

2023-2024



# ANNUAL REPORT





# Dean's Letter



Dear Friends and Family of the Lewis Honors College,

The Vision of the Lewis Honors College is to “provide a world-class Honors College experience that is known for the success of its students, the quality of its faculty and curriculum, the respect of its peers, and the economic and social progress of our communities.” With the 2023-2024 academic year, just six short years since we admitted our first class, the Lewis Honors College is fulfilling this commitment.

The College not only continues to attract tremendously talented and accomplished students to the University of Kentucky, the experience they receive in the Lewis Honors College results in nearly 100% retention in the first year, record graduation rates, and remarkable outcomes, including admission rates to medical school, average starting salary, and graduate school and career placement. In this summary report you will read about our outstanding – and award-winning – faculty, staff, and students.

Honors at the University of Kentucky has a long, proud history. The Lewis Honors College has built upon this strong foundation and, thanks to our incredible students and dedicated faculty and staff, is rapidly becoming a model Honors College, as we fulfill our Mission to “better the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the world.”

Sincerely,



Christian M M Brady, DPhil (Oxon.)  
The T.W. Lewis Dean  
Lewis Honors College  
University of Kentucky



# *Mission*

The mission of the Lewis Honors College is to better the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the world by helping students to explore their purpose, develop intellectually, and lead with integrity.

# *Vision*

The Lewis Honors College will provide a world-class Honors experience that is known for the success of its students, the quality of its faculty and curriculum, the respect of its peers, and the economic and social progress of our communities.

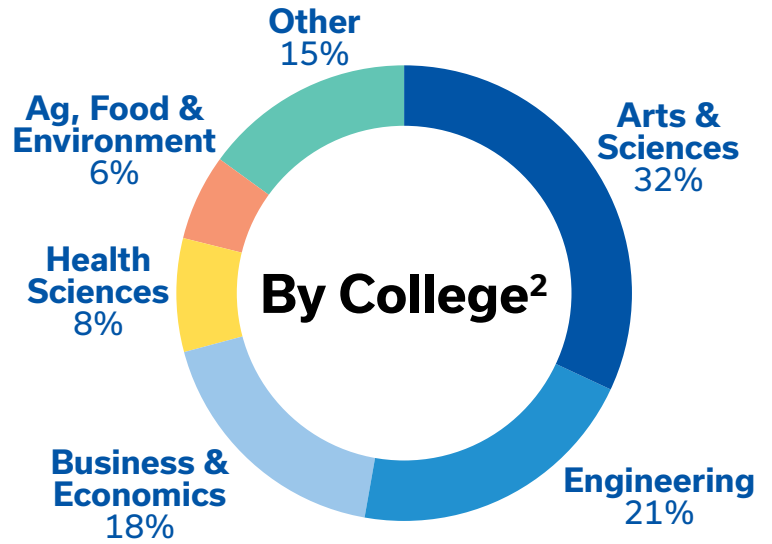
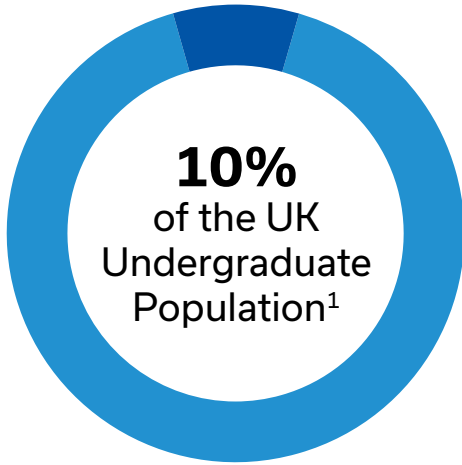
# *Values*

The Lewis Honors College is guided by its core values:

