EXPERIENCE WHAT’S INSIDE:

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Mission
The University Honors Program is committed to offering students an individualized, student-centered approach to a meaningful undergraduate experience. To that end, we are dedicated to:

• Promoting activities that lead students to discover their passions and enhance their gifts and talents.
• Coaching students to purposefully engage in experiential learning opportunities and reflection to maximize and integrate their learning.
• Fostering a community that prioritizes transformational personal development, civic participation, and global responsibility.

WHO LEAD INNOVATIVE EFFORTS TOWARD SOLVING THE WORLD’S COMPLEX PROBLEMS.
University Honors Program experiences fall within five thematic areas: community engagement, creativity, global studies, leadership, and research. By engaging in the community, exploring cultures domestically and internationally, honing leadership skills, and creating new knowledge, University Honors students are gaining the skills and experiences necessary to become innovators who will change the world. Through experiential learning opportunities that enhance their understanding of the thematic areas, students will reflect upon their growth and learning. As a result, they will refine their passions and determine how they will use their gifts and talents to make a difference in the world.
leadershape

December 12-17, 2015

Day 1: Building Community
Day 2: The Value of One, The Power of All
Day 3: Challenging What Is, Looking to What Could Be
Day 4: Bringing Vision to Reality
Day 5: Living and Leading with Integrity
Day 6: Staying in Action

60 STUDENTS

Feedback is love
Be intentional
Risk more
Feel the FEAR and do it anyway
Passion + Vision = Action
Success begins with the second letter
Practice makes better, not perfect
Be kind
Impossible = I'm possible

LEADERSHAPE WISDOM BOARD

institute
What are your plans after graduation? After I graduate, I hope to begin teaching in a language immersion school somewhere in Cincinnati. My top picks as of now are the Academy of Multilingual Immersion Studies (AMIS) or the Academy of World Languages (AWL). After a few years of teaching, I plan to return to UC to earn my Master’s degree in Literacy and Second Language Studies and certification in English as a Second Language (ESL). Ultimately, I hope to teach ESL in Cincinnati. My top picks as of now are the Academy of Multilingual Immersion Studies (AMIS) or the Academy of World Languages (AWL).

What is your secret talent? I’m not sure that it’s a secret talent per se, but I love jigsaw puzzles and have become pretty good at putting them together. It’s an incredibly relaxing hobby that exercises my mind in a unique way.

What is your favorite life experience and why? I can’t choose a favorite, but I can say that all of the best experiences in my life so far have been centered on working with children. Spending time with kids is the most refreshing thing I’ve ever experienced—it’s hilarious, educational, and impactful for everyone involved—there’s nothing I would rather spend the rest of my life doing!

Have you ever thought about who you want to be? For almost my entire life, I thought I had that question all figured out: I wanted to be a teacher. What I never quite realized is that to be the impactful teacher I wanted to be, I was going to have to delve much deeper into self-exploration than I had ever imagined. Entering college, this was quite a daunting thought as I faced financial independence, a new job, and a full load of classes within my first weeks at UC. Soon, I began to worry that I would never get the chance to explore my interests and personalize my educational experience. Luckily, I received an email about the University Honors Program and made the decision to apply. The rest, as they say, is history.

Suddenly, shaping my college experience to my individual interests and passions seemed not only possible, but absolutely essential. Since joining the Honors Program in the spring of 2014, I have been given the opportunity to experience things I would have never thought possible during this phase of my life. Perhaps the mark of a truly transforming experience is one that continues to inform and guide your life daily. I found all of this and more in my incredible experience at The Academy of World Languages (AWL).

What is another language you’d like to be fluent in and why? Because teaching ESL means working with kids that speak languages from around the world, I would love to become multilingual so as to better communicate with my students. However, because I have a foundation from high school and college courses, the first language I hope to become fluent in is Spanish.

Who I WANT TO BE

Have you ever thought about who you want to be? For almost my entire life, I thought I had that question all figured out: I wanted to be a teacher. What I never quite realized is that to be the impactful teacher I wanted to be, I was going to have to delve much deeper into self-exploration than I had ever imagined. Entering college, this was quite a daunting thought as I faced financial independence, a new job, and a full load of classes within my first weeks at UC. Soon, I began to worry that I would never get the chance to explore my interests and personalize my educational experience. Luckily, I received an email about the University Honors Program and made the decision to apply. The rest, as they say, is history.

