This past fall a new course was offered to Walton Honors students through the Management department focused on developing small business and entrepreneurship. Carol Reeves, Associate Vice-Provost for Entrepreneurship, wanted to create an opportunity for undergraduate honors students to mirror the experience and extreme success that Walton College MBA students have had in entrepreneurial competitions under her direction. Jeff Amerine, who is highly regarded for his work with technology start-ups and an adjunct instructor of entrepreneurship, was very eager to teach this new course and worked quickly to develop and market it to juniors in the honors program. The class is divided up into teams of four and students were not required to have a new venture idea prior to the start of the semester.

The fall term was spent in developing business ideas and closely examining every aspect of the potential start-up. At the end of the fall semester, each team was given the opportunity to pitch their business plan to potential investors with a cash prize on the line. One of the groups, Nat Gas Solutions, has been invited to compete in the 2013 Don W. Reynolds Governor’s Cup Business Plan Competition for the chance at winning up to $5,000 in prize money. The company has developed a fill at home technology that allows compressed natural gas powered vehicles to fuel at home directly off of the utility grid.

Another team created Word of Mouth, a mobile app for smart phones and social media which is a platform for Fayetteville restaurants and bars to promote food and drink specials. Word of Mouth has over 800 followers on twitter and just launched an app for iPhones this spring. All of the teams will present on the work of all graduating Walton Honors seniors.

We hope that Walton Honors undergraduates will join forces with other outstanding students from across the UA to become formidable competitors in future state and national business plan competitions. The UA Office of Entrepreneurship is providing financial support to help our students meet this goal.

Carol Reeves
Associate Vice-Provost for Entrepreneurship
On a beautiful fall Saturday morning, the Honors Student Executive Board hosted the first annual Game Day Breakfast for alumni, family, faculty and staff of the Walton Honors Program. The event was held at Shollmier Plaza, located in front of Willard J. Walker Hall and was attended by nearly 200 friends and supporters of the WHP. The breakfast lasted for two hours and led up to an 11:30 a.m. kickoff of the Razorback Homecoming game against the University of Tulsa which the Hogs won 19-15. About 20 members of the Honors Student Executive Board, led by junior Haley Prewett, showed up before sunrise to help set up tents, tables, chairs and decorate.

“The goal of the tailgate was to create a fun and casual networking environment for current members of the Walton Honors Program to meet and mingle with alumni and faculty. I think we were successful in accomplishing this and I am looking forward to planning next year’s Game Day Breakfast.” Haley Prewett, Junior, Russellville.

Several Walton College faculty members who work closely with the Honors Program were present including: Professors Robert Stapp, Ronn Smith, John Norwood, Vikas Anand, Alan Ellstrand and Molly Rapert, current Director. Dean Eli Jones and Associate Dean Gary Ferrier were present and gave remarks along with leading a “hog call.”

“The inaugural Walton College Honors Program Game Day Tailgate was a huge success. It demonstrated how the faculty and staff at the Walton College are able to provide the Honors students a community within a larger community. My thanks to Dr. Rapert and Jason Adams for organizing the event... I look forward to the next one,” Dean Jones said.

There were also many parents who came to share breakfast with their honors students before making the short trek across campus to Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium to cheer on the Hogs. Exciting news came from the Homecoming pep rally which was held the previous evening where HSEB co-leader, Kristen Zachary, was named as one of the five members of the 2012 University of Arkansas Homecoming Court.

“Thank you very much for including parents in the tailgate. We found the event to be a great opportunity both to meet some of Brooke’s fellow students as well as several of the professors that have had a strong positive impact on her while at the University of Arkansas. We haven’t had that opportunity much since she has been in college and we both enjoyed the morning with all,” said Wyman and Kim Atwell, parents of honors sophomore Brooke Atwell.

“The tailgate was the first time I had been back to the Walton College in quite some time. I was overwhelmed with not only what I saw, but the students, faculty and other alumni I met helped me truly realize what a top notch program we have in Fayetteville. Needless to say, I am proud beyond words to call myself an alumnus of the Honors Program and the Walton College,” said James Staley, 2007.

