HONORS
SENIOR AWARDS & RECOGNITION CEREMONY

2026

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY | HONORS SCHOOL

Senior Awards & Recognition Ceremony

MAY 13, 2026

Welcome & Opening Remarks ..... Director Jennifer Ross, MA
Introduction of Honors School Outstanding Service Award ..... Director Jennifer Ross, MA
Remarks from the Outstanding Service Award Winner ..... Dr. Ashley Bosonac
Introduction of Awardees ..... Director Jennifer Ross, MA

- Director's Award for Excellence in Honors
- Honors Council Award for Best Thesis
- Honors Council Award for Best Capstone
- Remarks from the Award Winner's First Reader

Recognition of Graduates ..... Director Jennifer Ross, MA
Closing Remarks ..... Director Jennifer Ross, MA

OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

DR. ASHLEY BOSONAC



Dr. Ashley Bosonac is a Professor of Marketing and MBA Program Director in the Leon Hess School of Business at Monmouth University. With over 20 years of industry and academic experience, she brings a dynamic, hands-on approach to marketing education, preparing students for today's business landscape.

At Monmouth, she teaches a range of marketing courses, emphasizing experiential learning and real-world application. She is deeply engaged with the Honors community, where she mentors students and supports honors education—work she finds especially meaningful and rewarding.

Her research focuses on enhancing student career outcomes, particularly through industry certifications and professional credentialing. She has published in multiple peer-reviewed journals and presents at academic and industry conferences.

In addition to her academic work, Dr. Bosonac has led consulting initiatives in the medical and dental sectors, where her strategic marketing efforts have driven increased brand awareness and profitability.

Prior to joining Monmouth, Dr. Bosonac served as a tenured Associate Professor for 12 years, where she helped launch a social media marketing minor, directed graduate programs, and co-developed a master's degree in communications and digital marketing.

Dr. Bosonac holds a Ph.D. from Old Dominion University, an M.B.A. from Duquesne University, and a B.S. from Virginia Tech. She remains committed to advancing student success, curriculum innovation, and meaningful connections between academia and industry.

THE DIRECTOR'S AWARD for EXCELLENCE IN HONORS

RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS BY GRADUATE OF THE HONORS SCHOOL

This award recognizes superior graduates for their contributions to the Honors School. Senior honors students who have achieved a 3.5 GPA in their major and who meet at least two of the following criteria may be included for consideration: active member of the honors community, member of the Peer Mentoring Program for at least two years, represented the Honors School at an academic conference, served on the Honors Students Association, served as a Beechwood Resident Assistant, or served on the Honors School Student Advisory Board. The award winners are selected by the Honors School Director.

Christopher C. Reigel '26

Christopher Reigel's time at Monmouth University has been marked by academic curiosity, purposeful research, and a deep commitment to marine biology. Majoring in Marine and Environmental Biology and Policy with a minor in GIS, Chris entered Monmouth with a clear goal: to engage in meaningful research as an undergraduate student. Through his dedication and initiative, he not only achieved that goal but became a standout student-scholar in his field.

Chris was recognized with the Research Achievement Award from the Biology Department and presented his work at the Marine Technology Society Fisheries and Benthic Monitoring TechSurge conference at the University of Rhode Island. He was a presenter at the 2025 Hawk Talks during Student Scholarship Week showcasing his research in the PHABLab, conducting eDNA research focused on the endangered Atlantic sturgeon. He also participated in the Summer Scholars Research Program, where he conducted research on harmful algal bloom abundance and water quality.

Beyond his academic and research accomplishments, Chris has been an engaged and generous member of the campus community. He served as a Resident Assistant for two years, supported first-year students as a Peer Mentor, and represented the Honors School for two consecutive years on a panel for Accepted Students. His warmth, humility, and enthusiasm have made a lasting impression on those around him.

One of our favorite memories of Chris is finding him fishing on the beach during our annual Sunrise Walk – a fitting reflection of his love for the marine environment and his ability to bring his passions into every part of his Monmouth experience. We are proud to recognize Chris with the Director's Award for Excellence in Honors.

2025 HONORS COUNCIL AWARD for

Best Thesis and Capstone

All Honors Thesis/Capstone presenters are invited to apply for the prestigious Honors Council Award for Best Thesis/Capstone. This is a competitive and prestigious award that is granted to an honors student who completed their Honors School thesis or capstone during the previous calendar year and that the Honors Council deems to be the most outstanding based on originality of thesis, depth and range of research, clarity of argument, and quality of presentation.

BEST THESIS, WINNER

ALEXA HOUSEKNECHT '25
BIOLOGY – CONCENTRATION IN MOLECULAR CELL PHYSIOLOGY

First Reader Dr. Davis Jose
Second Reader Dr. Ellen Doss-Pepe
Investigating local conformational changes from ligands on G-Quadruplex complexes using fluorescent base analogues

BEST CAPSTONE, WINNER

EMMA VINCI '26
PSYCHOLOGY

First Reader: Dr. Erin Nau
How Dance Impacts Self-Esteem and Body Image in Early Adolescence

• DIRECTOR ROSS PROUDLY PRESENTS •

THE HONORS SCHOOL GRADUATES

FROM SPRING 2026, WINTER 2026, AND SUMMER 2025

Cecilia Aversano
Viviana Ayuso
Veronica Belloso
Matthew Cioletti
Megan Costigliola
Kieran Cunningham
Dominick Del Bene III
Gianna DiBello
Gina Dige
Lojine Ahmed Elrais
Ella Farrelly
Robert Federico
Dean Heidel
Sarah Hilton
Ashleigh Kennedy
Christie Kollydas
Cades Linder
Caitlin McErlean
Alexander Metz
Aldo Monge
Christopher Reigel
Sophia Sabbagh
Julia Schaeffer
Gillian Sepp
Zaccery Tarver
Yanni Trogan
Victoria Tuffy
Emma Vinci
Sarah Vladu
Chelsea Walsh
Emily Webb

CECILIA AVERSANO



MAJOR: Bachelor of Science in Nursing

HOMETOWN: Wilton, CT

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Monmouth University Professional Nursing Association President
- Attending the New Jersey League for Nursing Conference
- First Monmouth University Nursing Student to be a part of the Flynn Fellowship
- Was selected to present research conducted during that fellowship at the ONS Conference in Texas
- Student ambassador
- Member of Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society
- Member of Alpha Omicron Pi
- Member of the Lambda Delta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honors Society
- Member of Omicron Delta Kappa

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I chose the Monmouth University Honors Program because it felt like a natural continuation of my academic experience. Having taken honors classes throughout high school, I was already comfortable with the level of challenge, critical thinking, and engagement those courses require, so transitioning into honors coursework at Monmouth felt like the right fit. Beyond academics, I was also drawn to the strong sense of community within the program. Additionally, the chance to live in the honors community was especially appealing, particularly because of its unique suite-style housing, which is uncommon for first-year students.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Monmouth University Honors Program was having the opportunity to serve as a student panelist at two Honors Brunches. It was incredibly meaningful to share my experiences as a nursing major within the program with prospective students, whether they were interested in nursing or another field. Being able to speak honestly about the academic challenges, supportive community, and unique opportunities the Honors Program provides made the experience even more rewarding. I especially valued the chance to connect with and inspire future students, helping them envision themselves as part of the program and encouraging them to take advantage of all it has to offer.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

While I do not currently have a job lined up, my plan is to return to Connecticut after graduation and pursue a position as a bedside nurse in a hospital setting. I am eager to begin my nursing career in a role that will allow me to provide direct patient care, apply the clinical skills I have developed throughout my education, and continue learning in a fast-paced, hands-on environment. Working at the bedside will give me the opportunity to build a strong foundation as a nurse while making a meaningful impact on the lives of my patients.

