



THE UNIVERSITY of
MISSISSIPPI

Sally McDonnell Barksdale
Honors College



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Sally McDonnell Barksdale

HONORS COLLEGE

MISSION

The mission of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College is to prepare citizen scholars who are fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good and driven to find solutions.

Founded in 1997 through a gift from Jim and Sally Barksdale, the SMBHC attracts a diverse body of high-performing students to the University of Mississippi and provides them a vibrant center of academic excellence. The Honors College seeks academically versatile students who enjoy intellectual novelty and critical thinking through reading, writing, discussion and experiential learning. Honors students hail from around the country and other parts of the world, and from any department at the university that confers an undergraduate



degree. The Honors College encourages those students to identify and develop their interests while also seeking an understanding of the world around us.

Through the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, you actively participate in your college experience. Most immediately, you will take small, seminar-style honors classes offered in many disciplines. Through honors freshman seminars, you will explore “self and society” and “ways of knowing/believing.” Each semester, you can select from a variety of honors classes, most of them designed to meet university general education requirements for any major or, often, targeted to fulfill the introductory courses required by many majors. You will be taught by some of the university’s finest faculty, in a class whose size allows you to engage with the professor and your peers. Imagine classes of 15 to 20 rather than the more common (in lower-level course work) 75 to 200, and you begin to see why honors courses appeal to students who want the rich experience of engaging with ideas, rather than just the information.

In your junior or senior year, you take the knowledge you have gained in the classroom and apply it to real-life situations through an honors capstone. A capstone can have a research, creative, pre-professional, or community-transforming focus. During the capstone experience, every student works one-on-one with an advisor or in a group to research, create, design, or work in their community. You might conduct cutting-edge research on the long-term stability of marine ecosystems, develop a marketing strategy for a Fortune 500 company, or collect an oral history about a regional crisis; whatever it is, you will develop the skills and knowledge you need after graduation through the honors capstone. Whether your plan is becoming a doctor, starting a business, working in public policy, managing your own classroom, or going to graduate school, you will find that

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The transition from high school to college can be one of the scariest and most intimidating experiences in your life. I was tossing and turning in my sleep the night before moving into my dorm because I was so nervous. Although it’s hard to adjust to college life, the Honors College offers a safe community free from judgment and full of love; I have received nothing but full hearts and open arms from everyone. The Honors College is a place where people can be who they want to be, no matter what situation they are in. Everyone has a story to tell in the Honors College, and the Honors College is an empty book waiting for words to be written.”

Hometown
Starkville, Mississippi
Classification
SMBHC '26
Major
Computer Science

the honors capstone helps prepare you professionally and personally for life beyond the university.

Your participation as a citizen scholar extends beyond the classroom or research facility. The Honors College also encourages our students to explore by providing honors fellowships to support study abroad or internship experiences (see Benefits). All honors students participate in the Community Action Challenge (CAC) each semester, finding some way to apply their talents to addressing a community need. Like the capstone, your CAC efforts might well be tailored to preparation for a career or pursuit of your individual community concerns, or linked to the shared community service efforts of groups to which you belong (e.g., Greek organizations or honor societies).

Your engagement with the world through the Honors College will not prevent you from participating in other activities on campus. In fact, our students are extremely active in opportunities such as student government, Greek life, band, choral groups, faith-based societies, athletics, and ROTC. Because of their energy and creativity, honors students often start new organizations, such as an undergraduate mock trial team, PeriodUM, or the Honors College Minority Engagement Club.

The Honors College asks you to envision your future with courage and imagination. For our part, we make a commitment to create challenging courses for you, provide you with a community where your creative and intellectual ideas can grow, and set high standards while giving you plenty of room to maneuver. One promise: The Honors College will not underestimate what you can do.

HOLLEY JEAN **GARRISON**

“I have found great friends and mentors that have helped me through my undergraduate experience in my honors courses. One of my best friends is someone whom I sat next to in my first honors class freshman year, and I will always be thankful to the Honors College for giving me that opportunity. The reading materials, classroom activities and discussion components have been such a great advantage to these classes and kept me interested and wanting to learn more. Honors provides an academically driven home away from home with a foundation of gratitude for the Lafayette County-Oxford-University community that we serve through the community action challenge. It is one of the best choices I ever made.

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Curriculum

THE HONORS COLLEGE WILL NOT UNDERESTIMATE WHAT YOU CAN DO.

Curriculum

Our students tell us that honors courses “aren’t harder; they’re just different.” Being a student in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College means more in-depth study, more discussion in class, more critical thinking — and more chances to apply theories in real-world situations.

