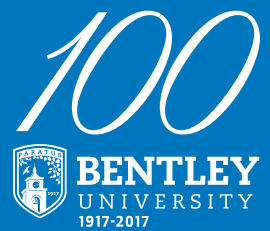


# COLUMNS

The Honors Program Newsletter at Bentley University ■ Fall 2016



Managing Editors:  
Priya Varatharajan '19  
Dana Zappone '19

## THE GIFT

### What My Honors Diploma Means to Me *By Maria Clarice Chua '16*

Graduation this past May was a strange day, at least for me. I was surely as happy and excited as my peers, but I had known since I was a little girl that the day of college graduation was infused with years of hidden meaning that glazed the hours of that fateful morning in a dizzying dream. When I walked across that stage to receive my diploma, I wasn't thinking about my steps, me, that moment. I was thinking about my father.

My father, the man who was born in the slums of Manila, who lost his own father to lung disease at a young age, who witnessed his brothers succumb to gangs and poverty as a teenager. My father, who ran a small convenience store selling small breads and candies for a peso each, who studied at night and worked by day. He took eight long years to achieve something no one else in his family could – graduate college. And from that moment on, he was no longer like the rest.

His college graduation date felt like lifetimes away from mine (though he would probably laugh at the thought), but when my own diploma touched my hands, I tried to imagine what he must have felt in that same moment. Was it freedom? After all, without that degree, he would probably still be trapped in that one-room shack he grew up in, sharing a tiny space with his sisters and their children. Was it hope? He

must have dreamt about the possibilities of having a healthy income – perhaps he could move to the United States, or maybe even send his children to college. Or was it a harrowing sense of responsibility – because this piece of paper meant he had the means to provide for those he loved, and that it was up to him to use this gift to care, to love, to shelter, to feed.

Knowing the man my father is today, what he felt at his college graduation was probably some combination of all three. By his own admission, he knew that this degree was his ticket out of the life he saw his family trapped in, but he never could have imagined that it could have carried him and the family he eventually created across the Atlantic and into what was then the most prosperous country in the world.

And though much has happened since his graduation and mine, the essential

promise he believed education possessed remained indelible. He so whole-heartedly believed that when all was taken away and lost, what a person was left with was his mind – and that the mind was the most powerful force in the world. This colored his perception of the world, altered how he taught me, how he showed his love to me. He wanted me to learn, bought me books to read, would take on my chores if I was stressed about a test, was willing to pay hundreds of thousands in loans to let me go to my dream school (luckily for him, I elected for practicality). He



PHOTO COURTESY MARIA CLARICE CHUA

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# THE RACE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

## Another Historic Election *By Lily Ling '19*

In what will arguably be America's most historically significant November yet, the United States is preparing to elect its 45th president. Either Hillary Clinton will become the nation's first female president or Donald Trump will be the first billionaire, and non-career politician in many decades to hold the title of "Commander-in-Chief."

Although not uncommon to elections, the 2016 Presidential Election has been marked by enormous controversy and outcry surrounding both of the current candidates at question. In Clinton's case, she has been dogged by issues of dishonesty highlighted by the private email scandal that involved the mishandling of classified information on a private server during her time as secretary of state. Trump's campaign has also been plagued with numerous issues, that of which include his own inflammatory and controversial remarks about others as well as his wife Melania's plagiarism scandal during the Republican Convention.

With Barack Obama's second presidential term coming to an end, both the Democrats and Republicans began preparing for their respective primaries early last year. Having lost the 2008 Democratic nomination to Obama, Clinton unsurprisingly emerged as her party's frontrunner over socialist senator Bernie Sanders and Maryland governor Martin O'Malley long before primary voting began. In contrast, the Republican Party saw a record breaking 17 candidates declare their bid, whose specialties ranged from real estate (Trump), neurosurgery (Carson), brother and son to two former presidents (Jeb Bush), and the former Hewlett Packard CEO (Fiorina).