THESIS: Enhancing Breast Cancer Treatment Outcomes: The Role of Sarcopenia Detection and Related Risk Factors

Breast cancer remains a commonly diagnosed cancer and is often accompanied by negative complications that impact patient outcomes and quality of life. Sarcopenia, which is frequently found, but underdiagnosed, in breast cancer patients is a leader in cancer related complications. This literature review focuses on the factors of sarcopenia and sarcopenic obesity in breast cancer patients, emphasizing the limitations of current assessment tools, and highlighting the importance of advanced body composition analysis. The review discusses the role that nutrition, exercise and lifestyle changes have on management, and some cases prevention, of sarcopenia. Evidence emphasizes that malnutrition, reduced physical activity, and metabolic dysfunction leads to muscle loss, treatment intolerance and increased mortality risk or recurrence. Educating clients in nutritional changes that are high in protein, participating in aerobic and resistance exercise can allow for maintenance of lean body mass, improvement of physical function and increased success of treatment. Implementing a standard of care that allows for early intervention at the time of breast cancer diagnosis, will allow for maintenance of muscle mass and bone health, improve cancer treatment success and overall quality of life.

VIVIANA AYUSO



MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration International Business

MINOR: Information Technology

HOMETOWN: Neptune, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- HR Club President
- Dean's List
- Dean's Advisory Council (Leon Hess Business School)
- HawkTank Finalist

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Starting full time at a Strategic Sales Solutions for Life Sciences company helping/doing their marketing.

THESIS: Cafeteros Coffee Shop Powered by OriginPay: Putting Coffee Farmers First

Colombian coffee farmers consistently face low margins, delayed payments, and high intermediary fees despite growing global demand for ethically sourced coffee. On the other hand US consumers, increasingly look for transparency, cultural authenticity and proof that their purchases create real impact. This thesis examines how combining a digital payment platform with cultural branding in a specialty coffee shop can increase income for Colombian coffee farmers, strengthen consumer trust and create a financially sustainable business model. The proposed concept, Cafeteros Coffee Shop, integrates OriginPay — a digital payment system — with an immersive Colombian cultural experience featuring authentic food, storytelling and farmer profiles accessible via QR code. Using a mixed-methods approach including a consumer survey of approximately 100 respondents, a farmer survey distributed via WhatsApp, and 20 customer discovery interviews conducted through the NSF I-Corps Program at NJIT, the research demonstrates that ethical sourcing, payment transparency and cultural branding collectively increase consumer willingness to pay and can meaningfully improve farmer compensation within the specialty coffee supply chain.

VERONICA A. BELLOSO VELÁSQUEZ



MAJOR: BA Political Science - Concentration International Relations

MINOR: Public Policy

HOMETOWN: Toms River, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Monmouth University Student Government Association: Human and Community Relations Co-Chair, Vice President, Attorney General
- Captain Monmouth Debate Hawks
- Model United Nations Delegate
- Honors School Dean Search Committee Representative
- Founder and Program Director of the Monmouth Untold
- Monmouth University Honors School Office Assistant
- Monmouth University Honors School Peer Mentor

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Monmouth University Honors School because I wanted to challenge myself academically and be part of a community where I could grow beyond the classroom. What really made me stay was Dean Ross and Doris, they made the Honors School feel like more than just academics. They created a space where I felt supported, pushed to do better, and genuinely cared for, which made a huge difference in my college experience.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

Definitely the Honors Sunrise walk, I met my best friend Dean there!

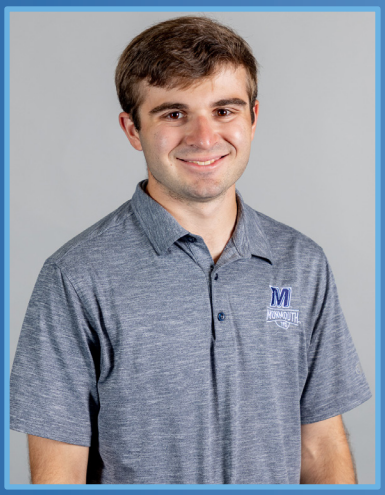
WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be attending George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs this fall to pursue my Master's in International Affairs, with a concentration on Latin America and economics. My long-term goal is to work in diplomacy and foreign policy, ideally with the U.S. Department of State.

THESIS: Color-Coded Futures: Redlining and the Politics of Educational Inequality

This study examines different socioeconomic and systemic barriers that may affect a student's likelihood of applying and enrolling in a four-year institution of higher education. In a time in which diversity in colleges and universities is increasing in importance for administrators, this study focuses on uncovering the derivation of persisting disparities This analysis investigates how historic redlining and housing segregation have shaped marginalized families' access to higher education, particularly through the lens of economic barriers, resource access, and social support. In addition, the study explains strategies for segregated communities to overcome these systemic barriers, highlighting cases of both persistent inequities and educational mobility. Through the process of semi-structured interviews, the study examines real-life experiences of two sets of teachers from high schools located in suburban and urban areas, then linking this with their students' educational outcomes. Ultimately, the analysis shows that the core determinant for whether or not students from marginalized communities applied and enrolled into four-year institutions was the support, or lack thereof, from their teachers, communities, and families. Although other factors were reasonings in student outcomes, familial support was a consistently identified factor for student outcomes across eight of the nine conducted interviews.

MATTHEW CIOLETTI



MAJOR: BA History

HOMETOWN: Brick, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Pep Band
- Phi Alpha Theta History Honors Society
- Honors School Peer Mentor
- Vice President of the Chess Club

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to be a part of a growing community of exceptional learners. The events like the Sunrise Walk are made fun which I learned from my cousin Sarah Drew who was also an Honors student. I wanted to get the experience of working at Monmouth knowing the peer mentoring program would be great to put on my resume. My goal was to graduate with Honors since Dean Mezey was still here, and I'm grateful I am about to achieve my Bachelor of Arts degree with it. Plus, I would be lying if I said I didn't want the luxurious suite style living in my first two years!

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

Presenting my Honors Thesis. I completed hours of peer mentoring and scholarly source reading to prepare to make the Honors School proud. Finding the 45 sources was as fun as finding out how to use them for my thesis.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I want to write for a local newspaper and go to grad school to one day work at a library.