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Since my high school years, I have had an increasing interest in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). Unfortunately, there is no ESL specialization program for undergraduate education majors at UC. For this reason, I decided to go out and explore this interest on my own. I was excited to find that UHP was there to support and encourage me along the way. I completely self-designed the experience, contacted teachers at AWL, and created a schedule for my experience that worked between my classes. For an entire semester, I got the opportunity to teach alongside educators that had my dream job and spend time with kids that changed every perception I had about culture and education.

Aside from giving me a great networking opportunity, teaching at AWL gave me the opportunity to test drive the career I hope to have one day. As I immediately discovered, it’s everything I imagined and more. ESL students are curious, hopeful, and incredibly resilient kids. Although almost every student in the classes I worked with came from a different country, I have never felt more at home in any school environment. Not only do I feel that I could make a difference in these kids’ lives, I feel that I was made to do so. I wrote about all of the discoveries this experience led me to in a journal along the way, and used it to later write a reflective essay that embodies the personal transformation it caused.

As I wrote, I realized that AWL not only reinforced my dedication to education and teaching ESL in particular, but also made me into a better person as a whole. I heard from the perspective of children issues of welfare, war, poverty, freedom, and discrimination and saw the way that these issues continue to affect our community and the people in it. These daily experiences at AWL have transformed me into a more compassionate, informed, and thoughtful human being. It’s crazy to think that without the University Honors Program, I may have never taken this leap into my own interests and discovered the Academy of World Languages—the school that met me where I was and showed me all the places I could go.
ADRIAN VALLES

College: Lindner College of Business
Major(s): Industrial Management
Year: 3rd Year

Hometown: Pamplona, Spain

Experiences:
• Multi-Variable Calculus
• Personal Narrative International Student Experience at UC
• World Championship in Track and Field in China

What are your plans after graduation?
I would like to compete as a professional track and field athlete while I do graduate studies.

What is your favorite time of day and why?
The night because I can enjoy my free time.

What is one thing on your bucket list?
To take part in the Olympic Games.

How many languages can you speak and what are they?
I am fluent in Spanish, English, and French, and I can speak a little bit of German.

If you could have lunch with one person, living or dead, who would it be?
Pau Gasol

If you could visit any place, where would it be?
New Zealand.

What is the strangest thing you’ve ever eaten?
Peanut butter and jelly sandwich (it is really strange for Spaniards!).

The 17th of August I flew to Beijing, China and fulfilled the most exciting experience of my life. I took part in the World Championships of Track and Field that were held in the Asian country from the 22nd to the 30th of August. As a result, I represented my country, Spain. This event is considered to be the third most popular sporting event, right behind the Olympic Games and the soccer World Cup. I have always loved track and I started doing it when I was 7 years old. When I was 13, I focused on the pole vault, and kept working hard since then in order to take part in big meets. However, I could have never imagined competing in the World Championship at only 20 years old. As a result, one of my dreams came true!

On the other side, I tried to take advantage of my trip to China not only for competing, but also for getting introduced to a new culture, meeting new people, and visiting amazing places. After competing, I had five days for enjoying one of the most fascinating cities on Earth. Beijing didn’t disappoint me.

I entered in University Honors in February, so I haven’t had as much time as I would have wanted for taking advantage of the program. I have been competing every weekend in spring, so my free time has been limited. However, from now on, I would like to start spending more time in the different activities that the program offers me. I am sure that the program is going to help me meet new people and enjoy great opportunities. As a result, it will have a great impact on my professional life. For instance, I have been able to register for a wider variety of classes and sections. This has been useful because of my busy schedule with track practices.

Personally, being in University Honors is going to allow me to take more advantage of my experiences in life. For example, before entering in Honors, I would have just seen my trip to China as a competition trip. However, I have been encouraged by the program to do some research about the country as well to accomplish some learning outcomes. As a result, I see the trip right now as something more than a competition trip!

“No risk, no glory.”

“...being in honors is going to allow me to take more advantage of my experiences in life.”
What are your plans after graduation? I really want to teach English in Asia! Right now I’m thinking either Japan or South Korea, but I haven’t actually lived in South Korea long enough to make an informed decision.