With the Republican festivities kicking off first, last September saw the conservative party's prospective candidates emerge throughout a

relatively even playing field compared to that of the Democrats. Trump held everyone's attention however, whether it was praising his bluntness and self-financed campaign or questioning his diplomatic ability and offensive remarks. Nevertheless, not even career politicians such as Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio could beat Trump's bold, unconventional, Twitter based campaign. Much to the displeasure of the party base, Trump's polarizing charisma is thought to ensure the loss of moderate conservative votes to Hillary Clinton.

The Democratic nomination process was much smoother, albeit similarly dramatic. The two main candidates were Clinton and Vermont senator Bernie Sanders; the latter revitalizing millennial's political participation rates with his calls for socialist economic policy and unfiltered social justice. With Clinton assured the support of super delegates, in June it was confirmed that she would make it to

the convention as the nominee.

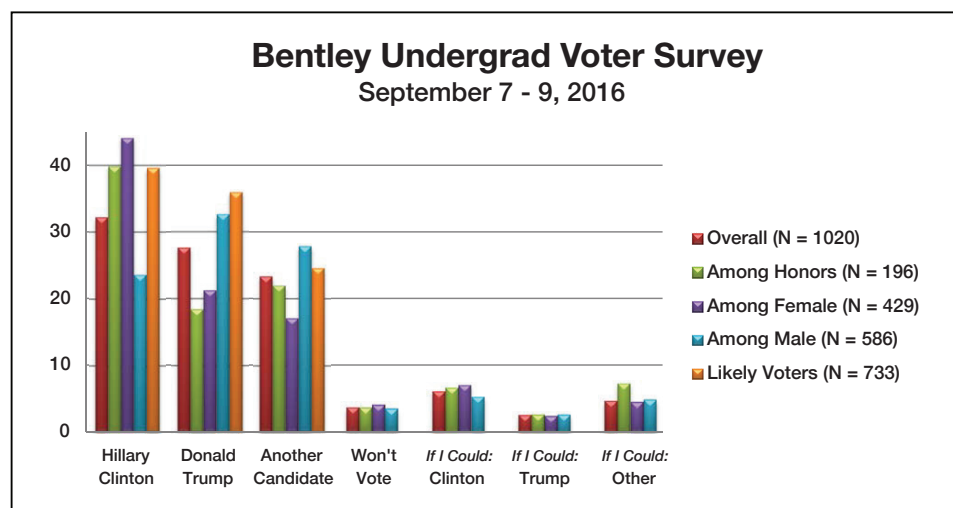
Also present at the conventions were Tim Kaine and Mike Pence, Clinton and Trump's respective running mates. Candidates were chosen to complement the nominee's attributes as well as make up for some needed areas of improvements, either in demographics, temperament, or policy acumen. In particular, former Indiana governor Mike Pence helped Trump gain favor with many conservatives who at first refused to support the party nominee, while Kaine should help Clinton carry the swing state of Virginia.

With such a polarizing election focusing on millennials, we thought it would be good to take the pulse of Bentley students to see how they feel about each candidate and the election as a whole. We received 1,020 responses to a quick survey sent out to all undergraduates between September 7-9, 2016, representing



Lily Ling

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# EMBRACING THE UNKNOWN

## How the Bentley Honors Program Made Me a Better Intern

By Kaitlyn Lavertu '18

It's more than just a gold star on a resume; the Bentley Honors Program offers the university's top students an educational experience that is transferable to the working world.

On campus, it's hard to distinguish between the average Bentley student and those that are in the Honors Program. Many have the same dreams or similar clothes, but it is in the classroom and campus organizations that Honors students stand out. Natural-born leaders who thirst for knowledge and wisdom, these students take their dedication to academic success to another level. But what happens when they are no longer in a school setting? What happens when they enter the professional world where exams don't really exist?

My queries were answered this past summer when I was hired for a paid internship with a Fortune 100 company. On my first day, my manager picked me up from the front lobby, brought me to my own cubicle in the finance department, and assigned me with learning the details of the department's role in the commercial insurance business by the time we would regroup. This was all new to me; never before had I worked alone with information I would be tested on in an hour next to adults I didn't know.