“I felt that the Honors Gameday Breakfast was a great idea because it gave some of my former classmates and myself a chance to catch up with one another. I saw a number of people that I had not seen since graduation, some former classmates as well as current students of the Walton College. Additionally, I enjoyed getting introduced to the new dean, and getting to see many former professors of mine. As always, the faculty of the Walton College put on a great program. It was great to sit around reminiscing about our time at Walton,” said Brinkley Cook-Campbell, 2012, Juris Doctorate, Arkansas 2015.

Planning has already begun for the 2013 Walton Honors Game Day Tailgate. We look forward to seeing you there!
Walton Honors seniors, Kristen Zachary and Terrance Boyd, participate in Homecoming festivities. Kristen was one of five seniors selected to the 2013 University of Arkansas Homecoming Court.

2012 Alumni Alice McMillan, Kristen Wilmes, Morgan Stellpflug and Brinkley Cook-Campbell.

Dudley and Linda Shollmier share a laugh with Dean Eli Jones and wife Fern, at the 2012 Tailgate Breakfast.
Tell us what you have been up to since graduating from the WHP:

After completing the MBA program in 2004, I entered the buyer training program (now ‘Merchandise Leadership Program’) at Walmart. I was fortunate enough to end up in the Electronics and Entertainment Division, which had unbelievable leadership at all levels. During this time I was involved in some of the first exclusive entertainment deals (ex. Garth Brooks, The Eagles, Journey) and partnerships.... very exciting! The leadership allowed me to not only be involved in my categories (i.e. Music, Digital Cameras) but to also participate in the Electronics Sustainability Value Network, which focused on energy efficiency and end of life product solutions. After a few years in the Walmart US Division, I took a role in the International Division supporting the electronics and home merchants across the globe. Possibly my favorite projects during this time involved due diligence for potential acquisitions and developing a playbook for post-acquisition integration. My final role was within the Sam’s Club Division in member strategy where I focused on serving the needs of their more than 6 million small business members.

What advice would you give to current WHP students wanting to go to graduate school, specifically a Doctoral program?

I would suggest that they get on Google Scholar and search for some publications on the topics they think they are interested in. Research isn’t for everyone and you have to have a curiosity and genuine passion in order to survive and thrive in a PhD program. Secondly, I would suggest that they seek advice from a few of their most trusted professors.

How did the WHP equip you for success/help in getting into the Doctoral program at CU?

More than my work experience or even WCOB coursework, the relationships I built with faculty during the Honors Program have been instrumental in my pursuit of a PhD. Molly Rapert, Molly Jensen, Jon Johnson and others have been beyond encouraging and supportive throughout my professional career and the transition to academia. I will never be able to thank them enough!

Did the research that you did for your Honors thesis play any role/help with your decision to go to grad school?

Honestly, no....my Honors thesis dealt with the repercussions of the Bush tax cuts. Even though I was an Accounting undergrad I cannot say that the topic was a passion of mine. Luckily, I have found that passion in exploring the social side of organizations. I am very interested in how communities form and drive entrepreneurship. For example, one of my projects looks at how the social identity of an entrepreneur impacts their decision to rebuild and reinvest following a natural disaster.

Did internships lead to a job after graduation?

I can point to one exact moment that led to my job at Walmart. Professor Jon Johnson invited a panel of professionals to speak to our MBA strategy class in the Spring Semester of 2004. Andy Ruben, at the time the VP of Corporate and US Strategy for Walmart, was on that panel. I remember asking a question during class and introducing myself afterward. Months later, Professor Johnson wrote a glowing recommendation letter to some folks at Walmart and Andy agreed to help. By the time I arrived in Bentonville, Andy was the first ever Chief Sustainability Officer and an invaluable mentor for me.

Was it always your plan/goal to attend a Doctoral program?

Yes, it was always in the back of my mind that I would like to become a professor one day. My professors did so much for me and I want to repay the favor to others. Did I really know what a doctoral program entailed? No. Probably still don’t but I’m learning!

What advice would you give a prospective high school student considering Walton College and the WHP?