THESIS: Examining Polarization of Religion, Democracy, and Patriotism Through Grand Stages of History

Between three critical axes, the historical perspectives on polarization have highlighted how America has struggled to find unity. With freedom of speech comes the freedom to make a difference, and the people who make that choice to lead the change are those who start a revolution. Firstly, colonial activists of the early Anglican church experienced serious religious dissent, and that has translated to psychological dissent across Catholics and Jews of today. The results of how Presidents win their elections comes down to the affective polarization of living in a country that runs like a democracy. Remaining loyal to the country despite the divide is hard to come by, and the idea of patriotism explains whether people have faith is evident by the changes across time. Describing the psychology of polarization helps explain what issues bring Americans apart because of the history of intolerant ideas. Polarization has existed throughout American history, outlining the American partition of political and social ideals from the Revolution to today. Extensive research on polarization demonstrates the enduring nature of emotional division.

MEGAN COSTIGLIOLA



MAJOR: BA Psychology

HOMETOWN: Lanoka Harbor, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Peer Mentor for the Honors School
- Programming Chair of Monmouth University's Student Activities Board
- Member of Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society
- Member of Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honors Society
- Member of Psi Chi International Honors Society
- Member of Psychology Club
- Claeyssens Annual Scholarship Recipient
- The Alice Gustav Scholarship Award
- Independent Study Working in Conjunction with New Jersey Parent's Caucus
- Psychology Thesis: Fur-Ever Connected: Examining the Effects of Digital Interactions with Pets on Loneliness and Homesickness in University Students
- Internship with New Jersey Reentry Corporation

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School for increased academic opportunities, the chance to challenge myself through learning, and for a sense of community. I wanted the ability to form connections, have opportunities for research and learning, and make friends with like-minded individuals.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My favorite memory of the Honors School is the honors cluster courses I took first semester of freshman year. The class really was a small community, and it's where I met my best friends!

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Kean University, M.A. in Human Behavior and Organizational Psychology (at the Kean Ocean Campus)

THESIS: From Feed to Fact: The Implications of Instagram and TikTok Usage on Perceptions of Crime

Social media's growing popularity and increased reliance as a news source means that individuals are now susceptible to believing false information, which means their perceptions about crime may become skewed. Current research fails to acknowledge whether there is a connection between TikTok and Instagram, two newer forms of social media, and perceptions of crime. An online survey asking about fear of crime, social media use habits, and perceptions of the justice system was used to investigate potential relationships between these variables. With data from 131 participants, positive, significant, correlations were found between the type of content participants view on Instagram and TikTok and their fear of crime. Those who view crime content on their social media are more likely to have an increased fear of crime, and, in some cases, are more likely to agree with punitive criminal justice policies. Significant group differences in fear of crime were found between those who view high amounts of crime on their social media versus low amount of crime content on their social media. These results indicate that time spent on these social media apps is not as important as the content viewed when looking at fears and perceptions.

KIEREN CUNNINGHAM

MAJOR: BA Psychology
MINOR: Sociology

HOMETOWN: Morristown, NJ



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Psi Chi (Psychology Honors Society)
- Alpha Kappa Delta (Sociology Honors Society
- Research Assistant in the Politics, Identity, and
- Misinformation Lab at MU
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters Mentor

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School because I wanted to be challenged in my academics. I also wanted the opportunity to explore my interests more deeply through the honors thesis.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

I really enjoyed developing connections with my professors through my thesis as well as honors by contract credits. These projects gave me opportunities to interact with people in the fields of psychology and sociology frequently and provided me with multiple great mentors during my time in college.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be attending graduate school for my master's in social work starting January 2027. I have not chosen which school yet.

THESIS: Curriculum Proposal: Introduction to Queer Psychology: Historical, Theoretical, and Lifespan Perspectives.

LGBTQIA+ Psychology (henceforth referred to interchangeably as LGBTQIA+ psychology or Queer psychology) is an often under-taught and misunderstood branch of the psychology discipline. Many may assume LGBTQIA+ psychology is the study of why people are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, or that it is a form of mental health support for these individuals. In reality, Queer psychology is the study of the lived experiences of sexual and gender minorities, and is therefore intended to study psychological principles with regard to people under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella. At large, LGBTQIA+ individuals experience unique social, emotional, and physical challenges – and resiliences – throughout their lifespan as a result of historical and continuing inequities. Currently within Monmouth University Psychology Department, no course exists with the explicit purpose of educating on the experiences of this specific population. The present curriculum is designed as an introductory course to Queer psychology using historical, theoretical, and lifespan perspectives to gain a deeper understanding of the lives and realities of LGBTQIA+ people.

DOMINICK DEL BENE III

MAJOR: BS Computer Science
MINOR: Mathematics

HOMETOWN: Farmingdale, NJ



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- intern at the Monmouth University Summer Research Program in Summer 2024.
- Math tutor at the Math Learning Center.
- Dean's List for 3 semesters.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to challenge myself academically. The program provided opportunities for research and closer interaction with faculty, which align with my goal of developing both technical and critical thinking skills. It has allowed me to push myself, stay engaged in my studies, and prepare more effectively for my future career.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School was presenting my work at the Honors Research Conference. It was a rewarding experience to share my project with peers and faculty, explain my project in depth, and receive thoughtful feedback. Presenting at the conference not only strengthened my confidence in communicating my work, but also made me appreciate how much I had learned and grown through the Honors program.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I'm attending graduate school at Monmouth University.

THESIS: Dog Breed Identification Using Computer Vision for Pet Grooming Services.

This study explores the use of computer vision to automatically identify dog breeds to support and improve pet grooming services. Accurate breed identification is important because grooming requirements vary significantly based on physical characteristics such as coat type, length, and structure. The primary objective of this project is to expand upon an existing deep learning model capable of classifying dog breeds from images using a Vision Transformer (ViT), a neural network architecture designed for image recognition tasks. The model is implemented in Python using the PyTorch library and trained on multiple datasets, including the Oxford-IIIT Pet Dataset, Stanford Dogs Dataset, and Tsinghua Dog Dataset. These datasets are preprocessed through cropping and resizing to meet model input requirements and are compared to evaluate their effectiveness in training accurate classification models. The results demonstrate that the model can successfully identify multiple dog breeds based on visual features such as fur texture, color, and body structure, providing a practical tool to assist groomers in making informed grooming decisions.

GIANNA DiBELLO



MAJOR: BS in Nursing

HOMETOWN: Philadelphia, PA

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Top of the Nursing Program Award

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to have more of a community of peers that value their education as much as I do. Being a part of the Honors School has given me a tight knit family.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The Sunrise Walk every year is always so beautiful and so much fun.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

To take and pass my NCLEX and become an RN.

THESIS: Reducing Anxiety with Pediatric Osteosarcoma

Osteosarcoma is a cancer found predominantly in the pediatric population with a difficult treatment and an extensive recovery period. This can cause incredible amounts of anxiety for not only the patient but for the family as well. This thesis investigated the relationship between pediatric osteosarcoma and anxiety while focusing on the factors that affect anxiety and strategies that can be used to limit symptoms. Through creating a website, this data and literature was presented and used as a resource to provide valuable information and examples on how to lessen anxiety. This is a very sensitive and heavy topic, and it is important to address this issue because mental health is often overlooked but is extremely prominent in the pediatric cancer population. The website is meant to provide comfort for the patient and their families by supplying them validating information while also suggesting various forms of nonpharmacological strategies to reduce anxiety.

