

Honors College

University of Tennessee
at Chattanooga

Class of
2021

 THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
CHATTANOOGA
Honors College





History of the Honors College

Honors at UTC began in 1977 as the University Scholars Program, enrolling about 20 new students each year. In 1979 a scholarship endowment was created through support from the Lyndhurst Foundation and the UC Foundation, and the program was renamed the Brock Scholars Program in honor of William E. Brock, Jr., a prominent Chattanooga businessman who served for many years on the UC Foundation Board of Trustees.

In 1987 with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Brock Scholars Program expanded to enroll more students and to enhance its curriculum. At that point, the name was changed to the University Honors Program, also called the UHON Program. The UHON Program typically enrolled between 30 and 40 new students each year. The William E. Brock Jr. Scholarships continued to be awarded to our students, but most also received other scholarships, including the Roberta M. “Bobbie” Yates Scholarship, the Paul Koblenz Scholarship, the Tennessee Hope Scholarship, the Chancellor’s Scholarship, and the Provost’s Scholarship.

In June 2013, the University Honors Program reverted to its previous name, the Brock Scholars Program, and became a part of the university’s new Honors College. Beginning with the Fall 2015 freshman class, the Brock Scholars Program admits 50 new freshmen each year.

In 2014–2015, two new programs were added to the new Honors College: the High Achieving Mocs Living Learning Community (HAM LLC), a first-year-only program, and Innovations in Honors, a problem-based, community-embedded program designed for students entering their second or third year at UTC. Using the UTC campus and the city of Chattanooga as active learning laboratories, IIH students work closely with faculty members and civic partners in a two-semester Innovation Lab to tackle authentic, real-world problems and benefit our larger community. These new initiatives do not replace the Brock Scholars Program, but instead offer more opportunities for high-achieving students at UTC to participate in engaging and challenging academic experiences.

Brock Scholars, including today’s honorees, were required to complete an interdisciplinary core curriculum consisting of seven Brock Seminars and a year-long honors thesis. Innovation Scholars were required to complete one Innovation Lab sequence, one Brock Seminar or other honors course, and a year-long honors thesis. Students from either program may earn the Honors College diploma by completing 24 credit hours of honors coursework. This is the fifth Honors College Commencement at which both graduating Brock Scholars and Innovation Scholars are recognized.

Today’s honorees join over eight hundred other University Honors, Brock Scholars, and Innovation Scholars alumni in having completed one of the most rigorous and unique undergraduate programs in the country.





Honors College Commencement Program

Welcome from the Dean

Welcome from the Provost

Recognition of Faculty Mentors

Introduction of Graduates

Closing Remarks





27 April 2021

Dearest creatures!

The last 13 or so months have been stained by loss. People have lost their lives; we have lost family members, friends, colleagues to COVID. So many have lost their livelihoods to this pandemic. We've lost daily habits and ordinary traditions and all students—you among them—have lost the educational experiences you expected to have; maybe you didn't get to study abroad like you'd planned, or do an internship you'd hoped to do, or you've been denied the chance to actually be in the classroom with your friends or a professor you really like. We all, and you especially, have lost a lot.

But some losses lead to gains—greater awareness, social progress, more and better freedom, opportunity, and justice, wacky newfangled vaccines. And some people—y'all in particular—push through the loss and come out ahead.

You are a one-of-a-kind group of graduates. You are graduating today not just against the odds that all Honors College students have had to battle—Honors Humanities, anything with Owen Foster, our weird house on Oak Street, everyday ordinary complicated relationships, fear of being HOPE-less, the actuality of thesis, terribly long lines at Starbucks. You have graduated in spite of—in the middle of—a pandemic. This is not the badge of honor any of you wanted to have, but it's the one I see when I look out at all of you.

