



# HONORS COLLEGE

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

ETSU Honors College Newsletter

March-April 2016

## *Happy blustery spring everyone,*

*It's time for another newsletter and another update from the Honors College Student Council. From the perspective of the council, the fall semester was a great success. Perhaps chief among our successes was the inaugural BUC Funded Alzheimer's Association Charity Ball, which we could not have put on without the help of the Roan Scholars and Sigma Kappa. The ball ended up raising approximately \$1,700 and was attended by students representing at least a dozen different student organizations. The ball won Best New Program at this year's Summit Award. To say I am proud of this accomplishment would be an understatement. I am very grateful to all the individuals who worked to make the event possible, as well as to everyone who gave their time and money in the name of a wonderful cause. Hopefully, the ball will become a philanthropic tradition at ETSU.*

*The spring is home to one of the bigger events in the honors college world: the spring social. This year we abandoned the (too) familiar Mediterranean Gardens for the fresh venue of the DoubleTree. The music was good. The turnout was solid. I have yet to hear complaints about the food. (It's been a whole week. That is some serious time.) My hope is always that the social provides the opportunity for the honors family to take a break from the hard work that is standard and simply to have an enjoyable few hours. I think this was accomplished. Towards the end of April is the Spring Pinning ceremony, which the council will be in charge of again. We are trying to make small changes to ensure this event is as memorable as possible. Congratulations to those of you who will be graduating, and good luck to everyone in this busy month of April.*

*Just keep swimming,  
Woodson Carpenter  
HCSC President*

## FACULTY/STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### CHASITY DREW

by Laura Traister

If you have noticed a new face in the Ada Earnest House on campus, also called the Honors House, you are not alone. Chasity Drew now occupies the office that was previously used by information research technician Judy Harrell for eight years before her retirement earlier this year.

Previously, Chasity filled in for Judy on a temporary basis. Then when Judy retired, Chasity applied for the job.

Chasity is from Arizona and has received degrees from Northeast State Community College as well as ETSU. She attended ETSU for four years — two years as an undergraduate and two as a graduate student.

She has been working at ETSU since 2014, first as an adjunct in the Department of Literature and Language and now with the Honors College.

Her job description is a daunting one: "to support the University and Midway Honors programs by maintaining databases of current and potential students, meeting with potential students, screening applications for eligibility requirements, maintain travel and accounting records, purchasing office

materials, and supporting the Director of University and Midway Honors Scholars, Dr. Wachs."

Chasity does all this and more, as current Honors College students may have guessed based on the steady stream of emails coming from her office.

There have been both challenges and triumphs in the time since she has started working for the Honors College.

"I'm still learning how this job functions, but there are times when I wish I had more time to shadow Judy because she is a wealth of information and ran this office effortlessly," she said.

One goal promises to help the Honors College go green.

"In our quest to be environmentally friendly, Dr. Wachs and I are currently working on making our office paperless. Our applications are now electronic, and we hope to have forms and other information sheets online by summer 2016," said Chasity.

As for her free time, when she is not at her children's ball games, she loves to read.

In the future, Chasity plans to pursue a PhD in linguistics or Teaching English to Speakers



of Other Languages (TESOL). She would also like to receive a certification in the Choctaw language.

In addition to helping honors students with everything from registration to financial aid, Chasity has some wise words of advice for students: "Do not conform to someone else's idea of who you are or who you should be; instead, revel in your individuality and be unique."

She also referred to a quote by Irish writer Oscar Wilde: "I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely — or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose!"

Welcome to the Honors House, Chasity, and thank you for all you do!

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## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# ADRIANNA GURAM

by David Floyd

When Adrianna Guram thinks about ETSU, one memory stands out with glaring prominence.

"My classmate and friend, Kara, was hit by a drunk driver my junior year of college," Guram said, who is a graduate of ETSU's University Honors Scholars program and is currently the assistant director of academic initiatives at ETSU. "Our honors program classmates, along with Kara's sorority sisters and really ETSU as a whole, rallied give support to not only her but also her family."

ETSU conducted fundraisers to help Kara's family cover her medical costs and hospital visits.

Thanks to the help of her classmates and faculty at the university, Kara recovered and graduated from ETSU, eventually receiving her doctorate in neuroscience from Penn State College of Med-

icine. She now works with Johns Hopkins HealthCare.

The university's willingness to help Kara throughout her ordeal typifies Guram's impression of ETSU — a generous community that's more than willing to give resources to people who need them.

Having grown up in Wisconsin, Guram didn't know about ETSU when she started applying to colleges.

"As someone who was a first-generation college student, I pretty much made choices on where to apply based on college brochures — back in 1996/1997, we weren't really using websites and emails to communicate like we do now — or places that I may have heard of before," Guram said.

During high school, Guram was accepted into the Governor's School for Tennessee Heritage, which would have brought her to ETSU, but she

instead opted to attend the Governor's School for Humanities at UT Martin.

Nonetheless, the acceptance put ETSU on Guram's radar and, along with several other schools, Guram added ETSU to her application list.

When she visited the university with her father, ETSU admissions staff told her that, thanks to her high GPA and ACT/SAT scores, she was qualified to submit an application for the university's honors program.

"I loved the idea of being a part of a program that would connect me with other students at ETSU," Guram said. "I came here with two other classmates from my high school, but after Preview, we hardly ever saw one another. I had an instant group of classmates who became friends that I had classes with throughout my undergraduate experience."