GINA DIGE



MAJOR: BFA Design & Animation - Concentration in Graphic/Interactive Design
MINOR: Photography

HOMETOWN: Howell, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Blue Hawk Records Executive Board Member (2023-2026)
- Dean's List (2022-2026)
- Art Club Treasurer (2024-2025)
- Graphic Designer for the Honors School, Leon Hess
- Business School, and Center for the Arts
- Award for Outstanding In Graphic Design for the 2025-2026 academic year
- Published in the Monmouth Review, vol. 66 & vol. 69
- David Tietge Memorial First-Year Composition Academic Essay Award (2023)

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I've always been a very dedicated student and the opportunity to be able to research something I was passionate about really appealed to me. But the thing that really got me excited about the Honors School was the people.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

There are so many great memories I have between being an honors student and working for the Honors School. The opening reception of my capstone exhibition was certainly a stand-out moment for me; getting to share all of my hard work with those who helped me through the past 3 years was so amazing. But my favorite memory is one from my freshman year. While working in the office, I got to be really good friends with two honors students who were in the midst of completing their capstones. We spent the night before their research conference in the office, watching Gilmore Girls and eating Surf Taco curly fries as they finished their presentations. I knew then that I was in the right place.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I'll be working as a social media manager for Chick Fil-A this Summer, as well as doing freelance work as a photographer and graphic designer. I also may be looking into starting my own business based off of my senior thesis, but that may be a while yet. Oh, and I'm going to Italy in August! I'm looking forward to that the most!

THESIS: Yarning for Peace of Mind: Fiber Arts for Students' Mental Wellness

The concern for the mental health and well-being of college students continues to be a prevalent issue existing in today's higher education. While efforts to make counseling and prevention resources more accessible to students persist, there are still many limitations (i.e., stigmas, budgetary constraints, scheduling conflicts, insufficient number of faculty, etc.) that prevent students from getting the help they need. One solution would be to implement more unconventional, preventative strategies that allow students to take control of their mental health before it approaches a point of crisis. Incorporating mindfulness-based activities into a daily routine has been shown to lessen perceived stress through strengthening aspects of self-regulation and self-perception, in turn improving overall well-being. This research aimed to redefine fiber arts within the context of mindfulness-based art therapy (MBAT). The findings of this research served as the basis for an exhibition of student-made fiber art projects in hopes of identifying and amplifying the perceived benefits of fiber arts as a mindfulness-based intervention for college students. Five themes were identified throughout the artist's statements that summarize the key benefits: Flow and Focus, Emotional Resilience and Stress Reduction, Personal Meaning and Identity, Mindful Routine and Functionality, Sensory/Tactile Experience.

LOJINE AHMED ELRAIS



MAJOR: BS Health Studies/Health Science Cluster (3+3 Physician Assistant Program)

MINOR: Sociology

HOMETOWN: Marlboro, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- NCHC and NRHC Conferences where I presented my research.

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to surround myself with a community of like minded individuals willing and ready to share thoughts and ideas. Throughout my years at Monmouth I've had exactly that. Bonding over honors courses and coursework, enjoying the perks like early registration, and spending time with people who treat me like family.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School was the 2025 NCHC trip to San Diego, where I built a family in my home away from home.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be attending Monmouth University's Physician Assistant program for my graduate level studies.

THESIS: Beyond the Surface — Taking Back Autonomy in Your Skin

This study reviews existing research on the epidemiology, risk factors, pathophysiology, and advancements in early detection and treatment of skin cancer. The basis of the study is to convey the most effective preventative measures to the public, as well as informing on the newest developing forms of treatment for patients already diagnosed. Of the more than a million cases of cancer detected annually, skin cancers, such as Melanoma, Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC), and Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC), are among some of the most common that go undetected and untreated. As well as examining the gaps in patient–provider transparency within dermatologic oncology, particularly in treatment decision making for skin cancer. Despite the availability of noninvasive diagnostic technologies such as topical treatments and targeted therapies, patients are not always fully informed of these alternatives prior to undergoing invasive procedures such as Mohs micrographic surgery or electrodesiccation and curettage. This project explores how clinical practice patterns of limited communication between physician and patients may lead to non-shared decision making on patient outcomes and autonomy.

ELLA FARRELLY

MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration in Marketing

HOMETOWN: Guelph, Ontario, Canada

THESIS: Beyond The Game: NIL, Branding, and Financial Empowerment for Female Student Athletes

This creative capstone explores the evolution of women's basketball, highlighting the historical challenges faced by female athletes and the significant strides made in recent years, particularly through the rise of social media, the implementation of Name, Image, and Likeness, and the legal developments surrounding the House v. NCAA settlement. While these developments allow athletes to generate income and potentially receive revenue from their institutions, many student athletes, particularly female athletes, may lack the resources or education necessary to effectively navigate these complex systems. This paper examines the historical context of women's basketball, the role of media representation and personal branding, and the growing importance of NIL opportunities in collegiate athletics. In response to these developments, this paper proposes the creation of a forum specifically designed for female student athletes. The forum aims to provide education on NIL opportunities, revenue sharing, financial literacy, taxation, contract negotiation, and personal brand development. By providing information based presentations, the forum aims to empower female athletes with the knowledge and resources needed to make decisions regarding their athletic and

ROBERT FREDERICO

MAJOR: BS Health Studies/Health Science Cluster

MINOR: Biology and Chemistry

HOMETOWN: Holmdel, NJ



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Presenting my research as a Hawk Talk at scholarship week
- Vice President of the Men's Volleyball Club team
- The first to do a large scale human subject research trial in the Human Performance Lab in the Monmouth University Graduate Center
- Honors School Peer Mentor
- MLC tutor

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to challenge myself academically and deepen my interest in cardiovascular research, as I plan to pursue a future career as a Cardiologist.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

Going to move in day as a peer mentor, and the honors sunrise walk.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

After graduation I will be studying for my MCAT in June. Following my test I will be applying to medical school. I will continue to work at Jersey Shore University Medical Center as a Patient Care technician.

THESIS: The effect of warm-ups on cardiopulmonary exercise testing and VO2 Max performance in college aged athletes and athletes with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy

This thesis consists of two studies assessing cardiopulmonary exercise testing (CPET) for maximal oxygen consumption (VO2 max) in college-age athletes and comparing results to athletes with Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM). The first study aimed to examine differences in VO2max between two different warmup modalities before CPET. Sixteen college-aged athletes (19-25 years) completed a traditional walking warmup (WW) for 6 minutes at 3.0 mph with 0% incline, and a suspension warmup (SW) using TRX equipment for five body weight exercises on two days with a randomized order. A novel graded exercise test was conducted after the warm-up condition, consisting of nine two-minute stages with incremental speed and incline, designed to obtain true maximal performance. 14 participants completed both conditions with no adverse events. The SW produced similar results to the WW, as hypothesized. CPET is relevant to athletes with HCM, a serious genetic heart condition that can be managed with proper screening and treatment. The second study compared the VO2 max performance of college-age athletes to those with HCM, aiming to propose CPET and a dynamic SW as an adequate testing method for all athletes, including those with HCM.

