



## Honors College Wins Scholarship Contest

by **Sankhya Amaravadi** • Freshman, Anthropology

This October, the UIC Honors College won a \$40,000 scholarship through a Facebook contest sponsored by Allie's Friends Foundation. The foundation was established in memory of Allie Dowd, who tragically passed away in 2004 at the age of nine as the result of a horseback riding accident. The foundation now provides stuffed animals to ambulance squads and emergency rooms, including University of Illinois Hospital on west campus, in order to offer comfort to children in emergency medical situations.

The Allie Dowd Memorial Scholarship Fund was created in the Honors College by Allie's parents, Diane and Brian Dowd, to honor what would have been Allie's first year of college. Allie's sister and cousins donated sweatshirts from their respective alma maters to a Facebook contest in which the public was invited to show their school spirit by "liking" the sweatshirt of their choice. Allie's cousin, Jennifer Borland (class of 2002), donated a UIC Flames sweatshirt, and the support from UIC students, faculty, and alumni started pouring in. The UIC sweatshirt got over 1,350 "likes," far more than any of the other 14 schools that participated. In recognition of UIC's spirit and dedication, the Dowds will donate a \$10,000 scholarship to a single Honors College student, renewable for four years. "The Honors College is very grateful to Diane and Brian Dowd for their generosity," said Lisa Domkowski, the Director of Advancement at the UIC Honors College.



*The contest-winning UIC Flames sweatshirt*

With this scholarship, Allie's Friends is expanding their already profound impact. On the foundation's Facebook page, one mother wrote about her daughter who was having difficulty breathing and was in hysterics in the emergency room; she only calmed down when a stuffed dog from Allie's Friends was brought to her. Many parents share similar stories and express their gratitude.

To learn more about Allie's Friends Foundation, go to <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Allies-Friends-Foundation/418729948146167> or [www.alliesfriendsfoundation.org](http://www.alliesfriendsfoundation.org).

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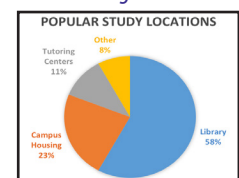
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Lounge Talk

# *a note from* **Dean Bottoms**



**DEAR HONORS COMMUNITY,**

We are full steam ahead in the Honors College as we prepare for the end of the semester and winter break. In this issue we are launching “Parent Corner,” a new feature that will highlight the ways in which Honors College parents contribute to our community. You will read about what the Honors College means to Dennis and Joy Webb, parents of Honors student Karelle Webb. Parents, if you would like to be featured in an upcoming “Parent Corner,” or nominate another Honors College parent, let us know.

Our Faculty Fellows continue to not only provide excellent mentoring to our students, but also to lead in their fields of scholarship. Congratulations to those who were recently honored with the 2013-2014 University Scholars Award: Carol Ferrans, Professor of Biobehavioral Health Science; Sudip Mazumdar, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Nikos Varelas, Professor of Physics; and Donald Wink, Professor of Chemistry. Honors College Faculty Fellows won four of eight total University Scholar awards. That fact speaks volumes about what we do in the Honors College and the quality of our Faculty Fellows’ teaching, research, and scholarship.

Our students’ achievements reflect that quality mentoring and the wealth of undergraduate research opportunities made possible by our Faculty Fellows. This is evidenced by our outstanding Capstone completion rate of 95% and the impressive research projects that were on display at the Honors College Research Symposium on November 20th. And this mentoring – from Honors faculty and staff – makes many other student achievements possible. For example, Fransely Robles, an Honors College senior, is this year’s Lincoln Laureate, a statewide honor given to one outstanding senior at each of the four-year colleges and universities in Illinois.