I may have been overwhelmed, but I welcomed the challenge. One of the most important lessons that the Bentley Honors Program instills in its students is being aware of their situation and then using their acquired skills to adapt to it. My desk may have been in a cubicle instead of an honors classroom, but all of the same concepts I've learned there were applicable.

I made it a point to find any projects I

thought weren't so interesting and get my hands on them. Last semester, I took Human Genetics and Behavior Honors despite every inclination to not take the class. I went to business school to avoid 'boring' science classes, and here I was taking one at the Honors level. However, to my surprise the course focused on discussions regarding a book that was actually interesting to read. Human Genetics and Behavior was all about how genes apply to topics that turn Honors students' heads, like IQ scores and how stress affects people differently. The course taught me how to open myself to, learn from, and enjoy experiences I never would have opted into before.

What truly allowed me to succeed even when I had no idea what I was getting myself into were my Excel skills. Between the extensive coverage of Excel functions in my IT Honors class and the mastery of graphing I developed in my Math Case Studies Honors course, I was able to maneuver myself through technical projects quickly and accurately. My manager and other professional team members were impressed with how much I knew how to do, like run macros and build charts that were worthy of inclusion in meeting with their managers and executives. When there was a function I did not know how to do, I took it upon myself to find how to do it, learn it and apply it to my work. In addition, my Math Case Studies course was entirely group-based, so being able to work and communicate with others effectively while maintaining a high level of professionalism and integrity

made my team's jobs easier.

All of my classes with the Honors Program showcase what it is about: teaching its students to go

the extra mile and providing them with the knowledge, experience, skills and confidence to enter any room they want to be a part of. The rigorous courses, like Financial Accounting and Reporting I and II Honors, that test students' endurance and encourage them to critically think about current issues are how the best self-discoveries are made. The Honors program inspires students to continuously improve and to actively be a part of a supportive community that is empowered by embracing the unknown.

At the end of my internship, my manager and I had a closing meeting to review my work and evaluate my future at the company. I was very happy when she proposed the only changes I'd see were returning next summer in a bigger office with even more opportunities that align with my goals. As I think back to my days when I was an eager high school senior looking for an outlet to showcase my talents in the classroom, choosing the Bentley Honors Program to be my home for the next four years was an easy decision to make. The Honors Program is more than something that helps you stand out. As a student, intern, Bentley community member, and future businesswoman, it has given me so much more.



Kaitlyn Lavertu

AUTHOR PICTURE COURTESY OF LUIS GUEVARA ZAMORA

# SMOKE-FREE BENTLEY

## A Campus Looking to Kick Some Butt *By Stephanie Robinson '19*

Even though campus was largely deserted on June 1, 2016, a significant change to student life was instituted and only now is impacting the entire student population. The posters, which see the number 'one' as a crushed cigarette butt, denote the day Bentley University put its smoke-free campus policy into effect.

Calling this a major change would be an understatement. Before the protocol adjustment, Bentley's smoking policy, in accordance with Massachusetts state law allowed smoking so long as it was 25 feet from any building on campus. While many students complied, there were some who smoked less than the allotted 25 feet away, grouping in front of academic buildings. Following the results of a survey conducted two years ago that concluded an overwhelming amount of the Bentley community did not smoke, Bentley is drastically shifting from its lenient policy to prohibiting smoking on campus altogether.

The new policy precludes the use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, e-cigarettes, and any other smoke-producing tobacco products by students, faculty, staff, guests, visitors, and contractors on all properties owned or leased by campus. This of course applies inside and outside of buildings, but also extends to inside private vehicles, and anywhere else on campus property. Refusal to comply with this policy may be cause for disciplinary action in accordance with employee and student conduct policies.

