. The lounge is an undoubtedly useful resource for anyone living in the Community, but there are other certain advantages that go unnoticed by the residents of the Slade 100s.

For my first year, I applied for Honors Housing and was unfortunately turned down due to an excess of interest. Despite disappointment, I was excited to start off my first year at Bentley right, and was determined to both accept the floor I was placed on, and to not let my housing assignment mean a lack of opportunity from the Honors Program. Considering I was still in Slade, the building the Honors Community is in, I figured that I would still be able to meet plenty of Honors students and get to know them. I was not the only one who felt the same way about using the Honors floor to make friends despite not living on it — Mark Stanic ('21)



Slade Hall

recalls “the honors floor was kind of a mystery for me at first — I only ever went at the beginning of the semester to meet new people.” The nature of the Honors Community is to be an environment for like-minded Honors students to get to know each other and thrive, so it is unsurprising to see many students visiting their peers on the floor.

There is one particular thing that the Honors dorms are able to provide that other floors do not; an environment immediately suited for group bonding. In the description for the Honors Community on the Residential Center website, it is “meant to provide a physical space for students to make meaningful connections” and allows residents to “develop relationships that prepare them for future success in the Honors Program.” Students living in Defined Communities move in a day earlier than the rest of the first-year students, where they get a head start on getting to know each other. This is no different than the normal move-in

day, however the Honors students also get the entire morning to know each other before orientation begins. I recall having a short meeting on move-in day to meet my floor; the Honors students, according to Katelyn Petronack ('21), “had dinner together as a floor, then did icebreakers together that were a ton of fun.” Moving in a day early to live on the Honors floor gave the residents the chance to truly begin to know each other before being thrust into the crazy schedule of orientation, allowing them to start off the year with an incredibly close bond.

Something to be considered when discussing how your freshman year of college went is how you are going to be changing socially for your second year. This includes the people with whom you will be hanging out and living. Many people have poor or mediocre roommate experiences their first year, and choose to live with the friends they made over the year. I know a number of people who are living with friends from all

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# A PERFECT CASE STUDY

## First-hand Market Research: my experience taking my first honors major class

by Bailey Saponaro '20

Major GPA. Sometimes dreaded, sometimes celebrated, but always feared. It is the two digits, separated by a decimal point, that mark success or failure within your discipline. No pressure.

As the spring semester of my sophomore year at Bentley inevitably approached, I became increasingly aware of the fact that it was time for me to not only officially declare a major, but also begin taking major classes. In hindsight, I wish I had been surer of myself. But, at the time, no amount of self-assurance could distract me from the fact that I was signed up to take two major marketing classes on the same day, with the same professor — and one of them was an honors course.

A seasoned industry veteran, Professor Pohlin Yeoh makes it clear to all of her classes from the start that, although the work in her classes will not be easy, it will be rewarding. In fact, she opened the very first Marketing Research class by explaining that only one person had managed to earn 4.0 in the last semester, and that the average grade for the class was around a 2.7. I recall sitting in the second row, wide-eyed, thinking to myself, “This isn’t even the honors course. What am I getting myself into?” Even though time would prove my competence, it was clear from the start that I was certainly not in Kansas anymore.

My very first class of the semester was Yeoh’s honors International Marketing course at 9:30 in the morning. I remember walking into

class a comfortable ten minutes early, with Argo Tea in hand, and selecting one of the many open seats available to choose. I glanced at the five other students in the room and resolved that more would be joining us in the next few minutes. By the time the clock struck 9:30, the professor had begun, and no other students had joined us. The entire class consisted of six students.

The size of the class was certainly one of the most striking differences I saw between the honors and non-honors major courses. In fact, I came to realize that the intimacy of the honors class was one of the major benefits of the course — and Professor Yeoh agrees.

I had the opportunity to interview Professor Yeoh recently to get her perspective on what distinguishes honors courses from non-honors courses. She and I both concede that class size can completely alter the structure of a course. In smaller classes, the instructor is able to lend more individualized attention and the students are able to learn better from each other. This creates a comfort and closeness rarely found in larger courses. Professor Yeoh remarked that a small class size is “imperative,” especially when it comes to an experiential class like International Marketing, which consists largely of an involved team simulation.

For many of us in the honors class, International Marketing was our very first major course — that prospect was nothing short of daunting. When I spoke with Professor Yeoh, she emphasized that another difference between honors and non-honors course material mainly lies in academic rigor: standard classes do not have different, diluted, or even reduced content, but rather honors courses are simply more challenging. They require heavy discussion and high levels of participation and student interaction. I absolutely agree with her, and I know firsthand that I would not have grown and learned as much as I did in that class if it had been any larger than it was.

For Professor Yeoh, the most important part of teaching is seeing student growth. While I certainly felt a transformation in the way I learned from the honors course, I also think it is important to note the growth I experienced in the non-honors Marketing Research class of twenty-two students as well. The non-honors course, also a required course for marketing majors, was much more regimented than the international marketing class. There were far less theoretical undertones, and much less focus on tying material together. It is easier for me to think abstractly, but this class had structured rules and demanded the development of hard skills.

While reflecting on this different kind of challenge in my interview with Professor Yeoh, I asked her out of curiosity whether she finds that honors students attend office hours

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# CHOOSE YOUR MEDIUM

## A Look at The Honors Program Creative Capstones

by Kimia Pourshadi '20

When you're young, you are repeatedly asked, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" Some respond by saying they want to be actors, painters, writers, musicians, comedians, and the list goes on.