Wishing you success for the end of the semester and a restful break,

**Bette L. Bottoms**  
**Dean and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs**  
**Professor of Psychology**

## **Events and Deadlines**

### **Capstone Progress Report/ Completion Forms Due**

December 6, 2013  
103 BH Burnham Hall

### **Honors Activity Completion Forms Due**

December 13, 2013  
103 BH Burnham Hall

### **Honors College Tuition Waivers**

January 2, 2014

<http://www.uic.edu/honors/learning/scholarships.shtml>

### **Rangel Graduate Fellowship Program**

January 17, 2014

<http://www.rangelprogram.org/>

### **Pickering Foreign Affairs: Undergraduate Program**

January 24, 2014

<http://woodrow.org/fellowships/pickering/>

### **NSEP Boren Study Abroad Scholarships**

February 5, 2014

<http://borenawards.org/>

### **UIC Udall Campus Deadline**

February 7, 2014

<http://www.udall.gov/OurPrograms/MKUScholarship/HowToApply.aspx>

### **Pickering Foreign Affairs: Graduate Fellowship**

February 7, 2014

<http://woodrow.org/fellowships/pickering/>

### **Rangel Summer Enrichment Program**

February 10, 2014

<http://www.rangelprogram.org/>

### **Honors College Special Scholarships: Drobis, Desouza, Wyatt, and Pearce**

February 20, 2014



## UIC Sailing Team: Calling All Sailors!

by **Hannah Lee** • *Sophomore, Biochemistry*

On October 13, the UIC Sailing Team took first place at the Chief Illiniwek Memorial Regatta held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, triumphing over teams from universities such as the University of Minnesota, Purdue University, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago.

The sailing club at UIC currently has ten members, six of whom participate on the competitive team. Each of the six has a chance to race at competitions. Honors College junior Kimberly Hu, a participant in the October race day – called a “regatta” – explained: “Team members switch out during rotations. Since we only have six competitive members, everyone gets to sail. Most teams in our league that have [a lot] of sailors either rotate or fill more boats at each regatta.”

A typical regatta encompasses two days of intense competition in which teams are divided into an A fleet and a B fleet. As Hu described, “One fleet goes out at a time and completes two races. When the A fleet has finished their two races, they come back and the B fleet immediately heads out. Each set of two races is called a rotation. Ideally, the A fleet and B fleet complete the same number of rotations by the time the regatta ends. [The UIC] team races boats called ‘420s.’ Other boats, such as keel boats, have different racing procedures.”

Although sailing is a challenging sport, it is also very rewarding. Hu and other members of the team look forward to being on the water at both practices and competitions. “Sailing is liberating, relaxing, and exhilarating all at the same time. It has taught me to be



*Kimberly Hu (second from right) with her sailing teammates*

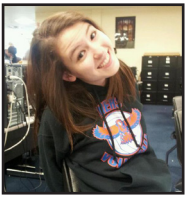
confident in myself and in the decisions that I make while I sail. It has also taught me to respect how powerful and dangerous Lake Michigan can be. When I’m sailing, I feel completely free. It’s just me, my teammate, our boat, and the water. It is something that I will continue to do for the rest of my life,” said Hu.

Hu hopes to find more students who can share in the experience. In fact, she joined the sailing team for the first time this year after seeing a flyer and thinking “it looked like a lot of fun. It was something unique that I may never have another opportunity to do. After going to a few practices, I completely fell in love with it.” Hu is currently the only Honors student on the sailing team and would love to get more Honors College students to join.

No previous sailing experience is necessary to become involved. If you are interested in the competitive sailing team or the recreational sailing club, please contact T.J. Valentor at [UICsailing@gmail.com](mailto:UICsailing@gmail.com). All are welcome!



*The Sailing Team glides into action*



## Cutie the Cat's Office Hours at JST

by Shannon Keane • Sophomore, English

Honors College students are masters of the balancing act. It's often hard to find time to unwind between midterms, exams, social lives, and homework. However, what better way to relax than spending some quality time with an adorable cat? Honors College Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Hui-Ching Chang, the Faculty in Residence for C Tower in James Stukel Towers (JST), can help you there!

Every Thursday, Dean Chang opens her apartment in JST and invites students to come in to relax, talk about their week, and play with her delightful cat, Cutie. A striped little cat,



*Students with Dean Chang's cat, Cutie. Photo courtesy of Hui-Ching Chang*

Cutie is friendly and playful with every student who comes to these office hours. "I have always wanted a cat," Dean Chang says about her new pet, which she got about four months ago. "He's adjusted to the apartment very well."

These office hours with Cutie allow students to gain insight from faculty members in a relaxed environment. Dean Chang also invites faculty from all disciplines: "I think it's really important that [students] get to know professors from outside their majors," she explained. "And, of course, Cutie's right in the middle of it!"

I had the pleasure of spending some one-on-one time with Dean Chang and Cutie, which gave me the opportunity to see that the friendly little cat was indeed part of a bigger picture. As Dean Chang showed me many snapshots of Cutie engaging with the dozens of students that come visit, I realized how much she cares about her students. Dean Chang is not only invested in helping students sort out their majors and classes, she is also genuinely interested in their lives outside of academics. When students come in to play with Cutie, Dean Chang takes the opportunity to get to know them personally. Every student who comes into her apartment is welcomed with open arms, to stay for ten minutes or an hour and a half, to learn something, talk to someone, or just take a break. No matter what, everyone leaves with a smile.