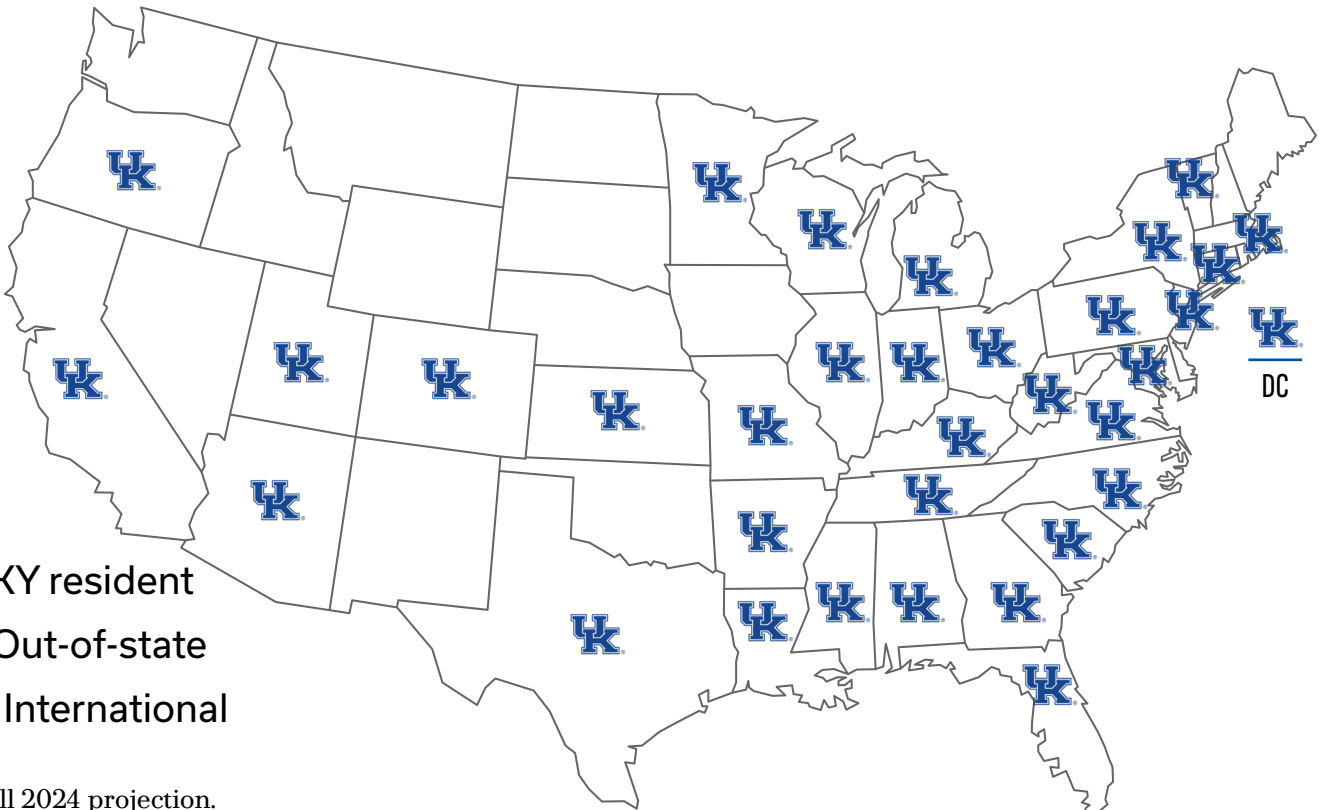
- ◇ Excellence
- ◇ Integrity
- ◇ Innovation
- ◇ Curiosity
- ◇ Mutual respect and human dignity for all
- ◇ Acting against hatred of any person or group
- ◇ Diversity and inclusivity
- ◇ Academic freedom
- ◇ Personal accountability and social responsibility
- ◇ A sense of community
- ◇ Civic engagement and service