From all of us to all of you, I want to say more than congratulations. I want to say, we are impressed. You are tough. If you didn't know it before, you certainly must know now the truly difficult things of which you are capable. Let that knowledge, as well as everything else you have learned here during your time at UTC, serve you and your communities well, in the days and years to come. Well done and hats off to you all.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda".

Linda Frost, Dean of the UTC Honors College

Honors College Graduates

JhéDienne Adams, B.A. History, Minor: Creative Writing, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Reparations

Director: Linda Frost, Ph.D., Dean, Honors College

Immediate & Future Plans: JhéDienne has accepted a year-long pastoral internship with The Annex, a college ministry in Boulder, Colorado. Her future plans include graduating from a MDiv/MSW dual degree program, hopefully from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Building an incredible family. She says, “My time and experiences with the Honors College, the History Department, URaCE, and The House have been invaluable, and it is through these organizations and programs that I have learned what it means to be a responsible neighbor, a devoted mentee, an engaged student, and a good friend.”

Elizabeth Allen, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Minor: Chemistry, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Examining the Effects of Exogenous Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids on the Antimicrobial Activity of Piscidins in *Vibrio cholerae*

Director: David Giles, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Attend medical school at Lincoln Memorial University in the Fall of 2021. Elizabeth says, “I plan to work and volunteer in medically underserved areas and dedicate my career to combating healthcare inequality, because healthcare should not be a luxury.”

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Completing a departmental honors thesis, and presenting at the Association of Southeastern Biologists (ASB), ReSEARCH Dialogues, and to her thesis committee.

Linnea Anderson, B.S. Psychology, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Associations Among Academic Motivational Styles, Purpose in Life, and Depressive Symptoms in College Students

Director: Ashley Howell, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Immediate & Future Plans: After a month-long vacation, Linnea will shadow a law firm and study for the LSAT before applying to Law School, preferably at Vanderbilt. She will explore opportunities in non-profit organizations and law firms, all of which will prepare her for her dream to practice criminal defense law and open a lobbying firm focusing on the improvement of inner-city living, penitentiary systems, and equal rights. Many years from now, Linnea may consider running for elected office and aspires to be “an author, mother, influencer and entrepreneur.”

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Graduating! Linnea says, “I transferred four times, and now finally, after five years, I am graduating.” She also considers her competitive internship as a clerk in the Tennessee legislature as a significant accomplishment.

Honors College Graduates

Evann Bailey, B.I.S. Integrated Studies, Minor: Chemistry, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: A literature review analyzing the effects of urbanization on insect morphology

Director: Deanna Beasley, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Working as a Patient Care Technician (PCT) at Erlanger East, studying/taking the MCAT, and eventually attending medical school.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Completing her honors thesis after COVID-19 forced her to adapt. Evann states that her thesis “was definitely a big learning lesson.”

Raiza Barahona Hernandez, B.S. Psychology, Innovation Scholar

**December 2020 graduate*

Thesis: What’s in a Name? An Assessment of Degradation of Women in the Name of Climbing Routes

Director: Alexandra Zelin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Immediate & Future Plans: Starting the Industrial Organizational Psychology (I-O) program at UTC in Fall 2021. After her studies, Raiza hopes to work as a Human Resources generalist at a company and help nonprofit organizations with survey development and assessments.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Completing her honors thesis.

Catherine (Gracie) Bell, B.S. Health and Human Performance: Exercise Science, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Counselors’ Experiences of a Virtual Summer Camp

Director(s): Karissa Peyer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance

Char Schmidt, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Health and Human Performance

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending physical therapy school this fall at UTC. After PT school, Gracie hopes to have a PT job working with special needs children.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Gracie says, “Completing my undergraduate thesis for sure! Such a daunting task as a freshman, but a very rewarding and unique experience, especially when trying to collect data during a pandemic.”

Honors College Graduates

Celeste Benjamin, B.S. Computer Science: Data Science, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Synthesizing Pop Music With a Generative Adversarial Network

Director: Anthony Skjellum, Ph.D., Director of SimCenter and Professor of Computer Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Working full time in a job in data science or computer science more generally.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Persevering through transition and a pandemic to graduate, and serving as Student Assistant Director and revitalizing the weekly newsletter.