The curriculum of the Honors College requires at least 30 hours of honors credit, including the 6 hours of HON 101/102. In addition, the capstone/thesis component usually earns students another 6-9 honors hours, hours that often count toward the major also. Most of our students take more honors courses than we require because they seek the enhanced focus and support of fine professors and motivated classmates, and the opportunities to explore topics only the Honors College will put before them.

Your major is not a deciding factor in whether or not you can participate in the Honors College; our curricular design and requirements accommodate all undergraduate majors on campus. Your transcript will show a special “Hon” designation for each honors course completed. And when you complete all the



Hometown
Niceville, Florida

Classification
SMBHC '26

Major
Chemical
Engineering

Holley Jean



Hometown
Gulfport, Mississippi

Classification
SMBHC '24

Major
Secondary English
Education

AZURREA CURRY

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“I chose the University of Mississippi because it felt like a home. The people at this university are incredibly warm and each person I met upon visiting campus, and especially in the Honors College, honestly just felt like a hug. The Honors College in particular is what solidified my decision to attend the University of Mississippi. It offers the unique experience of community, personal development, as well as intellectual challenge and growth among hundreds of incredible, like-minded human beings. In addition to these things, it provides the opportunity to travel and study however you desire with the support of an exceptional faculty and staff. Knowing all of these things, the University of Mississippi and its Honors College was the obvious, and right, choice for me.

requirements (minimum of 30 honors hours, completion of capstone/thesis or capstone/practicum, 3.50 GPA and full satisfaction of CAC), you will graduate as a Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College Scholar. That special distinction on your transcript forever marks the successful completion of a robust, out-of-the-ordinary undergraduate career.

Special Classes

The Honors College believes in learning that goes beyond the campus and limits of Oxford, at a level not usually provided to undergraduates. Experiential learning courses ask questions in various areas, often by tackling a concept we still do not quite understand at on-site locations, or going to a spot — such as the United States Supreme Court or casinos in Las Vegas— whose richness lends itself to an exploration of human experience in a specific moment. Also, the Honors College partners with the UM School of Law so honors third- and fourth-year students can take Introduction to American Law and Reasoning, which is a gateway to taking select law school classes for undergraduate hours.



Several Honors students presented their original research at the 2023 Honors College Poster Symposium

classes

Faculty

Professors who teach honors courses are master teachers and on the cutting edge of research in their fields, but they would not be part of the honors program if they did not genuinely care about students and like working with them. “The professors are all open to anything, and they always encourage us to come to them for help,” says one honors student. That kind of extra attention from faculty is an everyday occurrence in the Honors College, from individual meetings with professors, to simply getting advice about adjusting to college life, to the occasional cooking class in the honors kitchen.

Honors graduates are recognized at the Honors Commissioning ceremony each year.



Faculty



Caleb

Benefits

Benefits

Along with being involved in the life of the university, the greatest benefits of the Honors College are the friendships that are formed among students and the community among the faculty and students. This community does not arise just in the classroom. Honors students can choose to live in designated honors floors in a particular residence hall or almost any other residential space on campus. All honors students enjoy 24-hour access to the Honors College building.

The Honors College is a four-story building located near the heart of campus, just a few minutes' walk from major academic buildings and the Student Union. Many of the honors classes meet in the Honors College. Along with classrooms and administrative offices, the building also houses: a computer lab open only to honors students; study rooms for individual or group study; several lounge areas; a fully equipped kitchen; and wireless internet accessibility even on the courtyard and back patio.

Spend a few minutes talking with students, and it's easy to see how much this space means to them. The Honors College has been described as a "refuge," an "escape" and even a "home."

Honors students also receive priority registration, giving even an honors freshman an earlier registration window than most seniors. Entering honors freshmen also have the opportunity of attending an honors-only orientation session prior to the first regular session.

Assistance from the Honors College staff adds to the personal side of a public education. Whether it's dealing with a course scheduling problem or getting



CALEB BOHANNON

Initially, I was not going to apply to the SMBHC, but after speaking with its staff, I realized that the Honors College was a great experience. When I was told, 'being a big fish in a small pond shared by others just as motivated as you,' it prompted me to apply. The smaller class sizes, the study spaces and great quality of professors allow a diverse range of students to stand out and flourish here. If you are a hardworking student who wants to be challenged while also meeting other intelligent and equally motivated people, this is the place you need to be. You will look back at your time as an Honors College student with pride."

Hometown
Clinton, Mississippi

Classification
SMBHC '24

Major
Public Policy
Leadership

advice on career options, the Honors College administration is here to help students succeed. The college also has a network administrator who is ready to help students with their computer problems.