# Total Enrollment

**2,292**  
Honors students<sup>1</sup>



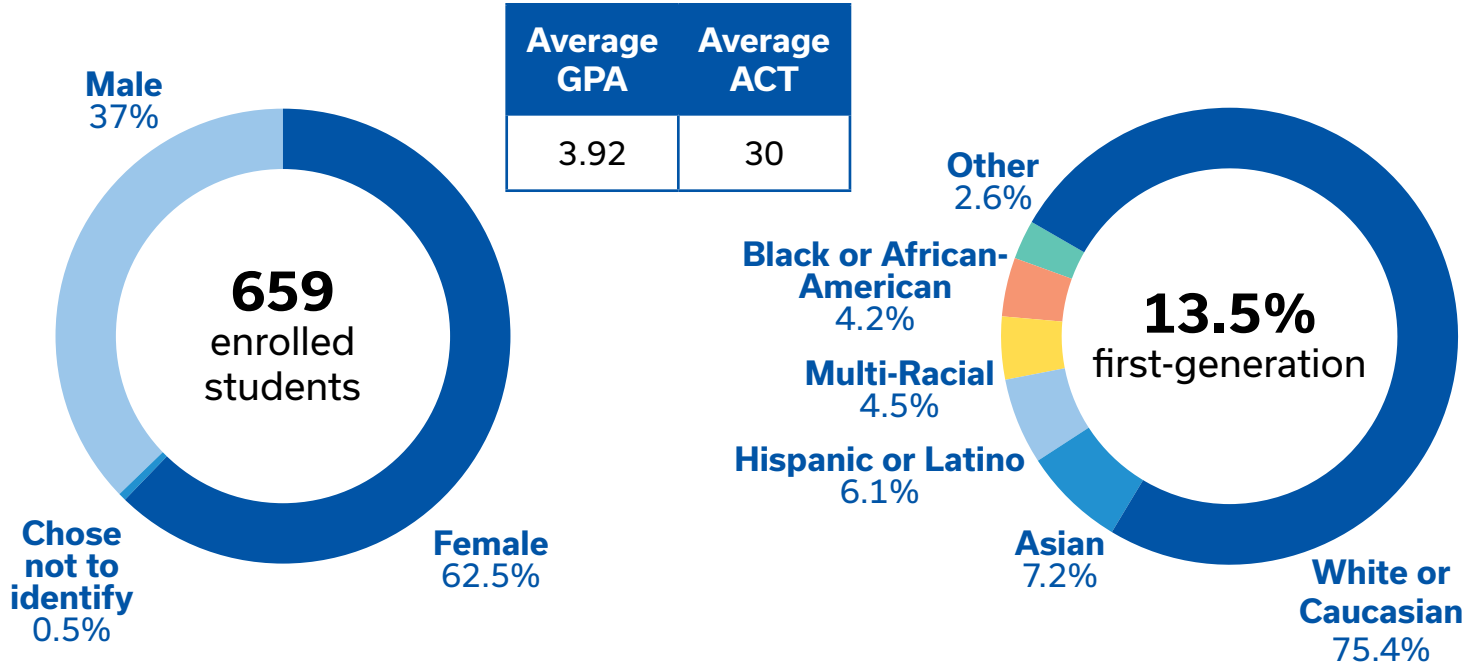
	Honors <sup>3</sup>	Non-Honors
First-Year Retention Rate <sup>4</sup>	97.8%	87.3%
4-Year Graduation Rate	79.9%	53.8%
6-Year Graduation Rate	90.5%	66.4%



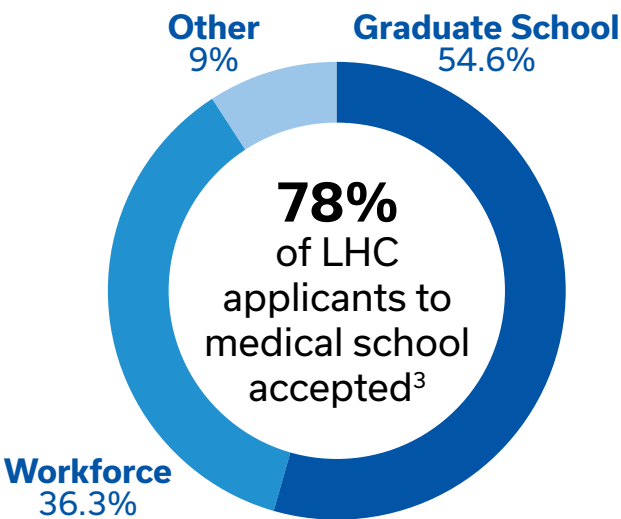
**81%** KY resident  
**19%** Out-of-state  
**1.5%** International

1 Fall 2024 projection.  
2 End of Spring semester 2023.  
3 Confirmed Honors students enrolled as of their first-year Fall semester.  
4 First-year students who enrolled in Fall 2023 and re-enrolled in Fall 2024.