If you could trade places with one person for a day, who would it be? It’s definitely Beyoncé (did anyone not put Beyoncé?), but I’m not sure how much fun she would have being me for a day...

What is one thing on your bucket list? I’m a 12-year-old on the inside, so I have this dream to eat an M&M of every color. There’s definitely a trip to The Big Apple in my future.

What is another language you’d like to be fluent in and why? Just one?? I want to be fluent in Japanese and Korean and Mandarin Chinese and Spanish and German and Italian and maybe even French, who knows? There are so many books, movies, and other things in our lives that we only have access to because someone has translated them. I think the communication barrier is one of the greatest things we have to overcome in the process of understanding one another, and I’d really like to help with that.

What is your secret talent? My senior superlative was actually “most talented” but I’m pretty sure the only thing I’ve got going for me is my chipmunk voice, which is definitely a love-or-hate thing.

What is the strangest thing you’ve ever eaten? I went out to eat with my host family in Japan once and they fed me cow tongue. I didn’t know until they started laughing, and I definitely have some trust issues now, but I’d still recommend the eat-first-ask-later style.

I came to UC knowing that I wanted to study abroad as soon as possible. I’d taken a gap year after graduating high school to study in Japan, and I was ready to go back about a week after I landed in the good old U.S.A. Maybe it was reverse culture shock, I’ve had plenty of that, but I prefer to think that I have wanderlust. “Wanderlust” is essentially the need to travel and see new places. Anyway, I was ready to go.

All of my honors experiences so far have revolved around my international interests. I took an honors seminar with Professor Kevin Grace (Intro to Global Studies, 11/10 students would recommend), which had a pretty significant impact on the way I view international travel. He really stressed travelling “mindfully,” which is thinking about how your travel is impacting others, rather than simply how it’s changed you. My first time abroad, I was focusing on myself, so that’s something I want to change next time.

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Right now, I’m working on two honors experiences (both of which will take place in Seoul) that revolve around me learning Korean and becoming informed about Korean history and culture. I can’t even begin to tell you how excited I am about that (think, literally living my dream), and I never even imagined it would be so possible. Seriously. I joined the Honors Program because I’ve always been involved in “honors” stuff and I figured it would look good, then I learned more about it and had this sort of “aha moment”, like, “wait, I can do that?” Next thing I knew, I was meeting with my advisor and writing honors proposals and working with UC International, and then I was on the plane. Wild.

Honors grants are my new favorite thing because they help with that financial burden thing I was talking about earlier, but there’s nothing that can help you with the emotional cost of travel. I highly recommend everybody travel abroad at some point in their lives, but I also want to warn you that it comes with the hefty price of never being satisfied in one place again. Suddenly your best friends aren’t just in one place—they’re all over the world—and you can’t sleep at 3am because you’ve realized there’s no place in this world you can have both Chipotle and real ramen. It’s a little uncomfortable but it’s a good uncomfortable—a tip-of-the-iceberg kind of feeling—that makes every place a little more interesting.”

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Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the present.”

Kung Fu Panda, Randal Duk Kim, 2008

KEAVASH ASSANI

College: McMicken College of Arts and Sciences

Major(s): Biology, concentration in Biomedical Sciences; Chemistry; Spanish

Certificate: Spanish for Social Work and Health Care Sciences

Year: 3rd Year

Hometown: Anna, OH

Experiences:
• Intermediate Composition (Honors section)
• Spain: 2014 Summer Program in Madrid
• Nephrology Research
• Criminal Justice in the Latino Community
• UC Exchange Program to Mexico (ITESM)
• Cultural Aspects of the Patient-Docent Relationship in a Mexican Population

What is one thing on your bucket list? My bucket list is very large–hard to pick one thing. Top of my list would be to be someone who is undergoing incredibly difficult circumstances, such as someone experiencing a natural disaster, a disease, illness, or a loss of some sort. This way I could gain a greater understanding of people’s suffering, and relate to their hardships. One can only understand someone’s difficulties to a certain extent; there is no true way to understand how they feel but by living that situation, having those feelings of true suffering, pain and humility.

If you could trade places with one person for a day, who would it be? I would want to be someone who is undergoing incredibly difficult circumstances, such as someone experiencing a natural disaster, a disease, illness, or a loss of some sort. This way I could gain a greater understanding of people’s suffering, and relate to their hardships. One can only understand someone’s difficulties to a certain extent; there is no true way to understand how they feel but by living that situation, having those feelings of true suffering, pain and humility.

