

THE Humanities Scholars Corner

The Humanities Scholars Program at UMBC

Summer 2015

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Every time someone asks me my favorite aspect of being the director of the Humanities Scholars Program, I always give the same answer: the humanities scholars. They continuously awe me with their eagerness to thrive, their wish to

excel, and their desire to help the community at UMBC and beyond. This year, we started the *Professional Series*, partnering with Career Services and PNC Bank to address and discuss professional and financial matters. We also hosted our first *Humanities Scholars Salon*, at which five scholars presented their research to the rest of us. How inspiring it was to see the great representation of humanities scholars at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement Day (URCAD)! And that's not all: In addition to pursuing their academic work, our hum scholars hold a variety of internships and engage in volunteer work. The scholars' academic achievements and service to the community do not go unnoticed in the humanities scholars' home departments, which recognized many of our seniors (and freshmen!) at the Student Honors and Awards in April. As you read this newsletter, you will notice that we have been busy this past year, and we're looking forward to next year! We hope you enjoy our first Humanities Scholars Program newsletter and will see you at our Homecoming brunch! – Dr. Ana Oskoz

The Humanities Scholars Program enables undergraduate humanities scholars to become independent thinkers who examine cultural products and practices from a multitude of perspectives. It provides educational opportunities and strong support for learning, research, and civic engagement to a cohort of particularly talented young people who, over time, will have an impact on the intellectual atmosphere of the campus and will make significant contributions to the humanities in society.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



Congratulations to Jennifer Mrosky, Yoo-Jin Kang, Jessica Martin, Desiree Sterling, Alex Szabo, Matthew Poissant, Jen Wachtel, Tyler McCafferty, Arielle Erenrich, Daniel Roeder, Anna Kearns, Nailah Henry, Juliana Venegas on graduating! We know you will go on to do great things!

(Pictured, L-R: Dr. Ana Oskoz, Jessica Martin, Matt Poissant, Arielle Erenrich, Jennifer Mrosky, Desiree Sterling, and Yoo-Jin Kang)



Welcome to the Humanities Scholars Class of 2019!

Alumni Interview



Alyson Becker, who graduated in 2012, was a Humanities scholar who majored in Interdisciplinary Studies; Intercultural Communication and East Asian Studies, and minored in History. She recently took the time to answer some questions and give some perspective on the program as a former humanities scholar.

1. What activities were you involved in while at UMBC?

During my time at UMBC, I was a Welcome Week Leader (i.e., "Woolie") each August, an English Conversation Partner for the English Language Institute on campus, a member of the INDS Council of Majors, and in my senior year I served as one of two student representatives on the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee, which reviewed and passed student degree proposals. I was also a

member of the Honors College.

2. What are you doing since you graduated?

Immediately after graduation, I traveled to South Korea with the Teach and Learn in Korea (TaLK) program and taught afterschool English classes in a rural village for one year. After returning from abroad, I entered a year of AmeriCorps service with the Metro DC Reading Corps and acted as a literacy tutor for low-income and at-risk Pre-K students in Alexandria, VA. Starting this past fall, I returned to school at the University of Maryland School of Social Work in downtown Baltimore with the goal of receiving my Masters of Social Work (MSW) in 2016.

3. What were some highlights of your time in the Humanities Scholars Program (HSP)?

The biggest highlight of my time in the HSP was the study abroad "requirement" (which I had been excited about since my acceptance to the program my senior year of high school!). I traveled to Osaka, Japan, and it was one of the best experiences of my life so far. Some other highlights of my time in the HSP were the friends I made (I lived on the hum floor all four years),

the many trips to see shows and performances in both Baltimore and DC, and the opportunities to attend dinners with forum speakers prior to attending Humanities forum events.

4. How did the HSP shape you professionally? What skills, knowledge and experiences have you brought to your professional/academic life?

During my time in the HSP, I learned how to be critical of what I read or watched, no matter the esteem attached to the author or presenter, so that I could draw and articulate my own conclusions about the subject. I learned how to express myself effectively and create well-informed arguments that made logical sense. These skills have benefited me well both academically and professionally, especially now that I am back in graduate school. I also learned through our Humanities seminars and forums to acknowledge and respect the more human side of things, that underneath each great philosopher or world-shaker exists a person with his or her own set of challenges and bank of mistakes. This perspective has really underlined my drive to

pursue social work. Studying abroad also showed me that no matter how confusing, strange, frightening, overwhelming, insert-similar-adjective-here something is, that it can be overcome! I got through my first few days in Japan without internet to contact family and friends and without anyone I knew on that side of the world, so everything seems tame in comparison now!

5. How would you define the HSP in five words?

An opportunity for personal growth.

6. What do you have planned for the future?

I plan to graduate with my MSW next year, and I've already agreed to work in Maryland's public child welfare sector for at least one year post-graduation. After that, I'd like to continue working with children, perhaps here or abroad, and be a supporter for family strength and child well-being. I am also passionate about the human rights violations in North Korea and with North Koreans in China, so I plan to become involved in advocacy efforts for this issue as well.

Humanities Scholars Highlights

In April, humanities scholars gathered to hear the research of five of their fellow scholars at the first Humanities Scholars Salon.



Hum scholars Matt Poissant, Dan Roeder, and Alex Szabo (Back Row, L-R), and Arielle Erenrich and Jen Wachtel (Front Row, L-R) presented their research at the Salon.

This year, teaming up with PNC Bank and Career Services, the Humanities Scholars Program established the Professional Series Workshops to provide humanities scholars with the necessary professional and financial skills to enter the work force.



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!



UMBC Humanities Scholars



@humscholarUMBC

This past April, the Humanities Scholars Program Advisory Board drafted and ratified a constitution, officially dissolving the Advisory Board and forming the Humanities Scholars Senate. The Senate assists the director and represents the interests of their fellow scholars.



Several humanities scholars received departmental awards in April. (Pictured, Back Row: (L-R) Dr. Ana Oskoz, Yoo-Jin Kang, Matt Poissant, Anna Kearns, Nailah Henry; Front Row: (L-R) Jennifer Mrosky, Desiree Sterling, Jen Wachtel)



This year the hum scholars participated in the annual Exemplary Teachers Award day and met with UMBC President Freeman Hrabowski to discuss the importance of the humanities in society.



HOMEcomings BRUNCH

Humanities Scholars Program Homecoming Brunch, October 10th, Saturday, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM at the Dresher Center conference room (PAHB #216)

What's the best way to reconnect with humanities scholars and meet new ones? Come over to the first Humanities Scholars Program brunch. Alumni, current humanities scholars, and faculty/staff are invited to attend this informal event. For questions or more information, call the Humanities Scholars Program (410 455 8087) or contact Ms. La Atwater (latwater@umbc.edu).