# Admit Fast Facts<sup>1</sup>



# Graduate Outcomes<sup>2</sup>



## GRADUATE SCHOOLS INCLUDE:

- Columbia University • Cornell University • Duke • George Washington • Harvard • Johns Hopkins • Northwestern • NYU • Rice • The Ohio State University • University of Cambridge • University of Chicago • University of Florida • UK • University of Michigan • UNC • Vanderbilt • Wake Forest • Washington University in St. Louis • Yale

## EMPLOYERS INCLUDE:

- Accenture • AECOM • Arkema • Burns & McDonnell • Cincinnati Children's Hospital • Crowe LLP • Dell Technologies • Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago • Fidelity Investments • GE Aerospace • General Motors • Gray Construction • KPMG • Lockheed Martin • Morgan Stanley • Northrup Grumman • P&G • Pepsi • Prysmian • PwC • SpaceX • Texas Instruments • Toyota • UK • UK HealthCare • Valvoline

Full-time Employment	Mean	Median
Salary	\$74,868	\$73,000

1 As of June 11, 2024.  
 2 First-Destination Survey for 2023 graduates.  
 3 Association of American Medical Colleges.





# Faculty Features

## ZADA KOMARA

Dr. Zada Komara, Senior Lecturer in the Lewis Honors College and an affiliate faculty member in the Department of Anthropology and the Appalachian Studies program, is one of the distinguished UK Alumni Association 2024 Great Teacher Award recipients.

"For me, teaching is first and foremost about community building, and education follows from that," Komara said. "The more community building you do, the more real you are with people, the more connection you try to make — the easier it is for everyone to teach and learn transformatively. I really believe in that, and I feel absolutely privileged to teach in Lewis Honors — a place where people are there to do the good thing."

Komara's research focus is archaeology of the recent past in Central and Southern Appalachia, oral history, public history, and general material culture studies. Her work focuses on early 20th-century company coal towns and explores the entanglement

of material culture (the everyday goods that populate our lives) with persistent stereotypes and narratives about the Appalachian region. She also administers the UK Appalachian Center's Coal Camp Documentary Project, a collaborative documentation effort focusing on company coal towns in Kentucky's 54 Appalachian counties.

Komara teaches courses such as Ritual, Myth and Magic; Pseudoscience & Society; Modern Material Culture and the Archaeology of Us; Race and Gender in the Material World; and Encountering Appalachia: Film, Photography & Material Culture.

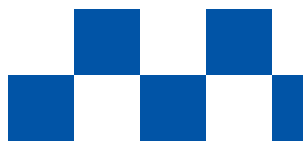
Jack Goebel '25, a physics major, nominated Komara for the award. "Dr. Z is a great example of exactly what the Lewis Honors College offers," he said. "She puts an amazing amount of effort into her pedagogy and how she's actually teaching her students. I have described it before as sort of a scavenger hunt of learning — she puts all these breadcrumbs out for you,



and you go along the path thinking that you discovered it yourself, but she actually was the one laying it out for you. She's an amazing professor."

Komara says bringing her "authentic self" to class helps in making connections with students and enhancing their learning experience.

"I always liked in the 'Anne of Green Gables' movie, where she said, 'if you're going to present publicly, you make them laugh or you make them cry,' and I always thought, 'why not do both?'" she said. "Present things with so much gravitas that people are moved emotionally. But also, make them laugh."



# TEACHERS WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE



At the annual UK College of Education Teachers Who Made a Difference event, three Honors Faculty members were recognized for their dedication to encourage and challenge students to be their best: Dr. Daniel Kirchner, Dr. Zada Komara, and Dr. Lou Hirsch.

## ADRIAN MAGENDZO

As the Ruth Jones Lewis Faculty Scholar in Entrepreneurship, Adrian Magendzo seeks to establish Lexington as an innovation hub.

Starting with HON 251 The Social Value of Entrepreneurship, Magendzo prepares students to recognize entrepreneurship as a vital source of change in society. When entrepreneurs are empowered to seek opportunities and create new businesses or start-ups,

their work fuels progress and wealth creation in all facets of societies worldwide.

As Magendzo challenges students to explore the ideation and innovation processes, by the end of the semester, students are able to pitch their proposals identifying the customer, outlining the business proposition, and providing a financial analysis.