My biggest piece of advice is to take advantage of all that the Walton College and the WHP have to offer, both in the classroom and outside. More than anything else I remember being exposed to and enabled to build relationships with business leaders. I remember interviewing Robert Young (at the time the CEO of ABF Freight) and dining with a variety of Fortune 500 power hitters. It made me comfortable engaging with them and ready to hit the ground running when I arrived at my first post-college position.

https://www.facebook.com/WaltonHonors
Keri Wood, a native of College Station, Texas, came to the University of Arkansas with an ambitious academic plan; complete her undergraduate degree in marketing with honors in three years and began work on a MBA degree during the fourth year. She completed her first goal this past spring, graduating Summa Cum Laude with a BSBA in marketing. Keri has done all this while also juggling the demands of being a member of the Razorback track and field program.

“Competing in intercollegiate athletics is extremely time-demanding particularly due to frequent travel, but I have discovered that I am a proficient writer while flying. The key for me is to prioritize my various commitments and create an objective for my use of each segment of time. Every day I keep mental and sometimes physical list of the things that I must do, things that I need to do, the things I should do, and the things that I want to do. As long as I accomplish all of the things that I must do, most of the things that I need to do, some of the things I should do and a few of the things that I want to do, I can generally keep a positive balance.”

Keri entered college as many honors students do with an abundance of Advanced Placement credits which allowed her to start thinking about post graduate opportunities even as a freshmen. “I found myself in a position similar to many honors students of being ahead of the game. I knew that I wanted to attend Arkansas for at least four years to pursue my athletic opportunities, and as I believe in making the best of use of my time, I decided that I could either double major or graduate early and begin working towards a graduate degree. I decided on the latter, and carved out a rigorous plan to make that possibility a reality,” Wood said.

She reflects on her three years as a student in the Walton Honors Program and explains how these experiences made the transition from undergraduate to graduate student a smooth process. “The requirements of the program, particularly the colloquium classes and honors thesis, challenged me to strengthen my ability to apply critical thinking. These features of the program offered the most challenges and served to stimulate my greatest academic growth. The focus on process and applied theory as opposed to specific information has been extremely beneficial in approaching my graduate studies,” said Wood.

Keri sums up her time in the Walton Honors Program as a very valuable building block in her collegiate experience. “My experience at the Walton College has been personally and academically enriching. Few programs in the country can offer the level of individual support and engagement from faculty that I was provided. Across the board, my professors sought to inspire learning and the students in the honors program sought excellence. I have already found that my classmates have become my respected colleagues. My advice to a prospective student would be that if you are willing to commit to the challenges of the program what you gain will be well worth your while,” said Wood.
Prior to the Walton College Career Fair this past fall, students in Honors Freshmen Business Connections had a wonderful opportunity to hear first-hand what recruiters are looking for. Cedric Kenner and a team of recruiting executives from Sam’s Club gave a presentation in class with an overview of their company and helpful hints for successful interviewing, resume building and networking.

“I liked how the Sam’s representative, Dr. Cedric Kenner, talked about how Sam’s specifically looks to hire and give internships to Walton honors students. I also especially noticed that Sam’s aims to offer positions to students who have interned with them once the students graduate.”

Rowan O’Brien-Williams
International Business
WHP 2016

“We really appreciated the opportunity to connect with the best and brightest students the Walton College has to offer. The student’s professionalism and eagerness to learn made this one of the best experiences we have had on a college campus this year. Hopefully, the information provided was insightful and will assist in their personal and professional development long after they have graduated from college.”

Cedric Kenner
Program Manager
Sam’s Club

“The Sam’s Club presentation was one of my favorite lectures from the class. They didn’t just focus on telling us the great things about their company and how to get involved, but rather provided us with useful tools to establish a well-rounded application any employer would be glad to accept.”

Hannah Birch
Finance
WHP 2016
Another record breaking class of freshmen were admitted to the Walton Honors Program this past fall. There were over 130 new students who were welcomed by upperclassmen at the annual Walton College Block Party. Each new freshman headed to the block party with the assignment to find a sophomore, junior or senior and introduce themselves.

“I really enjoyed getting to know all of my fellow Walton Honors classmates outside of the classroom. It was nice to show that we aren’t only smart kids, but we’re also athletic.”