Many honors students choose to study abroad during their tenure at the University. The Honors College offers fellowships to its students, for either a semester or year abroad. With the help of these fellowships, honors students have studied in places as varied as Namibia, China, Chile and France. Students can choose from programs in which the university is a partner, including the select International Education of Students (IES), or Ole Miss’ direct exchange arrangements with schools in the U.K., Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Chile, or Uruguay, to name a few. Students are required to pay tuition and residence and meal rates, plus travel expenses; however, financial aid and scholarships transfer to certain universities and — with the honors fellowship — place the study abroad experience within students’ financial reach.

Honors College fellowships can also support students who have received unpaid internships. These fellowships can help offset the living expenses of working in places such as Washington, D.C., New York City, or Madrid, to name only a few examples. The SMBHC also has funding to help you travel to a conference to present your capstone work and research funds to help you buy supplies or travel for your capstone research.

The Honors College wants students to dream big. The Barksdale Award (an award of \$5,000) supports citizen scholars who, willing to take a risk, propose ambitious, independent programs of study, research or humanitarian effort. So, dream big. Use the Barksdale Award (and the other honors resources) to make us jealous of your chance to make your vision a reality.



Honors students represent around 10 percent of the University of Mississippi student body.



“ HAYDEN WALKER

Hometown
Oxford,
Mississippi

Classification
SMBHC '26

Major
Mechanical
Engineering

As someone who has lived in Oxford for years, the University of Mississippi was always on my radar during my college search. I considered lots of other schools around the country, but I chose Ole Miss because I felt like I could truly have an impact on this campus. On my tour of the SMBHC, the students and employees that I met made me feel like they genuinely wanted to see me excel both inside and outside of the classroom. The faculty and staff are so supportive of any project or idea that you may want to bring to fruition here. You can tell that the Honors College faculty puts students first just by walking through the halls and seeing every office door open. From what I've seen, few universities give the same level of support to high-achieving students like the SMBHC does. Deciding to continue my education here has opened me up to so many opportunities and new adventures.”



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NATALIE GUMM

Hometown
Siloam Springs,
Arkansas

Classification
SMBHC '25
Major
English

I know that starting college can be overwhelming. There are hundreds of classes to take, endless clubs and organizations to join, jobs and internships to apply for, and more. You might think that joining the Honors College will be too hard or get in the way of all the other things you want to do and try, but it's actually the opposite. The Honors College doesn't prevent you from exploring everything college has to offer; it provides you with even more opportunities. There will be special classes available to you and different honors organizations to join and lead. You'll have help finding and applying for scholarships, study abroad programs and internships. And through it all, you'll have an amazing community to lean on."

Eligibility and Application

Application to the Honors College is accomplished through the university's Special Programs and Scholarship Application. The Honors College application includes a résumé, two essays and letters of recommendation. Your transcript submitted for university admission will also become part of your application. Most portions of the application can be used for other special programs at the university such as the Croft Institute for International Studies, Lott Leadership Institute and Chinese Language Flagship Program.

Your application to the Honors College will be reviewed holistically. The Honors College encourages applications from students who have shown academic ambition, who have sought ways to understand themselves and their world, and who have taken leadership in meeting community needs.

Requirements

At the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, we expect students to be active in plotting their own educational strategies and to let the SMBHC enrich their options and their experiences. As noted earlier, the curriculum of the Honors College requires at least 30 hours of honors credit, including the required Honors 101 and 102 sequence and the 6-9 hours usually earned in capstone work. A student must achieve at least a 3.20 cumulative grade-point average as a freshman, a 3.40 as a sophomore and a 3.50 as a junior and senior to graduate from the Honors College.

The Community Action Challenge, or CAC, is integral to the Honors College mission. Students are expected to commit at least 10 hours of their time each semester to making a difference in their communities. Students have freedom in choosing the focus and the avenue of their work either by pursuing a path of their own or working through student organizations with which they are affiliated.

Each year at the fall and spring honors convocations, we are called together to spend two evenings with a nationally or internationally recognized citizen scholar, such as a Pulitzer Prize-winning author (Doris Kearns Goodwin) or world-renowned dancers (Alessandra Ferri and Herman Cornejo) or an attorney general (Eric Holder). Whether our guests are familiar from the news or from a classroom discussion, we invite these guests to take us through perspectives that richly deserve our shared time and attention and always challenge our preconceptions. All honors students are expected to attend convocations.

VISIT [HONORS.OLEMISS.EDU](https://honors.olemiss.edu)

Apply!