# Medal Ceremony Recognition

**Founding Dean's Award for Faculty Excellence in Honors Education**



**Dr. Tara Tuttle**  
Lewis Honors College  
Senior Lecturer



**Dr. Clare Batty**  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Honors Faculty



**Staff Excellence Award**

**Ramla Osman Miller**  
Associate Director of Center  
for Personal Development





# Student Spotlights



## PRINCESS MAGOR AGBOZO

Princess Magor Agbozo '24, a first-generation, international student from Ghana, graduated with a public health major and will pursue a Master of Public Health at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

Agbozo found community and mentorship in the Lewis Honors College. Her overall time in the college was "enriching" and the Rising Leaders program was "truly one of the best programs that I was in here at the university."

"I was able to learn a lot about leadership," Agbozo said. "Including fighting impostor syndrome, how to present yourself, how to network, how to make sure that you are being the best

that you possibly could be, especially as a leader."

During her time at UK, Agbozo worked as an intern in the Division of Epidemiology and Health Planning in the Kentucky Department of Public Health and was highly involved in undergraduate research, including the CHANGE Team in the UK College of Nursing; the Markey STRONG Scholars Program; and the SPARK Program with the Center for Health Equity Research and the Center for Clinical and Translational Science. She placed second in the UNITE Research Showcase and third in the College of Public Health Undergraduate Showcase.

Agbozo was very involved in campus activities, including the Student Activities Board (SAB), where she served as vice president of internal affairs, director of multicultural

affairs, and engaging issues chair. She was named "Director of the Year" by SAB in 2022. She served as a tutor for the Center for Academic & Tutorial Services (CATS); a peer navigator and a first-year experience ambassador in the Office for Student Success; a resident advisor; a Student Wellness Ambassador; a College of Public Health Ambassador and an International Student Ambassador.

She received numerous awards and honors, including the UK Women's Forum 30 Under 30 award and the Lyman T. Johnson Torchbearer Award; 2023 UK Homecoming queen; and was selected as one of four commencement speakers.

"I'm grateful that I could be a form of hope or an example to people to see that they can also achieve their dreams," Agbozo said. "And it's not just within the academic spectrum, but as a leader, as somebody who's able to have a positive impact on campus."



Homecoming King Joshua Griffith '24 and Homecoming Queen Princess Magor Agbozo '24





# ASA O'NEAL

What does it take to be named a Barry Goldwater Scholar and an Astronaut Scholar in the same year? For Asa O'Neal '25, it appears an extensive resume in research and internships supported his winning both recognitions in 2024.

Not only did O'Neal serve as a Chellgren Fellow, but he also interned with Toyota Motors North America and NASA's Langley Research Center, and this summer he will intern at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"Each of these experiences has contributed differently to my current career plans. Most notably, my work as an undergraduate researcher at UK and my internships at NASA have shown me that I want to pursue a STEM research career," O'Neal said. "I plan to pursue my Ph.D. in aerospace engineering."

As a mechanical engineering and physics major with a mathematics minor, O'Neal joined the Lewis Honors College because "it encouraged the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and deep thought. It allowed me to explore and think about topics not related to my course of study." In addition, O'Neal found a sense of community among

Honors students during his first year.

O'Neal said, "The Honors classes I took my freshman year exposed me to ideas that I would not have otherwise thought deeply about. The topics we discussed have allowed me to engage with current events and the social sciences more than I would have been able to otherwise."

His advice for Honors students is to "find opportunities that interest you and join them as early as possible. Join clubs, find internships, join a lab, etc. This is the only way to find out what you like and will help you plan your studies and career accordingly."

One example of an activity that O'Neal enjoys is working on the Kentucky Solar Car Team "where we design, build, and race a manned, fully solar electric vehicle."



## HONORS MEDAL CEREMONY AWARD WINNERS

### Raymond Betts Crystal



Abraham Alhamdani

### Leadership



Joshua Griffith



Shria Holla

### Diachun Scholar



Christine Haddad

### Diachun Research



Artin Asadipooya



Caroline Youdes

### Evans Scholar



Kotomi Yokokura

# Honors Advising

A dedicated team of five Honors advisors help students construct academic plans, engage in problem-solving, connect with campus resources, and evaluate various pathways to achieve individual academic goals. Honors advisors act as guides to personal success by working closely with students from the Lewis Launch orientation through completion of the Honors thesis and graduation. They appropriately challenge and support students as they discover their unique path to success. Over 1,800 appointments occurred last year.