These hobbies and passions, unfortunately, are easily forgotten when we begin answering this question later on in life. It can be challenging to hold onto our childhood passions as our academic careers begin to evolve and our focus is shifted to internships and full time offers. While some courses offer opportunities for creativity, it is up to the individual to pursue and maintain these passions. Academic structure can render activities that used to be low-risk and exciting less engaging. The Honors Program has created a forum that allows for academic drive and creativity to fuse through the creative capstone project. Honors students can now diversify their capstones by investing time into a creative project. Long-term projects are the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences when the creator is able to enjoy the project along the way. The creative capstone is an opportunity to explore the passions that you may not have been able to spend time on during your four years here.

One example of a phenomenal project was Skyler de Boer, a student who spent her time creating a novel titled Ledger with her mentor Erica Arkin from the English Media Studies Department. She was able to combine her passions for creative writing and intersectionality studies to produce a work that was selected as the winner of the Creative Writing Capstone Award for the 2017-2018

academic year. To Professor Arkin, being a mentor is rewarding "because it gives [her] a chance to support and guide students as they move from their initial ideas through planning, drafting, and revising. Students who want to write a piece of fiction as their capstone tend to be incredibly driven and I always look forward to seeing how each unique project comes together." The capstone requires strong collaboration between a student and faculty member. Professor Arkin "recommend[s] readings and activities that will help students move through the writing process" and then, she "provide[s] feedback when students move into the drafting and revising phase." She further explained that it is common for students to enter the "capstone semester" with a full draft so that the pair can spend the entire semester making extensive revisions.

Some advice she has for students that are trying to pursue a creative capstone is "to start thinking about their project prior to their final year at Bentley and reach out to faculty for guidance even in the early stages" because of the large time commitment associated with the need for extensive revision. Professor Arkin suggests that students start with a written rough draft and reach out to possible mentors in their junior year. In doing so, mentors will have "the opportunity to make a timeline for research and writing spread



COURTESY JESSICA ANUVATTANACHAI

Professor Erika Arkin

across [students'] final year." Her final piece of advice is to read extensively. Because "reading creative work helps you determine what kind of project you want to undertake," going into the draft with a wealth of literature significantly improves and facilitates the capstone process.

While so much of Bentley curriculum is centered around the business major and general business requirements, the capstone is chance to take a unique approach. If your passion lies in the creative fields, try to find a mentor that matches your area of interest. This project is an opportunity for you to independently explore a field or a scholarship that may not have been available to you during your time at Bentley. The Honors Capstone allows for students to take a break of the business environment, gain an appreciation for creativity, and revive forgotten passions.

—Kimia Pourshadi '20 is a English and Media Studies Major

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about any and all Honors Program happenings, Professor Rubio pointed out many resources students can use. The Honors Council has Class Representative positions that students can run for at the end of the school year, and any questions or recommendations can be communicated through them. Professor Rubio has also initiated “Pizza Mondays” in Slade Hall throughout the fall semester in order to better connect with the freshman class, and hopes to introduce a similar event for the rest of the

Program. Professor Rubio and Professor DeLeo also hold office hours in the Honors Office where students are encouraged to stop by and say hello. The office itself has recently been remodeled, and Professor Rubio hopes that with these improvements, students will spend more time in the office.

Ultimately, Professor Rubio looks forward to engaging with students and working to incorporate their feedback into the program. He plans to elevate the Honors Program by

maintaining its national recognition and continuing to participate in academic conferences. Professor Rubio encourages students to get into contact with him and share their ideas. He insists that the main part of his job as Director is “giving students the best experience as absolutely possible,” and this philosophy certainly shows in his passion and plans for Bentley’s Honors Program.

*–Asimina Morris '21 is an Economics-Finance Major*

## THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN *(Continued from page 2)*

different buildings — merging last year’s Slade, Miller, and Trees residents across campus. None of these people live on the Honors floor. Of all the people with whom I have spoken who lived on the Honors floor, every single one is living with someone from the Honors Community, if not their direct roommate. If this does not show the genuine bonds and friendships that

the Honors Community is able to make, then I am not sure what would.

Living as a member of the Honors Community is something that I hope each resident values, as they have gained incredible relationships that most people never will, as well as a thorough integration into the Honors Program. As someone who was not able to live on the floor and make

these connections, I advise that past, current, and future Honors floor residents do not take the experience for granted, and that every future Honors student consider living on the floor as an opportunity to make the most out of the program and the year.

*–Carissa Delvecchio '21 is a Management Major*

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more than non-honors students do. To my surprise, she informed me that honors students actually visit less. She explained that the intimate class sizes of honors courses allow the instructor to gain a good understanding of individuals’ abilities, allowing professors to support them accordingly. In larger classes, she said, this is much more of a challenge, and the burden of obtaining help is transferred instead to the students. Upon reflection, she is right. I almost never sought Professor Yeoh’s help outside of

class for the honors course, but I could be found talking with her for extended periods of time after the non-honors Marketing Research class time.

After successfully making it through last semester, I can proudly say that I have undoubtedly changed and developed as a student because of taking both of Professor Yeoh’s classes. With all of their differences, both the honors and non-honors class forced me to think in ways I had never previously considered. Even with my rosy retrospection, I

cannot pretend that undertaking a course load of such high importance was easy. I definitely felt the growing pains. However, I cannot deny the inherent advantages that honors courses afford students. I will be the first to admit that the prospect of an honors major class is nothing short of frightening. But, take it from someone who tried it both ways: honors or non-honors, you really can do it — oh, and your major GPA will be fine, too!

*–Bailey Saponaro '20 is a Marketing Major*



This fall, the Honors Program will host:

# PIZZA MONDAYS WITH THE DIRECTOR

**WHEN:** Every Monday at Noon

**WHERE:** The First Year Honors  
Students Lounge in Slade Hall

**WHAT TIME:** Noon

Come by and stop for a slice of  
pizza and chat with Professor  
Rubio about honors!



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