So come in at 8 p.m. on Thursday in JST and play with Cutie! He sure lives up to his name!



## A Universal Discovery: The Higgs Boson

by Shilpa Kolachina • Freshman, Bioengineering

The 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to Peter Higgs and François Englert for their discovery of the Higgs boson, an essential particle first theorized in the 1960s but not confirmed to exist until March of this year. Several UIC physicists, including



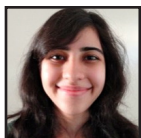
*Dr. Nikos Varelas*

Honors College Faculty Fellows Nikos Varelas and Cecilia Gerber, contributed research that helped make Higgs' and Englert's work possible.

The discovery of the Higgs boson provided strong support of the theory of the Higgs field, an invisible energy field that occupies the entire universe. When certain particles pass through this field, they become trapped and are decelerated, acquiring mass as their inertia increases. The bubble that forms in this energy field due to interactions between particles is the Higgs boson.

Dr. Nikos Varelas, a professor of physics and Honors College Faculty Fellow, explains the importance of this discovery and his contributions towards the Higgs boson. In layman's terms, the Higgs particle explains the weak forces of particle physics and the concept of mass. Dr. Varelas explained that his team at UIC works with electronic boards to track the collisions of trigger protons that collide at a rate of more than 100 million collisions per second. Their research helps to distinguish which collisions — a few hundred out of the millions that occur — are important. The data is analyzed at a very high speed as 10,000 computers run this information in parallel. Dr. Varelas also stated that out of one trillion proton collisions, only one may be a Higgs collision.

When asked about the future of particle physics, Dr. Varelas said, "The discovery of the Higgs boson opens up a new window for looking into the internal workings of our universe at a level we have never done before...[It] may lead to a whole new realm of surprises. The finding of the Higgs is not an end, but a beginning of a new chapter. This is a truly amazing time. Stay tuned."



# Holistic Health in India

by **Monica Sharma** • *Sophomore, Biological Sciences*

This past summer, I had the opportunity to study abroad with the School for International Training (SIT) World Learning to study various forms of traditional medicine that flourish in parts of Northern India. I encountered a spectrum of alternative medical systems, including faith-based healing, yoga, reflexology, Ayurveda, naturopathy, and Tibetan medicine. Most of these Eastern medical systems are more than 5,000 years old, yet they coexist with conventional medicine in parts of Asia. A universal underpinning of these alternative systems of medicine is the belief that the human body has innate healing capacities, and the purpose of medicine should be to augment those capacities through natural and holistic means, instead of ingesting potent drugs or using invasive means of treatment.

My SIT group first traveled to rural Nanital where we lived with the villagers and explored traditional faith-based healing prevalent in remote areas. We observed how practitioners and patients alike perceived mantra-based healing and the scope of its effects.

Afterwards, we traveled to Rishikesh, dubbed “the yoga capital of the world,” to learn about the philosophy and practice of yoga. I learned that the difference between more strenuous forms of exercise and yoga is that the former focus on movement, and the latter focuses on stillness. Aerobic exercises enlarge muscle mass by creating micro-tears in muscle fibers, whereas yoga postures, with their emphasis on flexibility, strengthen and tone the muscles, thereby carrying the effect beyond the tissues and into the organs. Moreover, I was able to experience the application of yoga in a clinical setting. Many physicians in India prescribe certain yoga poses to supplement the treatment of certain diseases. For example, diabetic patients are advised to perform yoga postures that stretch the abdominal region, such as the cobra and

butterfly postures, because exerting pressure on the abdominal region enhances circulation to that area, stimulating the pancreas to secrete insulin.

My group also shadowed at a prestigious hospital in Palampur, the Kayakalp Institute, where all treatments offered were drugless. I learned about thousands of herbs and spices and their medicinal properties, and about the therapeutic effects of massages and mud therapies in Ayurveda and naturopathy. Moreover, learning the basis of reflexology uncovered the mystery of why foot massages are so relaxing.

Our last excursion was to Dharamsala, a city in the foothills of the Himalayas where the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government reside.