## OUTSTANDING ADVISOR ADMINISTRATOR

As the Assistant Director of Academic Advising, Britt Frye manages a staff of four advisors. He also partners with the UK College of Medicine and the Center for Personal Development to develop programming for students interested in the healthcare industry. In recognition of his efforts, Frye won the UK Advising Network 2024 Outstanding Advising Administrator award.

“My Honors advisor is one of my favorite people to go to chat in between classes or if I need help with something.

**Valerie O’Nan ’27**

“I love the supporting and encouraging staff and advisors. It feels like a community if you take advantage of everything they have to offer.

**Zaynah Shahid ’26**

# Center for Personal Development



The mission of the Center for Personal Development (CPD) is to partner with students in their exploration of purpose to cultivate self-awareness, well-being, and career readiness. The five CPD counselors take a holistic approach in helping students set goals that promote their success while attending to their overall well-being. Services include individual counseling sessions as well as college-wide events and programs. The CPD also facilitates the Honors Alumni Mentoring Program pairing students and alumni to develop professional skills and positive life habits. In addition, the CPD manages several leadership opportunities such as the Rising Leaders and Lewis Liaisons.

“The Rising Leaders program and the CPD counselors have been some of the most influential aspects of my Honors experience in terms of professional development.

**Artin Asadipooya ’24**

“The CPD has been a huge resource for me over the years, and I’ve felt supported to reach my goals in college.

**Gabriela Da Silva ’25**

# College Life



## LEWIS LAUNCH ORIENTATION

To foster a sense of community from the moment new students arrive, the Lewis Honors College offers Lewis Launch, a three-day orientation designed to acclimate students with resources to ensure their success. In addition to having an Honors advisor and CPD counselor, students are assigned a Lewis Launch Leader who is an upper-class student guiding a group of 15-20 new students with the process of adjusting to college.



“During Lewis Launch 2023, I met two of my best friends, so I am most grateful for the friendships I have made.

**Ashton Long '27**



## PEER MENTORS

Once the academic year begins, Peer Mentors offer new students opportunities to meet other Honors students and foster a sense of community through monthly events such as Donuts with the Dean and Trivia Tuesday. Peer Mentors also hosted a Bob Ross-inspired Sip & Paint event, a Taylor Swift Album Release party plus many more activities!



## LEWIS LIAISONS

Honors students can find community with each other within the colleges across campus as the Lewis Liaisons plan professional development programs that appeal to the various disciplines. Liaisons help maintain communication among upper-level Honors students once they become more immersed in their majors. Lewis Liaisons hosted over 15 social and professional development programs to build community and belonging in their assigned colleges such as the Cookie Cram Study Session.

“Honors has allowed me to find a close-knit family within the vastness of the University. Honors has also given me the opportunity to meet some of the most unique scholars.

**Shria Holla '24**





# Honors Experiences

Of the 30 hours of required Honors coursework, students must complete six credits of Honors experiences such as participating in Education Abroad, internships, research, or service-learning.

## EDUCATION ABROAD

Between UK's Education Abroad program offerings and the affiliated Honors portfolio, students gain multi-cultural exposure, leadership, and a new frame of reference for understanding the world and their role in it. The curated Honors education abroad programs include faculty-directed and partner organization opportunities that facilitate study, research, service, or internships worldwide. Honors students participated in the inaugural Explore First program for first-generation students to travel abroad and faculty-led excursions such as "Navigating the Grand Tour" with Dr. Jane Jensen which included visits to London, Paris, Rome and more. Through the tremendous generosity of donors, the Lewis Honors College awarded \$54,000 in Education Abroad Scholarships for 2023-2024.



## INTERNSHIPS

Whether here or abroad, internship experiences fulfill an Honors curricular requirement, provide career goal clarity, and build relevant work experience. Students can choose from among many internship-credit courses across campus.



## RESEARCH

Faculty mentorship of undergraduate research is integral to the academic success of all Honors students. Highlights include: nine Honors students received the Commonwealth Undergraduate Research Experience Fellowships, six Honors students presented at the Kentucky Honors Roundtable, five Honors students were named Gaines Fellows, four Honors students were selected as Sustainability Summer Research Fellows, and one Honors student was named a Beckman Scholar.

### Barry M. Goldwater Scholars



Hena Kachroo '25



Asa O'Neal '25



Harrison Yang '25

## SERVICE-LEARNING

**HON 393** allows our student leaders (Honors College Ambassador Team, Peer Mentors, Rising Leaders, and the Lewis Liaisons) to learn about leadership, service, and higher education in ways that complement their work for the Lewis Honors College.