Connor Ahrendsen, 2016, Accounting & German

Professors Javier Reyes, Molly Rapert and John Norwood represent three of the four directors since the program began in 1999, along with Assistant Director Jason Adams.

Honors Economics Professor Dr. Robert Stapp, poses with honors seniors Shelby Feurtado, Jessamyn Ratcliff and Tom Davis at the annual Walton College Block Party.

In early November, the freshmen of the Walton Honors program, got a chance to show off their athleticism and burn off some stress in a friendly game of football. They competed against another group of Walton College freshmen enrolled in the Freshmen Business Learning Team. Around 100 students showed up to cheer on the team and compete in this annual event. The Honors team prevailed 45-14 and improved the overall record to 2-1 in the FBC Bowl.
"Somewhere between visiting the Colosseum in Rome and sleeping in a tent village among the Swiss Alps, I realized that studying abroad this past summer was easily one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I wouldn’t trade the memories and friendships from that experience for anything.”

Meagan Halligan and Sarah Margaret Pittman
(Honors student 2014)
Accounting/Finance
CIMBA Study Abroad Program/Italy

"Belize was an incredible, hands-on study abroad trip for five different colleges and the 60 students and professors who participated. Focused on community development and service-learning. This great experience gave the students an out-of-the-classroom experience that grew their teamwork and real-world experience while providing the gratifying experience of aiding those in and around the community of Dangriga, Belize. Business students participated in projects such as providing micro-loans to small businesses, aiding a local women’s co-op, building a park and creating a business plan for a national park. The small Central American country of Belize, provides a vast array historic cultures, exotic landscapes and friendly citizens, which left the students and faculty with an experience they will not soon forget.”

Caitlin Britt, Elizabeth Kyle, Mark McCallum, and Haley Prewett
Honors student 2014/2015
Belize Community Development Program

"Although I was born and raised in China, studying abroad in China was still an eye opening experience. I developed a different perspective and view of my home country from an international economic and global market standpoint. I gained skills on how multinational companies function in foreign markets and how to prepare ourselves as leaders for a global economy. While visiting cities that I had been to when I was a child such as Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong, I realized how important it is for students to become more globalized. I challenge all Walton Honors students to take their first step as studying abroad. Most importantly studying abroad in an unfamiliar environment such as China.”

Gili “Lily” Jin
WHP 2014
Accounting/Economics/
Retail Marketing
Business Seminar in China
Awards and Recognitions

Professors Charles Leftlar and John Norwood congratulate Sarah Fiscus on completion of her honors thesis this past December.

Walton Honors seniors Meredith Armstrong, Anna Ward, Shelby Feurtado, and Kristen Zachary took time to share with underclassmen at the 2013 Honors Thesis Forum.

In December 2012, five honors seniors successfully defended their honors thesis and graduated. There was a broad range of topics covered in the honors theses including a comparison to The Sermon on the Mount to current marketing strategies, a logistical analysis of swapping Auburn University and the University of Missouri into the SEC east/west, a business plan on starting up a program similar to the NFL's Play 60 in the SEC and an analysis of promotional strategies across college football. Graduating seniors included: Dylan Breeding (Marketing), Sarah Fiscus (Marketing), Courtney O'Grady (Finance & Marketing), Tanja Schmitfranz (International Business) and Brandon Vernon (Finance & Supply Chain Management). This spring, the Walton Honors Program will see a record number of Honors graduates with 76 students currently working on their thesis projects.

Professor John Norwood with the 2013 Beta Gamma Sigma scholarship recipients.

Arkansas Razorback football staff members with senior punter Dylan Breeding's at his thesis presentation.

Honors Director Molly Rapert and Assistant Director Jason Adams who were selected as the 2012 UA and Walton College Employee of the first quarter. Dr. Rapert was also the recipient of the 2012 UA Baum Teaching Award.

Chancellor Gearhart and Dean Jones present Walton Honors junior, Shicong Xu, with her Beta Gamma Sigma certificate.
2013 Upcoming Walton Honors Events

- Honors Thesis Forum
- Spring Alumni Networking Event
- Freshmen Party in the Park
- Walton Honors Day of Service
- 2013 WHP Freshmen Peer Mentoring Program
- Festival of Undergraduate Research
- Corporate Visit to FedEx