DEAN HEIDEL

MAJOR: BA Communication/Media Studies & Production Cluster

THESIS: This Is How I Feel Podcast Experience: The Conditions of Emotional Vulnerability in Generation Z

Emotional vulnerability is pivotal for learning, growing and interacting with other people. In particular, emotional vulnerability is more significant now due to the digital age and culture change that has been brought about with generation Z. In this thesis, there will be five different categories and causes of vulnerability that will be under observation. These include, vulnerability in the classroom, early workspace, parent child relationship, religion, and romantic relationships. These five categories are just some of the probable causes for emotional vulnerability. Moreover, this thesis will target the generation Z demographic, with a heavier emphasis on college students ages 18-24. With generation Z being the up and coming young adults as of 2026, this study caters to the transitional period of life in which college students enter potential uncharted territory such as entering the working class, long-term relationships or extended religious belief. Overall, the purpose of this thesis is to bring about the importance and value of emotional vulnerability in generation Z and college students, while highlighting the different areas of life in which vulnerability is necessary and significant.

SARAH HILTON



MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration International Business & BS Business Administration - Concentration in Marketing

HOMETOWN: Lancaster, PA

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Alpha Sigma Tau
- Academic Achievement award for International Business

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

To enhance my college career.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The sunrise walk each year.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Getting my MBA here at Monmouth.

THESIS: The Cost of Being Superwoman: A PSA Campaign to Combat the Pink Tax

This research investigated the economic and social impacts of the "Pink Tax," the phenomenon in which products marketed to women were priced higher than comparable products marketed to men. Through a numerical analysis of price discrepancies in industries such as personal care, clothing, and toys, the study examined whether these differences were the result of gender-based marketing rather than genuine variations in product quality or production costs. The research also explored the psychological consequences of gendered marketing, particularly its influence on children. Findings suggested that exposure to gendered toys and consumer goods shaped self-perceptions from an early age and reinforced societal expectations tied to gender roles. By analyzing both market data and social implications, the study highlighted how the Pink Tax not only placed an economic burden on women but also perpetuated long-standing patterns of inequality. To address this issue, I developed a public service announcement (PSA) campaign designed to raise awareness of the Pink Tax and educate audiences on its broader implications. This campaign aimed to encourage discussion, challenge existing norms, and inspire greater consumer and organizational accountability regarding gender-based pricing.

ASHLEIGH KENNEDY



MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration in Marketing

HOMETOWN: Old Bridge, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- "Social Media Manager in the AMA Transfer Mentor (w/ the Transfer Hawks)
- Honors Peer Mentor (w/ the Honors School) "

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

My journey with the Honors School here at Monmouth is a little different from most since I transferred here (started at Monmouth at the beginning of my Junior year), so I initially joined solely to continue my Honors education. Little did I know that taking this on would be one of the best decisions I made. Not only was I able to continue my honors education, but I was also able to meet so many incredible people and be able to further research and showcase a topic that I feel incredibly passionate about.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

Attending the NCHC and the NRHC conferences in San Diego and New Haven during the past academic year. It was incredible getting to meet and hang out with so many people from the Honors School, and to be also showcase my thesis topic as I was actively working on it!

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I'm attending graduate school here at Monmouth (the Bachelor's + Master's 4+1 Program), pursuing my MBA with a concentration in Management. During this time, I'll also be working in the Honors Office working with the Peer Mentors for the next academic year as the GA!

THESIS: Our Obsession with True Crime Media and the Ethics Involved

Fascination with the true crime genre has become a global phenomenon in modern media and culture. This popularity has led to its widespread presence in podcasts, documentaries, books, television series, and various social media platforms. The new accessibility of true crime "content" has made it easier for audiences to engage with real-life criminal events. Most true crime narratives revolve around missing people, murder, or paranormal cases. Many people have a natural curiosity about the darker, more graphic aspects of life, and true crime media provides a way to explore the morbid and mysterious. However, this rise in popularity raises concerns about whether society has become too desensitized about actual crimes and real-life victims. While true crime media can educate its diverse audiences about preventing crime and even certain legal matters, it also raises questions about voyeurism and the potential harm it can bring to victims and their loved ones when their pain is ultimately used for entertainment. Today, the genre often prioritizes sensationalism over accuracy, which can contribute to the spread of misinformation, misrepresentation, and the potential exploitation of victims. This project examines different factors driving true crime's recent surge in popularity, while also considering its ethical challenges and implications.

CHRISTIE KOLLYDAS

MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration in Small Business Management & Entrepreneurship

THESIS: Comic CONnections: A Podcast to Help Small Businesses Grow at Comic

This study is about the effects that comic conventions, known as comic cons, have on small business owners that sell at the event. Comic cons are divided into different sections. The show floor focuses on exhibitors that sell products that they have bought from companies, like toys and books. There is artist alley, where artists sell their original artwork and crafts. These conventions are often the only place business owners can promote their work in person. This study determined how to sell more while vending and the effects selling at conventions have on small businesses after the event occurred.

The artists at comic cons are small businesses and work hard to make a living doing what they love to do. Although not all conventions are successful, owners need to learn how to market themselves for the future and online business; online sales will help them fund their convention fees and an online presence will make a store more noticeable. The table display, sales pitch, and the buyer and seller relationship have made an impact on a business's success. This research led to a six-episode podcast featuring guests with different perspectives on selling at comic cons and its effects.

CADES LINDER

MAJOR: BS Health Studies/Health Science Cluster

THESIS: Barriers & Inequities in American Rural Healthcare

The research completed in this study was to define the barriers and inequities American rural communities face compared to their metropolitan counterparts. This work is important to educate future medical providers on how to address cases and disparities in a unique way due to the differences based on residential communities. There were 29 peer reviewed journal articles accessed in this literature view between 2010 and 2025. Various databases were accessed and keywords were repeated to get optimal results. The capstone project was completed by creating an informational website that stated the key findings of the research, and offered ways to implement this knowledge into medical school and Physician Assistant program education. The website was shared with Misericordia University's Master of Physician Assistant Studies program and Rutgers University's Medical School. The key finding of this research was that American rural residents are underserved in healthcare due to physical barriers, a scarcity in providers, and limited financial resources. These barriers cause a higher rate of chronic & preventative illness, and greater use of federal support for health insurance.

CAITLIN McERLEAN



MAJOR: Bachelor of Social Work

HOMETOWN: Hawthorne NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Member of Phi Eta Sigma
- Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
- Member of Phi Alpha Social Work Honors Society
- Vice President of Best Buddies at Monmouth University
- President of the Social Work Society at Monmouth University
- Presented at the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) conference in February 2026 in New Orleans with the School of Social Work Program

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I chose to join the Honors School at Monmouth University for many reasons. I knew that I wanted to continue to challenge myself in an academic setting, as I had been in honors classes during my high school career, and I thought it was a good idea to continue pushing myself in an academic setting through the honors school. I was also extremely drawn to the sense of community that was obvious when looking into the school. I knew that these were connections that would mean a lot to me when I first decided to join the Honors School, and I am glad to say that I was proven correct, as I have made lasting connections with peers who support and push one another for success.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School is the orientation weekend freshman year, specifically the sunrise walk to the beach with the members. It was a wonderful bonding experience that we all still talk about.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I am attending Graduate School at Monmouth University for a Master's in Social Work.