**HON 399** is an option for an independent service-learning project with a faculty mentor.

**HON 394** blends a three-credit traditional course with a strong community service component.

Singletary Scholar Kotomi Yokokura '24 received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award (UK's highest honor for humanitarian efforts) for those "who exhibit Sullivan's ideals of heart, mind and conduct as evince a spirit of love for and helpfulness to other men and women."



HCATs provided tours for prospective students and welcomed admitted students during pre-Merit Day open houses.

Peer Mentors hosted community-building events throughout the year.



Rising Leaders participated in workshops to develop executive presence and leadership skills plus assisted the International Book Project to pack books.





# Conference Host



## HONORS EDUCATION AT RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES (HERU)

As the sixth biennial host of the HERU Conference, the Lewis Honors College facilitated "Dialogue, Debate, and Discourse: Having the Hard Conversations" over two days of programming which included keynote speakers Dr. Sigal Ben-Porath and Irshad Manji; a Moral Courage workshop; and topical sessions covering themes such as administrative leadership, admissions/recruitment, advising, assessment, dialogue, high-impact practices, philanthropy, and student engagement. Of the nearly 200 attendees, approximately half were first-time conference participants. The conference benefited from the generous financial support from the UK Office of the Provost.



## LEWIS HONORS COLLEGE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

In April, the Singletary Scholars Class of 2027 hosted the inaugural Lewis Honors College Leadership Conference. Scholars planned, fundraised, and presented this conference for over 100 UK student leaders from across campus. With support from members of the Lewis Honors College, the University, and the greater Lexington community, the Scholars refined their leadership skills and shared what they had learned with their attendee peers. They will also mentor the incoming Scholars when the new class takes on the task of expanding the conference.



# One Day for UK

During the sixth One Day for UK, the Lewis Honors College was proud to showcase the Kate Johnson Scholarship Fund. Alumni shared their memories of Johnson — and other special Honors staff members throughout the years — during the celebration of the 20-year anniversary of this scholarship.



## KATE JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Faculty from the former Honors Program, led by Dr. Jim Albisetti, established this scholarship in 2004 to honor the retirement of advisor Kate Johnson. In an outpouring of recognition for her impact on the lives of our students, the fund has now been supported by gifts from over 1,200 individuals, foundations, and corporate entities to date. It is to be used exclusively for “student skills development outside the normal curriculum, including non-UK summer programs, educational or conference travel, or research projects.”

During April’s One Day for UK, an additional \$18,400 was raised to make these opportunities possible. Featured below are three of the scholarship’s 2023 recipients:

**Helena Arjona '25** is a Lexington native. As a triple major in Media Arts & Studies; Writing, Rhetoric, & Digital Studies; and Broadcast Journalism & Multimedia, she also moonlights as a radio show host on WRFL 88.1 and works as a junior staff member at KRNL. Earlier this year, Arjona was selected as a prestigious Google News Initiative Fellow and invited to attend the Gracie Leadership Awards in New York City. “I am excited to not only represent the University and my colleges, but also the Lewis Honors College. As a woman of color in journalism, every opportunity counts and I am excited to share my gift and point of view to better my communities in the future.”



**Megan Mendez '26** is a Political Science major and Trunzo Scholar in the College of Arts & Sciences. The scholarship assisted with expenses related to her summer 2023 internship with the National Air and Space Intelligence Center at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. As an intern, Mendez learned to study and track foreign aerial threats and other national security concerns. The internship “was the perfect environment to shape me professionally, to hone and sharpen my analytical and organizational skills, and to prepare me for a life of public service and leadership in my field.”

**Faith Sammons '26** is a Singletary Scholar from Gurnee, Illinois. She is a triple major in Digital Media Design, Vocal Performance, and Spanish, with a minor in Theater. Following a study abroad in Florence, Sammons was offered a position in the highly-selective TuttoToscana program at the James Beard Foundation. “I hope to eventually merge my passion for disability advocacy and culinary arts. My dream is to create adaptable culinary resources. I want to teach adaptable culinary courses because I believe that it is crucial to promote independence and can simultaneously allow people to utilize food as medicine.”





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