Tibetan medicine is closely intertwined with Buddhist philosophy, and practitioners of this system believe that all of us are sick until we surpass all forms of ignorance. Even if there is no conspicuous physical illness, ignorance gives rise to mental illness, and states of anger, desire, and other afflictive emotions are considered in Tibetan medicine to be reflective of one’s mental health.

My experiences this past summer have shaped my understanding of medicine as a dynamic anthropological creation. When we think about health, we are accustomed to thinking in terms of disease. But, I’ve come to realize that health is not merely the absence of disease, and that a holistic conception of health is necessary in treating the entire gamut of human afflictions. I am eternally grateful to the Gilman Scholarship, the Foundation for Global Scholars, the UIC Asian American Native American and Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAAPISI) Scholarship Program, the UIC Honors College, and SIT for making my trip possible and affording me this great opportunity.



*Encountering faith-based healing in rural Nanital.*

## HCAB Update

HCAB is very excited for the winter season! HCAB’s very own events committee has arranged decorations such as snowflakes around the Honors College. Also, HCAB is collecting toys to donate to a local children’s hospital. Thank you to all the Honors College students who have brought in toys and are making a difference. We have also started holding game nights in Burnham Hall’s Quiet Study lounge. These have included Bears and Bulls games, and the turnout has been impressive. We are glad to see that each event is getting bigger and bigger. Finally, HCAB is very excited for the Honors College Ball on March 1, 2013. We have received donations of some remarkable silent auction items, including an item from the Chicago Bulls and from the Bose Corporation. We are also talking to the radio station B96 with the hope that they can deejay at the Ball. Stay tuned for more information in the next issue!

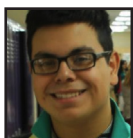
## Parent Corner



“My wife and I are bereft of words adequate to express our profound gratitude to the Honors College

and the UIC academic community for this exceedingly magnificent and extraordinarily significant PAP scholarship. Generations to come of our family will know about, and be inspired by, this monumental occurrence.”

-Dennis and Joy Webb  
Parents of Karelle Webb



# Lincoln Academy Student Laureate: Fransely Robles

by Ricardo Ramirez • Freshman, Industrial Engineering

Fransely Robles, an Honors College senior, was awarded the 2013 UIC Lincoln Academy Student Laureate on November 2, 2013 in Springfield, Illinois. This honor, given to only one senior in each of the four-year colleges and universities in Illinois, recognizes academic excellence and dedication to public service.



Associate Dean Stacie Williams stands with Fransely Robles in Springfield, Illinois.

Robles is actively involved across the UIC community. From working as an office assistant in several of the UIC colleges, to leading a number of student-focused organizations including Agape House, to serving on the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer People, and Allies, Robles has embodied the Honors College spirit of engagement. A commuter student, Robles has also maintained a stellar GPA while being a leader on campus as an Honors College Ambassador and admissions assistant.

However, Robles's work is not limited to the UIC campus. Robles has a passion for activism, advocating for the rights of youth through a variety of causes such as the Dyke March and the Undocumented Chicago March. In addition, Robles has facilitated sexual education workshops in Chicago Public Schools.

Although this is not Robles's first award or honor, the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate signifies the upcoming end of their journey at the Honors College. As a bilingual first-generation college student, Robles plans to pursue their interest in queer theory and the intersections of religion, sexuality, and gender by attending graduate school and eventually becoming a professor of gender and women's studies. Robles also plans to continue their off-campus activities by mentoring LGBTQ youth in a congregation within the community. Robles stated, "Receiving the Lincoln Laureate as an Honors College student is a testimony to the strength, readiness, and preparation that the Honors College has instilled in me." Robles ultimately encourages Honors College students to become leaders on campus and to be active within the Honors College during their college experience.



# Farewell to Jennifer Hawe

by Shreya Thakkar • Freshman, Biochemistry

As I walked into her office, it was unsurprising to see a working copy of the latest issue of the *Ampersand* on Jennifer Hawe's computer. Hawe, the Honors College's graduate assistant and editorial advisor for publications, will be leaving her position to take her dissertation leave at the end of the fall semester. Hawe's dedication to the advising and editorial processes is undeniable, and she will be greatly missed.