This extreme policy change favored cessation programs over designated smoking zones, and outlawed smoking alternatives such as e-cigarettes. As with nearly all new safety regulations instituted in society, the goal of improved health or safety required the limitation of the personal freedom of

some individuals. Some changes such as requiring the use of seatbelts has been generally accepted and proven to reduce deaths. However, other regulations, such as New York City's attempt to limit the size of sodas sold to 16 ounces, were ultimately overturned as an unwarranted restriction of personal choice. Fascinated with the range of reactions we knew this would elicit, my group for my Honors Deviance and Social Control Sociology class last semester decided to focus our research on the ban. Our goal was to investigate the opinions, reactions, and future smoking plans of Bentley students in particular, although the policy affects staff, faculty, and visitors alike.

We began by distributing a seven question survey to various organizations and classes on campus; our overall sample consisted of 112 students across all four undergraduate years. From previous observations, we had expected the majority of

respondents claiming to be smokers to be international. However, only two of the thirteen international student respondents identified as

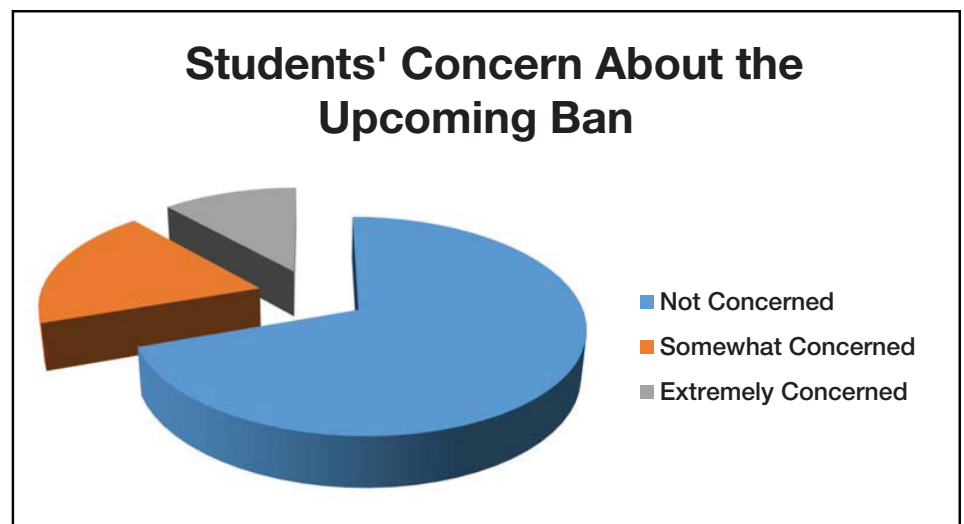


**Stephanie Robinson**

smokers. Of the eight identified smokers, six were male and two were female. Even though the male to female ratio of respondents was not representative of the Bentley population, the international to domestic student ratio was fairly representative; 12% of respondents were international and 16% of the Bentley population is international.

After analyzing our data, we concluded the majority (70%) of our sample was generally not concerned with the upcoming ban, while about 20% were at least somewhat concerned. 93% reported not smoking at all while the other respondents comprised of smokers who smoked between once or twice a year and ten times a day.

Of the smoker respondents, some plan to ignore the ban altogether, while



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# RELAY FOR LIFE

## Honors Beyond Academics *By Frank Elenio '19*

A profound collegiate experience should have the ability to teach lessons both inside and outside of the classroom. Bentley University's idea of seeing our school as one that is a "living-learning community" has frequently proved why a well-rounded college education is necessary for success in the 21st century. As a current sophomore who is through a mere twenty-five percent of his time studying at Bentley, I have already seen how our school culture, one that is built on many honorable pillars, excels at fostering personal growth with a keen awareness on improving the surrounding community.