What is one thing you plan to do after graduation? I might take a year off so that I can do research and travel before I go to med school. I have many potential prospects for med school. From there, I want to be involved with Doctors Without Borders or a travelling doctor in the US, so that I can offer my talents to people in underprivileged areas that do not have the resources that they need for proper diagnosis and treatment.

What is your secret talent? A secret talent that I have is that I have a knack for direction. I can navigate in a city in relatively any country without the help of a GPS if necessary. Last winter break, I travelled to the Yucatan Peninsula for 2 weeks. While there I rented a car and drove all around the coast and different cities without getting lost, driving and exploring numerous cities and architectural sites.

What are your plans after graduation? Last winter break, I travelled to the Yucatan Peninsula for 2 weeks. While there I rented a car and drove all around the coast and different cities without getting lost, driving and exploring numerous cities and architectural sites.

If you could visit any place, where would it be? One day, I want to visit an Atoll, which is basically an island that has formed from a volcanic island that has submerged below sea level. Over time coral reefs develop in the interior and they are really extravagant with a variety of marine species within them. They are located throughout the ocean. One day I want to scuba dive and explore the depths of one of them.

If you could trade places with one person for a day, who would it be? I would want to be someone who is undergoing incredibly difficult circumstances, such as someone experiencing a natural disaster, a disease, illness, or a loss of some sort. This way I could gain a greater understanding of people’s suffering, and relate to their hardships. One can only understand someone’s difficulties to a certain extent; there is no true way to understand how they feel but by living that situation, having those feelings of true suffering, pain and humility.

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What is another language you’d like to be fluent in and why? Currently I am learning Spanish, so of course I want to be fluent in that; if I had to choose another language, I would choose Farsi or French. Farsi because that is the language of my heritage and French because it is a beautiful language.

Research is wonderful. It gives one the ability to discover things never before known or thought of. It allows one to look at raw data that nobody else has ever seen, analyze it and work towards building a future for science and medicine. Without researchers, we would not know about the things that we do now; we would not have the tools and technology and people would live much less enjoyable lives. Science can be seen in literally everything! All the way from a toothpick that gets food out of our teeth to a satellite that explores the depths of space allowing us to uncover and see things unknown to man. That is why research is so important to me; it is the area that can truly make a difference globally.

This past year, I have had the honor to contribute in such a field. My experience as a volunteer was spent in the Nephrology and Hypertension Lab at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center as a research assistant under the supervision of Dr. Manoocher Soleimani. This experience has offered me several learning experiences that have impacted me on a micro level, especially personally and professionally. The first semester of my work was used to really fortify my techniques and skills required for a lab. I have had the opportunity to advance my laboratory skills and work towards my professional goals of becoming a researcher and a nephrologist as well.

"Learning from mistakes is important; it helped me learn why things work and why they don’t, and I learned to not make those mistakes again.”

This summer I was invited to research with a fellow researcher on his project investigating Cisplatin and Ischemia/Reperfusion (I/R). I couldn’t have been more excited. This experiment is so significant and important in the role of preventing kidney failure in hospital patients and veterans alike. Both Cisplatin (a cancer treatment drug) and I/R (stoppage and release of blood flow) are leading causes to kidney toxicity. Our goal in the lab is to monitor the effects of Cisplatin specifically on polyanion degradation, the pathway of endoplasmic reticulum stress (ERS), and the unfolded protein response (UPR). All of these can lead to cell death and kidney toxicity in a multitude of ways. With techniques that I had learned, I was able to apply my knowledge to collect data and critically think about what the results meant. I identified several amino-acid sequences involved in protein synthesis and I was able to monitor the upregulation of the enzymes Ssat and Smo. Through my experience I was able to make an impact in this research project and make a difference in something that will hopefully affect many people one day. Unfortunately with research, it takes time, and with other honors experiences coming up, I was unable to finish my project. When I return in the spring from my exchange program in Mexico, I will finish my work.