Scholarships

We understand that scholarship opportunities and financial assistance are among your top concerns. Your application for admission to the Honors College is also your application for our highly competitive honors scholarships. ***Fewer than 5 percent of our entering freshmen receive an Honors College scholarship.*** You must apply by the regular-decision deadline (***January 10***) to be considered. These scholarships are available only to students enrolled in the Honors College:

- McDonnell-Barksdale Honors Scholarships, annual awards valued at \$32,000 (\$8,000 per year) and limited to Mississippi residents
- Doris Raymond Scholarships, annual awards valued at \$32,000 (\$8,000 per year) and open to all applicants
- Harold Parker Memorial Scholarships, annual awards valued at \$32,000 (\$8,000 per year) and open to all applicants
- Bill and Melanie Roper Scholarship, annual awards valued at \$40,000 (\$10,000 per year) and open to business, science, technology, engineering, or math students
- Everett Williams Honors Scholarships, annual awards valued at \$32,000 (\$8,000 per year) and open to all applicants
- Annexstad Family Foundation Leaders for Tomorrow Scholarships, annual awards valued at \$25,000 (\$6,250 per year) and open to applicants with financial need who exhibit leadership potential
- Walker Family Scholarship, annual award valued at \$12,000 (\$3,000 per year) limited to Mississippi residents with demonstrated financial need

Other University Scholarships

Although the SMBHC itself awards only a few scholarships, most honors students qualify for one of the university's many academic excellence scholarships. Applicants to the Honors College are often the strongest contenders for university-wide and departmental scholarship awards, as well as for other forms of financial aid available at the University of Mississippi. Please visit the university's financial aid website (finaid.olemiss.edu) and the department or school in which you intend to major to learn about other scholarship opportunities.



<< **SCAN TO GET IN TOUCH
WITH AN HONORS STUDENT.**



Have you heard of the Fulbright, Goldwater, Truman or Rhodes scholarships?

These national and globally competitive awards offer life changing opportunities where academic excellence, leadership, and active communal engagement are valued and nurtured.

The Office of National Scholarship Advisement (ONSA) is based in the lobby of SMBHC. ONSA supports and advises students applying for nationally and globally competitive merit-based awards. We hold workshops, writing sessions, bootcamps, interviews and guide you every step of the way through the process.

This is not just a gateway to undergraduate and graduate school funding, but an opportunity to further your mind, commit to bettering our world, and actively engage in a scholarship community. Book an appointment with ONSA (onsa.olemiss.edu)!

Students in the Honors College participate in fun events like trivia, art showcases, and the Honors College formal.





Aly Eilers

SMBHC '19

B.A., Linguistics

M.A., Urban Education, Rhodes College

Capstone: *"Incorporating African American Vernacular English in Education: Fostering Linguistic Diversity Within Mississippi K-12 Classrooms"*

5th Grade Math Teacher



The SMBHC challenged me intellectually and interpersonally. I learned the value of civic discourse and disagreement; the necessity of truly listening to, not just hearing, others' perspectives; and the strength of a community of scholars dedicated to the growth of themselves and their greater communities. The SMBHC gave me the opportunity to build deeper and more meaningful relationships with my peers and professors. My learning was more robust due to the opportunities provided by the Honors College."



Jarvis Benson



The SMBHC gave me the freedom to question and critique the campus and larger community around me. Honors classes made me realize that academia didn't have to look a certain way or sound the same. I'm continuously inspired by the way Honors College staff and faculty engage deeply in important work while also being genuinely good people. As I continue in my Ph.D. program, I am hopeful to one day have an impact on others as they have on me."

SMBHC '19

B.A. International Studies; B.A. Spanish

Capstone: *"The Haves and the Have Nots: Segregation and Marginalization in Puebla, Mexico"*

Ph.D. Student in Sociology,
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

SMBHC



Ashna Sethi

SMBHC '19

B.B.A., Marketing
M.P.H., Epidemiology, Tulane
Capstone: *"How Individual Traits Affect Type II Diabetics' Intentions to Use Wearable Technologies"*
Regulatory Project Manager, UCLA Health

Within the walls of the SMBHC, there is immense curiosity, eagerness to learn, and drive. At the SMBHC, it's cool to want to learn more, which I think is hard to find during your collegiate career. The SMBHC brought me incredible friendships and memories and challenges, as well as resources that allowed me to achieve each goal I set for myself."

"The SMBHC played a vital role in challenging me and growing me into the person I am today. While there, I learned how to go above and beyond. I learned to always ask 'Why?' and I continue to challenge myself to ask this question in all my endeavors.