Among one of the many instances in which Bentley, and more specifically the Bentley Honors Program, shone was during 2016's Relay for Life. My relationship with this event, even prior to joining Bentley, is quite unique. I admit with regret that I required

wrenching moments of the event, and became a huge supporter. Now, not only do I serve on the E-Board of Colleges Against Cancer, I am also the Service Coordinator for the Bentley Student Honors Council. As the latter, I am tasked with finding and encouraging opportunities for Honors students to participate in meaningful community service. Upon being appointed to the position, I immediately thought of Relay for Life. Cancer is something that has affected most, if not all of us, its effect apparent even in a community as diverse as the Bentley Honors Program. I knew this would be a project where the Honors Program could give back, and serve our community well. Balancing both my passion and nervousness, I proudly went forward with my first project as Service Coordinator: creating a Relay for Life team for the Bentley Honors Program.

After commissioning the project and beginning promotions, it was met with an equally supportive reception from Honors students and faculty alike! One professor even responded minutes after the initial informational email was sent, inquiring about how to support both the organization and our efforts towards creating a Honors Program team. Furthermore, when the residents of Slade Hall's Honors Floor became aware of the initiative, they too expressed resolute support, making it a point to assist me while tabling outside of the dining hall and classrooms to spread the word. The team was off to a very optimistic start, and it only got stronger after its launch.

We started organizing very early into the fall 2015 semester, and very far away from the actual event itself. Taking advantage of how early the process had begun, I proceeded to market our team with an assortment of carefulness, optimism and passion to ensure the team's success. Fast forward to April 22nd, 2016, the night of Relay for Life. We had built a team that placed in the top ten in terms of participation and fourth of 51 teams in total fundraising. Even an alumni ten years my senior generously donated, as did students and faculty campus wide. Our team also included three "virtual survivors", which are remote participants who are signed up for the event by team members who Relay to honor their specific loved ones. More importantly, we had also built a team



Frank Elenio

AUTHOR PICTURE COURTESY OF LUIS GUEVARA ZAMORA



RELAY PICTURE COURTESY OF RELAY FOR LIFE BENTLEY UNIVERSITY

convincing to attend my first Relay for Life during sophomore year of high school amidst a very rigorous final exam season, and had no interest in attending initially. But minutes after arriving, I quickly forgot about the stresses that were around me, embraced the heartwarming and heart

overlooked last year was the constant immense support emanating from the Honors community.

When I first presented the idea to the Student Honors Council, it was instantaneously met with a strong reception and unwavering backing.

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# WHAT MAKES A TEAM TICK?

## Examining Success via Collaboration *By Luis Guevara Zamora '19*

Productively collaborating with peers, subordinates, and superiors has become one of the most valuable skills of the 21st century. Being in a team is now equivalent to belonging to a community, since both comprise of a group of people striving to achieve a common goal by working together. This has prompted reputed institutions such as M.I.T. and tech giants such as Google to delve into figuring out why certain teams perform better than others. The results are astounding, and luckily for us, the Bentley curriculum has been designed to equip us with the essential positive team building skills we need.

Bentley is known for preparing its students to tackle the multi-faceted dynamic of teamwork through its curriculum, particularly that of the General Business sequence. Terms such as teamwork, group building, and Outlook invites transcend from the fabric of our curriculum to our daily lives, and eventually workplace. We are trained not only to collaborate well, but also to tackle any ensuing disagreements with professionalism. As we move up in our Bentley careers we grow not only as individuals, but as members of a team. We learn how to manage and work efficiently with others. From the first GB 112 project where people were just beginning to experience the murky waters of college team projects to the GB 212 project, I experienced a notable difference in preparation and efficiency. Why though? Because the knowledge everyone had gained from working on their first group project transferred over when attempting their second.

Such professionalism has proved invaluable, since people often feel they have to prove themselves individually,

which can lead to disagreeing over leadership issues and debating new ideas. Such behavior generates stress, diminishing productivity due to a poor work ethic. Nevertheless, brainstorming can broaden your perspectives in ways you may have never thought were possible, especially given how the era of cubicle work is coming to an end. In accordance with the current resurgence of an industrial revolution are Marshall Van Alstyne's findings on the manner in which we share information. The Boston University professor concluded that "we're living through a golden age of understanding personal productivity." Groups have been statistically proven to solve problems faster, spot mistakes at a higher success rate, and offer innovative solutions as opposed to individuals. Why, then, has there been so little research on what exactly makes a team tick? Lucky for us, Google has invested in several years of research on its quest to discovering just what exactly creates the perfect team.