THESIS: Siblings Being Overlooked: The Need for Support for Healthy Siblings in Pediatric Oncology Settings

Oftentimes, the focus of families and professionals may stray from a healthy sibling when dealing with pediatric oncology, when there is a need for support for the healthy sibling. When a child is diagnosed with cancer or passes away, loved ones experience emotional and psychosocial challenges that require support, including the siblings of the child. Although this is the case, there is limited support for siblings. The lack of available support for the healthy sibling can lead to long-term consequences. This can create an injustice for the healthy sibling. To address this issue, an informational pamphlet based on archival research has been created to be distributed in a hospital or cancer patient center to increase awareness and encourage advocacy. The project's objective is to raise awareness among social workers and health care institutions about the needs of healthy siblings in an oncology setting that are not properly met, in the hopes of leading to more support for healthy siblings to be available. Changes, such as creating counseling for healthy siblings of children with cancer, are essential to make sure siblings are properly supported during these difficult times.

ALEXANDER METZ



MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration in Accounting Analytics

MINOR: Computer Science and Statistics

HOMETOWN: Manalapan, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Founder and President of Chess Club
- Vice President of Math Club

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to have an academically rigorous experience and be part of a community.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

I always loved the social events, like the watch parties, game nights, and bonfires. But I'd say my fondest memory of the Honors School would be presenting my Honors Thesis after 2 years of research.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be getting my Masters in Data Science at Monmouth.

THESIS: Lines of Power: How Gerrymandering Affects Representation

Voting is a central feature of democracy, allowing citizens to choose who represents them. This thesis investigates the effect of gerrymandering on U.S. House elections' competitiveness by evaluating whether states with more biased (or gerrymandered) district maps have higher winning margins. Using the results of the 2022 House elections, the dataset was reduced from about 1,350 entries to 370 winning candidates from states with stable, multi-district congressional maps. Using the Princeton Gerrymandering Project's letter grading system (A–F), the fairness of each state's congressional map was assessed.Then, the vote share and margin of victory was computed for every winner and compared average trends based on their grades. The findings present a clear trend, indicating that states with fairer maps (A and B) have lower average winning percentages of about 63%, relative to states with poor maps (particularly C and F) which average above 66%. After extensive statistical analysis, the findings have shown that gerrymandering creates safer seats and diminishes electoral competitiveness. Nonpartisan redistricting practices, such as independent commissions, would result in more competitive elections and would better represent the electorate.

ALDO MONGE

MAJOR: BS Homeland Security

THESIS: How Should the United States Secure Its Borders? A Whole-of-Government Approach to Border Security.

This apolitical policy analysis examines how the United States should secure its borders by evaluating border security through a whole-of-government framework rather than as a narrow immigration or policing issue. The project addresses this question because border security remains a core state function, yet the contemporary threat environment connects border management to narcotics trafficking, human smuggling, contraband, public safety, and broader national security concerns. Using securitization theory as its conceptual basis, the analysis relies on a qualitative, library-based review of official threat assessments, federal strategic planning documents, and relevant scholarly literature. It also evaluates the primary and border-specific roles of the federal departments most directly connected to border security, including Homeland Security, Defense, Justice, State, Treasury, Health and Human Services, Commerce, and Agriculture. The analysis finds that border security is most effective in mitigating immediate threats linked to the physical movement of people and goods, especially narcotics trafficking, human smuggling, firearms movement, and contraband trafficking. However, it also finds that border security alone cannot fully address broader threats sustained through financial, technological, and transnational systems. Therefore, effective border security depends on integrated coordination across multiple federal departments

CHRISTOPHER REIGEL



MAJOR: BS Marine & Environmental Biology & Policy

MINOR: Geographic Information Systems

HOMETOWN: Cherry Hill, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- President of MEBP Club
- Resident Assistant
- Research Assistant (PHABLab, Dunton Lab),
- Presented independant research at national Marine Technology Society Conference

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I wanted to be in classes alongside likeminded, hardworking individuals, challenge myself to be a better student, and participate in independent research.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The sunrise walks!

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be pursuing a Master's of Marine Science from Stony Brook University

THESIS: Comparative Study of qPCR eDNA Analysis with Capture Data for Atlantic Sturgeon, Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus, in the New York Bight

The Atlantic Sturgeon, Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus, is a native endangered fish of historical ecological and commercial importance. Due to its endangered status, the Atlantic Sturgeon is currently monitored by various state and federal agencies. However, sturgeon population data is limited by current monitoring methods. To evaluate the strength of an eDNA qPCR assay for the quantitative monitoring of Atlantic Sturgeon, water samples were collected from adjacent to gillnets deployed for an acoustic tagging study conducted by the Dunton Lab at Monmouth University. Those samples were processed through qPCR and compared against the value of sturgeon per net, indicating a positive regression ($p = 0.00807$; $R2 = 0.93$) between the eDNA and physical capture data. Samples were also taken from a reserved bank of eDNA extracts from a previous eDNA metabarcoding monitoring project that had indicated a high proportion of sturgeon in the fish community structure. However, the qPCR assay failed to amplify any sturgeon DNA in those samples. Overall findings indicate eDNA as a useful tool to augment traditional surveying for Atlantic Sturgeon, with improvements to be made to the qPCR assay tested.

SOPHIA SABBAGH

MAJOR: BS Biology - Concentration in Molecular Cell Physiology & BS Chemistry

THESIS: Application of Rhenium in Chemotherapy: Synthesis of Cytotoxic Rhenium Complexes

Cancer is one of the leading causes of death around the world. This is due to the lack of treatments available, leading to high mortality rates in comparison to other illnesses. Luckily, in 1978 the first chemotherapeutic was approved called cisplatin. This treatment helped many people suffering from cancer and is one of the top treatment options today. Unfortunately, this treatment includes the possible risk of harsh side effects that many would rather avoid. In order to lessen side effects and boost treatment effectiveness, current research has explored rhenium(I) tricarbonyl-containing substances as a promising alternative to cisplatin. After researching this approach, continuing work has been done in Monmouth University's laboratories focusing on developing a new bidentate ligand to support rhenium(I) substances. During this process, five new compounds have been prepared and characterized by nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and infrared (IR) spectroscopy. These compounds then went through cytotoxicity screenings to investigate the cytotoxicity and selectivity of the compounds against oral squamous cell carcinoma cells and normal human gingival fibroblasts. The results showed that two substances prepared were cytotoxic and somewhat selective. In future work, the mechanisms of these substances will be studied.