This experience has truly helped me develop as an honors student and an honors scholar. It has showed me the true impact that science and research can have. It has also helped me develop as a person and professional. Jumping into research, I did not know much about research. I had to study several hours just so that I could catch up, but it was all worth it. This has helped me greatly as a student. As a student, I have learned that it is important to work hard and put the time in so that you can learn the information fully and retain it. I have also learned the importance of precision and accuracy. Just the smallest mistake can cause an experiment to go awry, even if you did everything else exactly right. Through time and practice, I learned to keep good notes and be very careful. Learning from mistakes is important and skills required for a laboratory. I have had the opportunity to advance my laboratory skills and work towards my professional goals of becoming a researcher and a nephrologist as well.

Invention that helps others, or works toward protection of the environment from further deterioration. One of the things that has inspired me to continue my scientific research is the impact that our work can have on society and the world. I want to develop an invention that helps others, or works toward protection of the environment from further deterioration. One of the things that has inspired me to continue my scientific research is the impact that our work can have on society and the world.
**MIKALA STOKES**

**College:** McMicken College of Arts & Sciences  
**Hometown:** Middletown, OH  
**Major(s):** History  
**Year:** 2nd year  

**Experiences:**  
- Global History of WWII  
- Queen City Foundations Education Program Manager

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If you could trade places with one person for a day, who would it be? Sometimes when I get really busy, I wish I could trade places with my dog. He leads a luxurious life sleeping 15 hours a day.

What is your secret talent? It was really hard for me to think of a secret talent. But I am so busy that finding the time in the day to annoy my younger brother is my one odd talent. He is the one person I talk to everyday... no matter what I have going on.

What is one thing on your bucket list? I would like to fly in a hot air balloon. It’s funny... The Midwest Hot Air Balloon Show comes to my hometown every year. So it would be pretty convenient for me to knock this task off my bucket list, I just haven’t yet.

What is another language you’d like to be fluent in and why? I would like to be fluent in Spanish. There are so many amazing places to visit in the Spanish-speaking world. I hope to visit the majority of them someday. I believe you experience a country more genuinely when you speak their language.

If you were to eat one food for the rest of your life, what would that be? Definitely my mom’s macaroni and cheese. It’s a family recipe and no matter how many times I have it, I never get tired of eating it.

What are your plans after graduation? Most likely I will stay at UC and get a Masters of Education Certificate so I can teach high school social studies.

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**A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

During the fall semester of my sophomore year, I took a seminar on the Global History of World War II. In the class, we analyzed the causes and effects of the war from a global perspective. In other words, we took the time to discuss the impact of the conflict’s events through the lens of each country that played a role in the unfolding of WWII from the mid 1930s-1945. From this experience, I learned that my previous framework of WWII was problematic. In America, we like to singularly frame WWII as a dramatic battle between the Allied and Axis Powers. While this viewpoint is not completely incorrect, it deserves added complexity to include a more accurate portrayal of events.

For example, in the American purview, we often ignore the experience and interests of China. In the same vein, the experiences of women and children are often ignored as well. I'm thankful for taking this seminar because it taught me about the necessity of taking a holistic approach to historical analysis.

When the class ended in December, we got the opportunity to truly gain a global perspective of WWII by visiting two of the countries who played dominant roles in the conflict. During the week-long trip, we visited museums and relevant historical sites in London, Paris, and Caen (Normandy). The highlight of the study tour was getting to walk on the beaches that American soldiers stormed during the D-day Operation. This was an especially surreal experience for me because I have a family connection to the invasion in Normandy. My grandfather landed on Omaha Beach about two weeks after D-day. I loved the travel portion of the seminar not just because the cities were beautiful, but because having the opportunity to shed my American identity for a week and learn about a major historical event from another country’s perspective was enlightening. This experience cemented the reality that my American perspective can cloud my assessment of historical events.

If there is one lesson that I want to take away from this seminar in both the class and study tour portions, it would be the true side of history makes you a better human being. The key is that all study and exploration happens through meaningful learning experiences. In the context of our course, I gained some awareness of mankind’s capacity for both stunning valor and abysmal destruction. I also now realize that meaningful learning experiences can show us how to use our knowledge to make the world a better place. Most importantly, knowledge that does not help you do anything useful in the world is somewhat wasteful. These insights are particularly beneficial considering my future career path. Before this course, I do not think that I would have doggedly insisted on creating meaningful learning experiences for others. Now, I feel committed to fighting against the bureaucratic status quo of American education. I know that this course has made me a better person, and I am excited to see how I can apply the knowledge I gained to future endeavors.