SMBHC '16

B.A. Biochemistry
M.D., University of Mississippi Medical Center
Capstone: *"Christian Faith and Evolution: One Person's Journey in Science and in Faith"*
Emergency Medicine Physician,
Vanderbilt University Medical Center



Logan Wilson

The SMBHC helped me get to where I am because it taught me to never give up and that I can achieve my dreams. I didn't settle because I knew I could do it. I wouldn't have that without the SMBHC."

SMBHC '19

B.S.Ch.E., Chemical Engineering
Capstone: *"Equivalent Annual Operating Cost of Reactors in A Discrete Optimized Styrene Process"*
Design Authority Engineer,
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions



Arizona Garza



**Lizzy
Pitts**

SMBHC '18

B.A. Spanish

M.B.A., Louisiana State University - Shreveport

Capstone: *"Impact of Plants in the Classroom on Student Success and Well-Being"*

Clinical Research Associate, Novo Nordisk

The HoCo was everything. It gave me community starting from Honors 101 to the janitorial staff I befriended during one of my many all-nighters. It gave me a couch to nap on during those all-nighters. It opened my mind wider than would've been possible without it, pushing me to explore deep and complex issues. HoCo pushed me to live on a different continent for a summer and gave me some money to help me get there. It gave me the best instructors on campus, best in their field and best of heart. It gave me purpose by charging me with a thesis and made it exciting by giving me full creative control over my project."

"The SMBHC encouraged me to pursue my passions and let nothing hold me back. By equipping me with strong research skills, the opportunity to pursue my intellectual passions and simply be myself, the SMBHC empowered me to pursue my dreams to the best of my abilities. Having the opportunity to explore my passion for civil rights law and immigration rights law helped me confirm that these options were the right career path for me. That was a special moment for me. I grew up on a cattle farm in rural northwest Alabama, and I am the son of a public school teacher and a manufacturing worker. I am descended from generations of crop farmers. I am also an openly gay man and one of the only members of my family to attend college at any level. For someone like me, opportunities to pursue a legal career felt like nothing more than a far-fetched dream. The SMBHC gave me the opportunity to grow, to explore, and to gain the tools and skills I needed to pursue that dream. Not only that, the Honors College helped me realize that my dream was within my reach and set me up to take the next step toward it.

Levi Bevis

SMBHC '19

B.A., Public Policy Leadership

M.A., Emerging Media Studies,

Boston University

Capstone: *"Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: A Comparative Analysis of Access to Education and Healthcare for Immigrants before DACA, under DACA, and under the Dream Act"*

J.D. Candidate,

Arizona State University

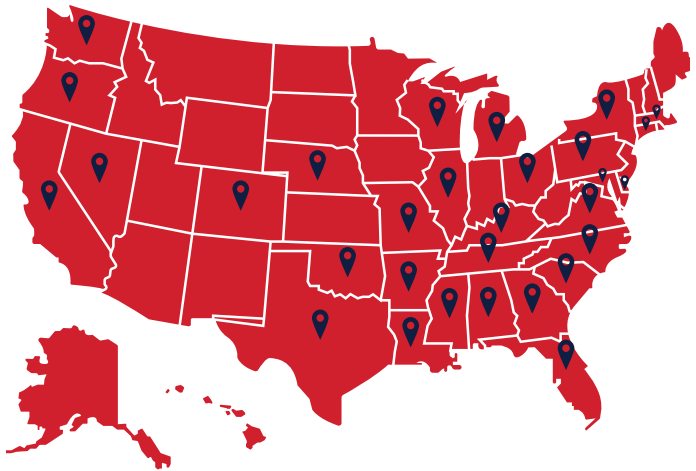


ALUMNI

MEET THE SMBHC

Class of 2027

3.97
AVERAGE
Unweighted
GPA



30 STATES REPRESENTED

52
ACADEMIC
PROGRAMS

from
**ALL SCHOOLS
& COLLEGES***

*excluding the Graduate School,
School of Law & professional schools
(e.g. medical school)

53%
MISSISSIPPI
RESIDENTS

Top Five
**NONRESIDENT
STATES**

Tennessee • Alabama

Louisiana • Texas

Missouri



51
Mississippi
Counties
Represented

49
VALEDICTORIANS
33
SALUTATORIANS

Student
traveling
farthest to
the SMBHC
Olympia, WA

2,439^{MI}
37^{HR}

THE SALLY MCDONNELL BARKSDALE
**HONORS
COLLEGE**

prepares citizen scholars

who are fired by the life of the mind,


COMMITTED

to the public good,

and driven to find

SOLUTIONS.

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 @UMHOCO