Hawe was recruited to the Honors College due to her previous experience with campus publications, and she has been an integral part of the staff since January 2012. She obtained her Masters in Fine Arts in writing and critical studies from the California Institute of the Arts, and is currently pursuing a PhD in English literature at UIC. In addition to teaching writing and English courses at UIC, she has worked as an editor for *Black Clock*, a nationally distributed literature and art journal, and as a freelance editor and writer. In the future, Hawe wants "to continue working with language and its capabilities, and to mentor talented undergraduates like those in the Honors College."

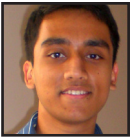
Throughout her two years at the *Ampersand*, Hawe has worked intensively with students on many aspects of producing a publicly circulated newsletter, from writing, revising, and editing of the publications to overseeing the publication timelines, content, general logistics, and final polishing. She feels that the experience has helped her grow as a professional. She appreciates the opportunity to work with the Honors College publications because, according to her, "When you teach a class, you only have one semester with those students. With the Honors College publications, I have

been able to work with students long term, build relationships, and see students grow as leaders." Hawe applauded past and current editors Bryan Killian, Michelle Skinner, Sasidhar Madugula, Swathi Madugula, Avni Bavishi, Maria Nakhasi, and Sarah Lee for their outstanding contributions.

Hawe is departing her Honors College position at the end of this semester to work on her dissertation, which studies the economics of 20th and 21st century creative labor through portrayals of writers and artists in contemporary fiction and nonfiction. *Ampersand* and *JPHAS* Editor-in-Chief Avni Bavishi will miss Hawe's "perpetual good humor and infinite patience. Jenn has been an invaluable part of the publication process and we will miss her and her keen editorial eye greatly." Hawe returns the sentiment saying she will greatly miss the Honors College environment and the strong relationships she is leaving behind. She describes both Honors College Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Sara Hall and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Dean of the Honors College Bette Bottoms as role models who epitomize what it means to be professional women in an academic setting. Finally, Hawe says, "The Honors College is so special within the university. The kind of cohesion, sense of community, and success of the students here is something you don't always find in all other parts of the university."



The Ampersand Editorial Board, with Jenn Hawe (top left) at the fall publications party.



# Capstone Highlight: Hugh Vondracek

by **Rafid Rahman** • Freshman, Biological Sciences

The Capstone project provides an opportunity for Honors College seniors to pursue topics that they are passionate about and demonstrate what they have learned. Senior Hugh Vondracek, a political science major, is completing not one, but two major research projects, and was kind enough to share his experiences with the *Ampersand*.



*Hugh Vondracek*

Vondracek completed his first research project during his junior year, when he worked with Professor Yue Zhang on a qualitative and comparative analysis of Sudanese rivalry. This project focused on discussing and creating solutions to the underlying economic and political struggles of modern day Sudan, such as oil and resource distribution. Vondracek truly feels drawn to this topic, remarking, “I’m interested in the Sudanese rivalry because it is an opportunity to learn more about this dangerous phenomenon.” Furthermore, Vondracek worked on expanding the depth of current research

available on the topic of rivalry in the Sudanese population. He presented his findings at the Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association in April of 2013, which was the culmination of his year’s work. Vondracek was also awarded the LAS Undergraduate Research Initiative Grant by UIC to further fund his work on the Sudanese economic and political systems.

However, he hasn’t stopped there. Vondracek is devoting his senior Capstone to another topic he is passionate about: the relationship between stadium construction in China, foreign policy, and nation building. Vondracek is currently exploring the principles of control implemented by China by writing about its influence in the Asian subcontinent, another area of special interest for him.

Apart from the joy of pursuing topics that captivate him, Vondracek feels that the Capstone prepared him to become a critical thinker and eloquent presenter. He also believes that his projects have helped him to plan out his future. As a result of his experience with the Capstone project, he hopes to pursue a graduate degree and continue research in the field of political science.



# Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle Visits UIC

by **Renee Ronzone** • Junior, Anthropology

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle came to UIC on October 18th to talk to students about “Reform in Cook County Government” as part of the Future of Chicago Lecture Series co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science and the Honors College. The talk included a question-and-answer session and was followed by a luncheon in Burnham Hall.

During the lecture, Preckwinkle spoke to her past as a teacher and touched on her exposure to politics as a teenager, experiences she regarded as invaluable to her decision to run for office. Preckwinkle also outlined many of her key policy concerns and explained how the Cook County budget is spent. In the luncheon that followed, Honors College students had the opportunity to talk in-depth with Preckwinkle about her career, policies, and motivation. Throughout both the talk and luncheon, Preckwinkle engaged the students with her progressive policies and positions regarding immigration reform, business subsidies, urban planning, and healthcare. Senior Katherine Feekin, a student in the Urban and Public Affairs program, said of the event, “The opportunity to attend a small luncheon with [Preckwinkle] after the lecture was incredible. She is an inspiring woman, and I was so thankful to be able to meet her in a more personal setting. She spoke candidly about her life and her views, and it is not an experience I will soon forget.”