Since its inception in 2012, Project Aristotle used historical data on past team's performances to figure out why some rose while others faltered. What motivated members? What traits did successful projects have in common? What was the goal of each project? What was the ethnicity, age, and gender distribution of each team? Every possible variation that could affect a team was researched.

However, the only conclusive pattern found was that group norms heavily influence interaction. Omnipresent yet unique to every group, norms include rules against interrupting, communication methods, scheduling, celebrations, and even the number of

tangential topics discussed in a meeting. Various studies were conducted to bring more specificity to this field, yet only a collaborative effort between Carnegie Mellon, M.I.T., and Union College psychologists in 2008 yielded a startling discovery. The experiment assigned tasks to various teams, concluding that successful teams consisted of members who treated each other well. This may seem obvious at first glance, yet proved humanity prevailed in an age heavily reliant on data.

Despite having technology at our fingerprints, the study reinforced how successful teams simply need its members to positively influence each other in order to triumph. All the other variables were not nearly as important as caring for your fellow team members. Successful teams evenly distributed opportunities for all team members to voice their opinions even if there was a clear leader; this gave room for the collective intelligence and participation of the group to soar. These teams also demonstrated what psychologists called "social sensitivity," which meant that members could intuitively feel when someone was not welcomed or comfortable and would strive to include them in the group dynamic.

Such tangential discussions prevailed because sharing intimate anecdotes created an aura of confidence and trust between members that is



Luis Guevara Zamora

AUTHOR PICTURE COURTESY OF LUIS GUEVARA ZAMORA

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## THE GIFT *(Continued from page 1)*

thought that if he could give me this gift – the gift of an education – it would protect me, provide for me, even long after he was gone.

Though he never explicitly pushed me into taking every honors class and studying for four AP tests in high school, or joining the Honors Program here at Bentley, his work pushed mine further. It made me want to learn more, to do better and it made me believe that I could be better, if I could stretch my mind wider and wider. In that

sense, the Honors Program was a definite plus, because it gave me the challenges, professors and outlets I needed to grow my mind and to make the most of what my father has given me.

That was what I thought about when I received my diploma. I thought about the long years my father spent trying to earn his own, about the fear and anticipation that must have rattled his bones when he first journeyed to America, alone, confused, with nothing

but a job contract as a computer consultant and a picture of my mother and baby me to provide him with comfort and safety. I thought about how much that sacrifice, that effort, has pushed into my own life, forced me to realize that I cannot take anything for granted, made me recognize that this diploma, this seemingly flimsy piece of paper, signified a promise fulfilled, a lifetime's work completed.

*-Maria Clarice Chua '16 is an Actuary Analyst with Aon*

## THE RACE TO THE WHITE HOUSE *(Continued from page 2)*

about a 25% response rate. When asked if they were likely to vote in the presidential election this November, a surprisingly large 77% of students answered “yes”. In answering who they would vote for, students’ responses tracked fairly close to many current national polls: 38% for Clinton, 30% for Trump, 28% for another candidate, and 4% who said they would not vote at all. Overall, the students who responded were 58% male and 42% female (very close to Bentley’s breakdown), with 19% saying they are in the Honors Program.

Unsurprisingly reflective of national polls, Clinton fared well with female voters and Trump did with male voters. Among the honors students’ responses, Clinton also beat out Trump

by a sizeable margin, almost double.

As Election Day approaches, it will be interesting to see what direction the majority of Americans decide to go. Our polls suggest that Bentley as a whole, and the Honors Program in particular will be voting for Clinton. However, given the unfavorability ratings of both candidates, anything

can happen between now and election. Whether it be an experienced career politician or a strong-headed businessman we elect in November, this country is headed for a bumpy road to recovery and progression during these crucial times.