JULIA SCHAEFFER

MAJOR: BS Health Studies/Health Science Cluster (3+3 Physician Assistant Program)

HOMETOWN: Wayne, NJ



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Alpha Omicron Pi (Vice President of Programming & Enrichment)
- Rho Lambda Panhellenic Leadership Recognition Society (Treasurer)
- Surgical Club (Co-President)
- ACS Colleges Against Cancer (Event Coordinator, Secretary, & Vice President)
- National Wellness Institute Student Chapter (Founder & Vice President)
- Pre-PA Club Member
- Senior Class Ambassador
- Deans List
- Gamma Sigma Alpha Academic Honor Society
- Alpha Epsilon Delta Health Pre-Professional Honor Society
- Order of Omega Leadership Honor Society
- Academic Excellence Scholarship
- FSL Program of the Year (Alumnae Mentorship Program)
- Inspiring Ambition in Programming & Enrichment (AOII)
- Scholarship Award (AOII)
- Inspire Ambition Award (AOII)
- Outstanding Organization of the Year (CAC)
- Campus Conscious Award (CAC)"

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to form meaningful connections with peers who share a commitment to academic excellence and intellectual curiosity. I also aimed to broaden my knowledge through rigorous coursework, diverse perspectives, and the completion of a thesis. I was motivated by a desire to challenge myself both academically and personally by stepping outside my comfort zone and embracing new opportunities for growth.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School is becoming a peer mentor!

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I am attending Monmouth's Physician Assistant Program this fall.

THESIS: Lifestyle Factor's Relationship With Academic Achievement in Children and Adolescents

Academics are important for proper development in children and adolescents, impacting cognitive, social, emotional, and future success. Academic achievement correlates with high self-esteem, problem solving skills, and overall wellbeing. There are possible lifestyle factors that impact academic achievement, including physical activity and nutrition, other factors are sleep, screen time, and socioeconomic status. The purpose of this review is to investigate multiple studies to determine the associations between physical activity and nutrition with academic achievement in children and adolescents. Additional lifestyle behaviors including sleep and screen time were examined for possible relationships with academic performance. Various scholarly search engines were used including Guggenheim Memorial Library, JAMA Pediatrics, International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, Science Direct, Pubmed, National Institutes of Health, BMC Public Health, and Frontiers. The searches used keywords, but not limited to "children and academic performance," "physical activity," "sleep," "diet and nutrition," "lifestyle factors," "sedentary behaviors," "cognitive development," "health," and "academic achievement". A total of 45 peer reviewed journal articles were selected. Achieving the daily physical activity and sleep recommendations, balancing a nutritious diet, and limiting screen time is associated with greater academic achievement in children and adolescents.

GILLIAN SEPP

MAJOR: BS Chemsistry

MINOR: Biology & Statistics

HOMETOWN: Bogota, NJ



ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Student Activities Board President for 2 years
- President of the Year Award
- Lead Global Education Mentor for the Global Education Office
- Student Employee of the Year Nominee

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School for the strong sense of community and the opportunity to challenge myself academically. The ability to conduct independent research and complete a thesis allowed me to gain valuable hands-on experience.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest Honors School memories were the events on the library lawn my freshman year. It was such a fun way to meet new people and spend time with my Honors School friends.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I will be attending the University of North Carolina Eshelman School of Pharmacy at Chapel Hill

THESIS: Evaluating the Antibacterial Effects of Arborvitae Essential Oil Against Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus faecalis and Resistance Development

Antibiotic resistance is an ongoing and growing global health threat that necessitates the exploration of alternative antimicrobial treatments. This study investigates the antibacterial efficacy of arborvitae essential oil against vancomycin-resistant Enterococcus faecalis (VRE), a significant contributor to hospital-acquired infections. Antimicrobial activity was evaluated using the Kirby-Bauer disk diffusion method, in which arborvitae oil was applied to Mueller-Hinton agar plates inoculated with VRE, and zones of inhibition were measured. The minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) was determined to assess the lowest effective concentration of the oil. Additionally, resistance development was evaluated by exposing VRE to sub-inhibitory concentrations over multiple passages to determine whether prolonged exposure induces reduced susceptibility. Standard antibiotics, including vancomycin and linezolid, were included as controls to validate the experimental conditions. Results demonstrated a dose-dependent antibacterial effect, with inhibition observed at concentrations ≥ 25%, while no inhibition occurred at lower concentrations. No resistance development was observed; instead, sustained inhibition under sub-inhibitory exposure conditions suggests antibacterial activity beyond that indicated by diffusion-based assays.

ZACCERY TARVER



MAJOR: BS Computer Science

MINOR: Cybersecurity & Mathematics

HOMETOWN: Toms River, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Participated in Summer Research Program 2023
- Became a board member of newly founded Chess Club
- Appointed President of Kappa Chapter UPE Comp Sci Honors Society
- Participated in Bell Works ICUNJ Research Symposium
- Received Award for Academic Excellence in B.S. Computer Science Program from Monmouth CSSE Department

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

To meet new people and take on new challenges.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The Sunrise Walk, when I first came to Monmouth. Really beautiful experience.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Conducting Cybersecurity and Operating Systems Research as a Freelance Developer.

THESIS: Check I/O: Instantaneous Visit Logging System

Barcode scanners are standard in modern retail. They are highly effective at information retrieval, which enables quick customer interactivity. Barcode scanners are optimal in settings where consumers make recurring appearances to the monitored environment. Therefore, these hardware devices have much potential in areas of organized work and recreation. A lightweight computer application (Check I/O) has been developed to allow efficient checking-in and checking-out of organization members. This program is written using Java and the JPOS software package from Zebra Technologies and uses a Zebra LS2208 barcode scanner. The barcode scanner scans in clients as they check-in and check-out using ID cards with unique barcode labels. Logs are automatically exported in convenient file formats when the program closes, and logging history is saved as well. Since this program is built on open-source software, it is a cost-effective solution for grassroots organizations to keep an accurate history of membership activity. It is also suitable for higher-order organizations to use a local application, instead of outsourcing a third-party application, which can be costly and unintuitive to administrative needs.

YANNI TROGAN

MAJOR: BA History

THESIS: From a Dreaming Strategist to a Pragmatic Commander: The Change in Leadership of the 21st Bomber Command from Haywood Hansell to Curtis LeMay

After months of poor results, Haywood Hansell, who was in charge of the 21st Bomber Command, was replaced by Curtis LeMay at the end of January, 1945. Hansell attempted to employ traditional strategic bombing strategy under the American Bombing Doctrine in the bombing of the Japanese home islands, but failed. For the March 9th, 1945 bombing of Tokyo, LeMay drastically changed tactics when he ordered his B-29 bombers to fly at low altitude, during the night, and without armament. The attack devastated 16 square miles of Tokyo and led to the sidelining of precision bombing for urban incendiary bombing for the rest of the Pacific campaign. This key point in the history of bombing during WWII raised several questions such as the necessity of changing tactics and focusing on incendiary urban bombing, the success of Hansell's precision bombing, whether LeMay got carried away with firebombing, and what role strategic bombing played in Japanese surrender. Through the use of primary sources such as The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey and Hansell's and LeMay's personal memoirs, this library thesis attempts to answer these questions and contributes to the scholarly knowledge of this critical moment.