When asked about the biggest challenge for Chicago that Preckwinkle observes from her post on the Cook County Board, she replied, “Chicago is [seen as] a place of political corruption for a lot of people in Illinois [...] There’s that legacy that’s hard to overcome.” Additionally, Preckwinkle holds healthcare as a high priority, and 35% of the \$3 billion county budget goes towards this area. Her other priorities include public safety and economic development. Last year Preckwinkle rolled back the sales tax increase implemented by her predecessor Todd Stroger, something she cited as a first in Cook County history. She has also worked for the past three years to reduce the numbers of pre-trial detainees sitting in jails. Chicago and Cook County have the largest unified court system in the United States, but case disposal is slow and jails become “an intersection of racism and poverty,” as she called it, due to questionable policing efforts that target specific areas and nonviolent offenders.



*Toni Preckwinkle*

*Photo by: Renee Ronzone*

As the luncheon concluded, she urged students to “find a candidate you believe in. Get behind them and back them all the way.”

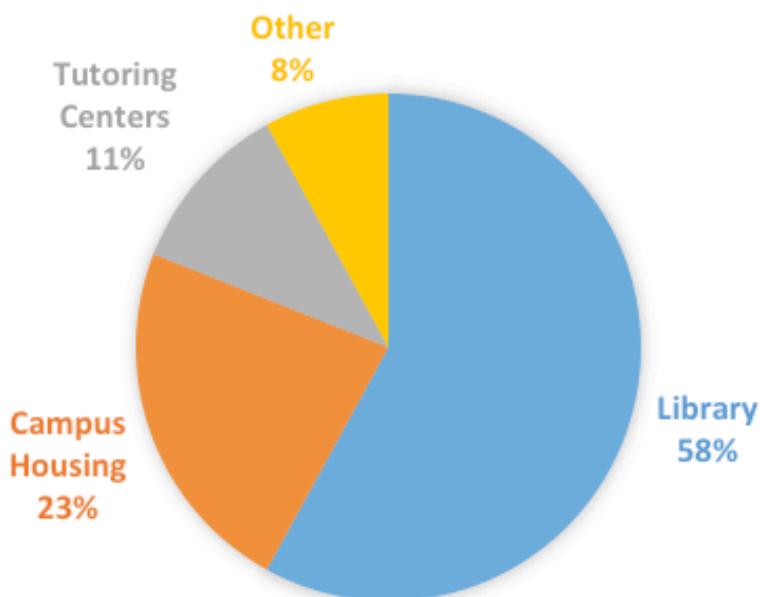


# Lounge Talk: *Where is your go-to study place on campus?*

by **Alvin George** • *Sophomore, Biochemistry*

It's almost the time of the year that college students dread: finals week. Common indicators include watching the sun rise, eating a disproportionate amount of junk food because calories don't count during finals week, and wandering around aimlessly with No. 2 pencils asking strangers if they have bubble sheets for you to fill. These signs are, of course, a result of excessive studying. To help those struggling to study effectively, I polled Honors College students about their favorite study locations, especially for finals week. The majority find the library, particularly the second and third floors, really useful. Others remain in their residence halls and make use of tower and study lounges. A smaller proportion of students utilize the university's tutoring centers such as the one within the Honors College in BH 220. The smallest minority take advantage of other buildings on campus such as Lincoln Hall and Douglas Hall. Explore where you study best and take advantage of it!

## POPULAR STUDY LOCATIONS



## *The Ampersand Board*

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### **FACULTY ADVISOR**

Professor Mark Chiang

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ADVISOR**

Associate Dean Sara F. Hall

## Mission Statement

*To highlight the achievements of Honors College students, staff, and faculty, to report on Honors College events, and to provide a forum for students and faculty to share interesting experiences and opinions, all for the purpose of fostering a sense of community and celebrating diversity among the constituents of the Honors College.*

*Like us on Facebook to find out about upcoming issues, new events, and how to get involved!*

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*Visit our webpage:*

[ampersand.honors.uic.edu](http://ampersand.honors.uic.edu)