*-Lily Ling '19 is an Accounting major*

### TALE OF THE TAPE

Name, Party	Hillary Clinton (D)	Donald Trump (R)
Running Mate	Tim Kaine	Mike Pence
Campaign Slogan	<i>Stronger Together</i>	<i>Make America Great Again</i>
Alma Matter	Wellesley College (B.A.) Yale University (J.D.)	University of Pennsylvania- Wharton School of Business (B.S.)
Positions (experience)	Former Secretary of State, Former Senator of Illinois, Former First Lady	Owner of Trump Organization, Producer/Creator of Celebrity Apprentice
Economy	Fair tax system, preserve social security and Medicare	Decrease taxation, increase trade, soften energy restrictions
Immigration	Create a pathway to full and equal citizenship	Build a wall at the Mexican border, temporary ban on Muslims entering the country
Healthcare	Expand affordable healthcare to all families	Cut Obamacare
Abortion	Pro-choice	Pro-Life

## SMOKE-FREE BENTLEY *(Continued from page 4)*

others plan to smoke off campus or at night when they presumably won't get caught. This resistance could stem from Bentley's aim to make the transition easy, avoiding immediate harsh punishments by recognizing the substantial adjustments involved. Bentley has communicated to students that the enforcement will be a group effort between faculty, staff, and students to hold each other

accountable to follow the new policy.

Although we did not feel our sample was large enough to be statistically valid and definitively answer our research question, it has nevertheless provided insight into how the smoking ban will play out in its inaugural year as well as the future. Following the 1,457 campuses that already have registered smoke-free or tobacco-free policies as

of January 2016, Bentley's smoking policy may have been a bit overdue, but has already proved effective. It has been just a few weeks since classes started, and we have already observed significantly fewer students holding cigarettes on the library quad than in previous years.

*-Stephanie Robinson '19 is a Finance major, and a member of the Student Honors Council.*

## RELAY FOR LIFE *(Continued from page 5)*

that distinctively united students, families, faculty, and alumni alike. The endless generosity and compassion of the Honors community were on full display that night, and witnessing firsthand the impact we were able to make was inspirational.

As always, Relay for Life was able to make not only a significant contribution

to the local community, but a contribution so successful we will be putting forth a team for the event every year. No Relay for Life event is ever successful without the generous dedication and support of its participants and donors, which for the first time in recent Relay for Life of Bentley history, involved a team specially crafted by the Honors

Program. As another testament to the Honors Program's constant outpouring of community service and outreach, Relay For Life will go down as another successful opportunity for Honors Program students to get involved.

*-Frank Elenio '19 is an Accounting major, and Service Coordinator for the Honors Program*

## WHAT MAKES A TEAM TICK *(Continued from page 6)*

essential for "psychological safety." This concept of discussing ideas without the fear of judgement is easy to understand in theory, but challenging to implement since people often lack empathy in today's fast-paced lifestyle. It is the establishment of a purely human bond between members that is the sole definitive factor of repeated success.

Thanks to Google's incredible capacity to conduct such intensive research among the other studies involved and the article from Charles Duhigg\*, people can now be more informed on what enables a productive team. So when you walk into your next GB group meeting, keep in mind that achieving that 4.0 lies not in how accurate your data is, but rather how hard you have worked to foster quality

relationships with your team members.

\* Information gathered from New York Times article "How to Build a Perfect Team" by Charles Duhigg, February 25, 2016

*-Luis Guevara Zamora '19 is a Computer Information Systems major, and a member of the Student Honors Council.*

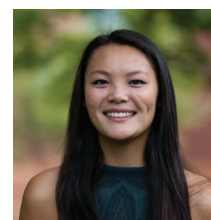


We are pleased to recognize United Technologies Corporation for its generous support of the Honors Program and academic excellence at Bentley University.



*Priya Varatharajan '19 is an Economics-Finance major, and managing co-editor of Columns*

**Editors**



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