VICTORIA TUFFY

MAJOR: BS Mathematics & Secondary Education

THESIS: The Impact of Yoga on Math Anxiety

This project looked at the correlation between physical activity, specifically yoga, and students' anxiety in their math class. The research objective was to determine if yoga reduces stress and anxiety and increases self-confidence in a mathematics classroom, specifically in first year Monmouth University math courses. Students portrayed their feelings towards their mathematics class on a pre-activity survey, completed a short yoga session, and then answered the same questions on a post-activity survey. The yoga poses selected were those which focus on breathing and self-calming techniques. It was found that yoga made students less apprehensive about their upcoming math courses, assignments and exams. Many participants illustrated their dislike towards math, but expressed how the yoga session made them feel relaxed and more open to learning math. This project can help create generalized ideas discussing if and/or how yoga and physical activity can change students' confidence in math. This project can also lead to further studies on how physical activity in an educational classroom can affect students in different disciplines. Mathematics is not liked by many, so exploring different ways to engage students and interest them in learning math is

EMMA VINCI



MAJOR: BA Psychology

MINOR: Childhood Studies

HOMETOWN: Brooklawn, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Awarded the Advocate for Change award from BSU and the IC
- First ever Director of Access and Inclusion for SGA; VP of SGA
- Presented at the EPA conference in Boston; Presented at COSGA in Texas
- Completed another thesis for psych
- Created the "Monmouth Untold"- a student led panel about breaking the stigma around mental health

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School to continue to be pushed in my academics and continue to make sure I was surrounded by support. I knew the Honors School would push me to be an even better student and challenge me to think outside of the box.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the honors school is presenting my honors capstone in Fall of 2025. This is something that is so personal and important to me and being able to share what I accomplished and created was very rewarding. The support in the room was some of the biggest support in my life.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I am attending graduate school here at Monmouth. I am pursuing my MSW!

THESIS: How Dance Impacts Self-Esteem and Body Image in Early Adolescence

This project investigates how stereotypes in the dance community affect self-esteem and body image in early adolescent dancers. Existing literature connects eating disorders and a negative body image to dancers, most of the research focusing on college-age dancers. There is a gap in the literature between how these issues impact middle-school dancers. Middle school is a formative period that is marked by significant developments in multiple areas, making it crucial to research how these issues impact dancers during this time. This project was a creative capstone project with a focus in creating a podcast: What I Wish I Could've Said. It was hoped that the podcast would help dancers who struggled with these stereotypes and harmful effects of body dissatisfaction and reduced self-esteem to create a safe space for them to talk. This project aimed to bring awareness to an often-overlooked group and encourage more open dialogue within the dance world, ultimately advocating for safer and more inclusive environments for middle school dancers. The podcast found that among different experiences and studios, dancers can experience similar feelings and have trouble navigating the demands of dance while experiencing these emotions.

SARAH VLADU



MAJOR: BS Biology - Concentration in Molecular Cell Physiology

HOMETOWN: Tinton Falls, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Member of Alpha Omicron Pi
- Served as Director of Community Service for Panhellenic
- Served as Vice President and Historian of TriBeta
- AOII scholarship award 2023
- Dean's List (Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2024, 2025)

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I wanted to be part of an academic environment that would challenge and support me. I also wanted to contribute to the field or research, which the Honors School gave me an opportunity to do through my thesis.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The sunrise

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I'm applying to PA school & currently working as pharmacy tech

THESIS: Masked Identities: The Effects of Masking Masculinity and Femininity on Relationship Satisfaction

This study examined how masking one's masculine and feminine energies, as well as behaviors of self-silencing and a couple's dyadic coping skills, influenced relationship satisfaction. Masking is the suppression or alteration of one's authentic personality, emotions, behaviors, and beliefs, often to prevent conflict or to conform to societal expectations. Inauthentic individuals may mask masculinity and femininity, which was hypothesized to decrease overall relationship satisfaction, commitment, and investment. Additionally, an increase in attention to alternatives, relationship stress, self-silencing, and negative dyadic coping was hypothesized. A correlational survey study with 92 participants was conducted at Monmouth University using a Self-Silencing measure, Masking Femininity and Masculinity measure, Relationship Stress measure, Dyadic Coping measure, and the Investment Model Scale measure. Results showed that overall masking was strongly correlated with masking masculinity and masking femininity. Masking was also linked to lower relationship satisfaction and commitment, higher relationship stress and self-silencing, poorer dyadic coping, and greater attention to alternatives. Masking was not correlated with perceived relationship investment, possibly due to the necessity of a long-term study observing changes in investment due to ongoing masking behaviors. These findings highlight the negative impact of masking on relationship dynamics and the importance of maintaining authenticity in partnerships.

CHELSEA WALSH



MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration in Marketing

MINOR: Public Relations & Journalism

HOMETOWN: Boonton Twp, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Dean's List Recipient (2022-2026)
- Rho Lamba Honors Society
- Honors School Peer Mentor
- Leon Hess School of Business Tutor
- Colleges Against Cancer Social Media Marketing Chair & Vice President
- Alpha Omicron Pi Director of Panhellenic Relations & Youth House Founder
- Greek Senate Risk Chair
- Monmouth University Store Sales Associate

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

I joined the Honors School because I was eager to meet new friends, challenge myself academically, and grow as an individual!

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

My fondest memory of the Honors School was the freshmen year Honors Sunrise Walk.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

Unsure at the moment!

THESIS: Powerful yet Disempowered: A Chronological Literature Review of Women in Sports

Women in sport, although scrutinized under prevailing social norms, have evolved overtime into a highly successful global industry. Over the past century, female representation in the Olympic Games has increased drastically from 2.2% in 1900 to nearly 49% in 2024, showcasing a social and institutional shift toward gender equality. This thesis examines the historical progression of women in sport, with a particular emphasis on the collegiate level. Drawing upon scholarly research and theoretical frameworks, this thesis analyzes the challenges, transformative milestones, and emerging trends shaping women's experiences in the sporting industry. By utilizing historical analysis and theoretical perspectives, this research offers insight into the ongoing pursuit of equality and provides projections for the future of women in sport.

EMILY WEBB



MAJOR: BS Business Administration - Concentration International Business

MINOR: Public Relations

HOMETOWN: Mount Laurel, NJ

ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Marketing Vice President of the Student Activities Board, Communications Vice President for Alpha Xi Delta, President of the Student Alumni Association

WHY DID YOU JOIN THE HONORS SCHOOL?

To make new friends also in the program and to challenge myself academically.

FONDEST HONORS SCHOOL MEMORY:

The sunrise walk and presenting my thesis.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRAD PLANS?

I'm currently job searching!

THESIS: Pixels or People: Human vs. Artificial Intelligence Influencers on the Impact of Consumer Purchasing Decisions

In today's marketing world, brands commonly use celebrity-likeness in order to reach a broader audience. In recent years, artificial intelligence personalities have taken over that role for some brands, drawing the question of which influencer can be more effective in gaining traction: a human or an artificial personality. Through research, six key components were found to be at the forefront of this discussion: the role of influencers, perception and decision making, use in fashion marketing, engagement, ethical concerns, and use of case studies. The use of "mega," "macro," and "micro" influencers are also discussed, as these influencers can drive up to 50% engagement on a post. With all of this in mind, a survey was created to test the differentialities between a human and AI influencer, including a questionnaire and varying print ads, to test which is believed to be more reliable and better induce customers to purchase a product.

The Director would like to give a special thank you to the Honors Council for their dedication and service to the Honors School.

Tjeerd Boonman

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Courtney Werner

Cui Yu