## ETSU Honors College Giving

*Gifts made to The Honors College, regardless of their size, have a significant impact on the seemingly small things on campus. These gifts make a difference in the lives of real people. Wherever they are earmarked, these gifts help address specific needs. They are as meaningful to the students and faculty who benefit from them as are the mammoth gifts that underwrite entire programs.*

*To give online please use our convenient online link: [www.etsu.edu/give](http://www.etsu.edu/give). In this form you may designate your gift to The Honors College and create a payment schedule.*

*If you would like help with your gift or want more information about other ways to give, please call (423) 439-6962, email [give@etsu.edu](mailto:give@etsu.edu), fax (423) 439-5836 or mail correspondence to:*

*ETSU Foundation  
Box 70721  
Johnson City, TN 37614*

*Thank you in advance for your support.*

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## SAVE THE BRAINS

### CONTINUES FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

by David Floyd

It's only a matter of time before scientists discover a cure for Alzheimer's, but because an effective treatment is still many years in the future, organizations like the Alzheimer's Association need help raising money for research.

That's where Save the Brains comes in.

Started by University Honors Scholars Caitie Duke and Gabriela Coronel, Save the Brains is a student-run volunteer organization affiliated with the Alzheimer's Association.

The team has been in existence for about a year and has become a pivotal component of the Alzheimer's Association's volunteer efforts at ETSU.

"The Alzheimer's Association actually seeks us out when they need help now," Duke said. "They know who we are and they know what kind of work we're capable of."

Traditionally, teams like Save the Brains are set up to help raise money, but the ETSU organization also gathers volunteers for events like the Walk to End Alzheimer's.

"We try to give (the Alzheimer's Association) some manpower at their events," Duke said.

The most notable fundraisers Save the Brains conducts each semester are its popular trivia nights, which are hosted in the Great Room in Yoakley Hall.

Teams of up to three people pay a registration fee to participate in the competition. The events have helped the group reach relatively strong funding levels for the past two semesters.

Save the Brains received several large donations during its first year in existence, bringing its end of the year fundraising total to about \$600.

Coronel and Duke are advertising the group's efforts to ETSU's general population, but Save the Brains receives a majority of its support from members of the Honors College.

While the organizers would prefer to have a broader foundation of support from the ETSU community, they're satisfied with the assistance they've received from members of the honors program.

"In the Honors College you do have a lot of people who are diverse but still care," Coronel said.

"They have a mindset of they want to do something more, they want to do something that's going to make a difference, so it's a lot easier when you have that basis to work with."

Duke believes her and Coronel's interest in combatting Alzheimer's is a natural extension of the principles they

learn in the Honors College, particularly the value of possessing a strong brain.

"It's such a logical road to go down, to look at Alzheimer's and think what if you just lost everything and you're still there but you're not you anymore," Duke said. "So that was kind of a logical progression from Honors College to Alzheimer's Association."

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# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

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## MICHAEL STANTON

by Laura Traister

Although Michael Stanton hails from Banner Elk, North Carolina, a tiny town only about an hour away from ETSU, he has had a long journey to arrive in Johnson City.

“Since I started college in 2010, I have attended four different universities and lived in three different countries,” said Michael, who is now majoring in marketing management at ETSU.

One of the universities he attended was Compass College of Cinematic Arts in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While he has been interested in film, especially stunts and sword choreography, since childhood, it was there that he discovered a talent for screenplay writing and producing and ended up writing/producing two short films. He has also lived for one year in Uganda as a volunteer teacher’s assistant.

“In all of that time, I only had an associate’s degree to show for all of my hard work. It was becoming evident that I needed to settle in somewhere and finish a bachelor’s degree,” said Michael.

He and his wife, Carolyn, married the summer before Michael came to ETSU. Carolyn was already attending ETSU and was in the Honors in Discipline program in chemistry, so Michael applied

and was accepted to the Honors College.

“Had I not been accepted into the honors program, I probably would have sought out employment in Johnson City while my wife finished school. I’m glad it worked out differently! I could not imagine life here without being involved in the honors community.”

Michael is now a senior Midway Honors Scholar and also participates in the HID program for the College of Business and Technology.

To him, the Honors College helps students realize the importance of community, extracurricular activities, and leadership opportunities rather than going to college just to get good grades.

“I learned that the Honors College is made up of an excellent group of people. It is the people that I will miss when I’m gone. It is the people who pick me up when I’m down and help me through my struggles,” said Michael.

“Whenever an issue arises with a class or a financial issue, I know that the best team on campus is in my corner. It makes life a lot less stressful. Since we have more academics to focus on than the average student, it is impossible to calculate the value of the Hon-



ors College family that surrounds us everywhere on campus. What’s fun is to see how far that family extends.”

He has also been working to produce a short film with the Buc Films club at ETSU and hopes to write a feature film over winter break and then produce it this summer. Again, community is a draw for him:

“Film is also one of the few art forms that really requires a lot of collaboration from various artists...that community that springs up on almost every film set is what really settled me into the idea of working professionally in the industry.”

After Michael and Carolyn graduate (he with a bachelor’s degree and she with a master’s degree in public health), they plan to move to Atlanta because the film industry is growing there. Their big picture goal is to produce feature

films, feature documentaries, or television shows.

Outside of school, Michael has also enjoyed finding community at Christ Reconciled Church, a small church located near downtown Johnson City.

“Experiencing and being an active part of the community around ETSU has really opened my eyes to lives which are very different from my own. The church’s focus on community has led me to view poverty in a whole new light, and I hope to reflect the importance of human dignity and healthy community—both spiritually and physically—in my work as a filmmaker and citizen of this country.”

EDITORS David Floyd, Laura Traister

LAYOUT Grady Saunders