Ellie Tripp Bixler, B.A. Sociology and Anthropology: Anthropology, B.A. Humanities: Liberal Arts, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Young Adult: A Poetic Exploration of Modern American Life

Director: Richard Jackson, Ph.D., UT National Alumni Association Distinguished Service Professor & Ellis K. Meacham Annual Writing Workshop and Creative Writing Professor of English

Immediate & Future Plans: Ellie will begin a Master's degree in anthropology at Oregon State University where she received a full-tuition waiver and monthly stipend. She will work with Dr. Loren Davis, who specializes in lithic archaeology. After graduate school, Ellie would like to be working as a federal archaeologist for the National Park Service. She says, "More importantly, I hope to be spending lots of time outside, floating down rivers and resting on warm, sunny rocks."

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Ellie is most proud of her poetry thesis and the research she's conducted in the Archaeology lab.

Carmen Black, B.S. Environmental Science: Biodiversity, Conservation & Natural Resources, Minor: Biology, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: An Analysis of the Pollinators of *Echinacea purpurera* in Relation to their Perceived Efficiency and Color Preferences

Director: Stylianos Chatzimanolis, Ph.D., Guerry Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Carmen would like to work actively in the entomology field doing research~ideally pollination research~ and continue her work in wildlife rehabilitation (currently working at Opie Acres Wildlife and Opossum Rehabilitation Inc.). Carmen will also continue pursuing personal climbing goals.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Carmen says, "Getting to know myself and what I want my future to hold. UTC has been an incredible learning experience for me as a scholar and student, but also for myself personally."

Honors College Graduates

Briana Brady, B.S. Political Science & Public Service: American Politics, Minors: Economics, French, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Mental Health and Its Impact on the School-to-Prison Pipeline: A Look at Tennessee Schools

Director: Michelle Deardorff, Ph.D., Department Head, Political Science & Public Service, Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Government

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending Teachers College at Columbia University in NYC next fall to pursue a Master's degree in the Sociology and Education program within the Education Policy department. Briana says, "I am honored and humbled by this incredible opportunity to study such vital topics in a culturally-rich and diverse community—both academically and geographically." She hopes to either follow her Master's degree with a Ph.D. or work for the government in a role that examines school policy, specifically school disciplinary policy and/or intersections of education/race/the criminal justice system.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Completion of her Honors thesis. "Undertaking such an effort was daunting, and it was something I proved to myself that I was capable of doing. Additionally, though, getting an A on a Dr. Deardorff paper is ALWAYS a cause for major celebration, haha!"

Samantha Burger, B.S. Political Science & Public Service: Public Administration & Nonprofit Management, Minor: History, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Non-Profit Assistance in Response to the Trump Administration's Family Separation Policy

Director: Jeremy Strickler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Working in the nonprofit sector here in Chattanooga, TN, with plans to pursue a master's degree in Public Administration at UTC in the next few years.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Samantha explains that finding the field in which she would be happy to work long-term is her greatest accomplishment. She says, "Before UTC I was still unsure of my 'calling,' [but] now I know it is to work in the nonprofit sector."

Francesca (Frankie) Cable, B.S. Psychology, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Efficacy of Stress Relieving Interventions Through Zoom

Director: Alexandra Zelin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Immediate & Future Plans: Frankie will take some time to travel and continue research before jumping into graduate school for Occupational Therapy. In five years' time after OT school and starting her career, she hopes that she'll "almost be ready to start a family!"

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Graduating with honors and passing her thesis defense.



Honors College Graduates

Chase Carroll, B.S. Computer Science: Cyber Security, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Security fatigue and its effects on perceived password strength among university students

Director: David Schwab, M.S., Associate Lecturer in Computer Science and Engineering

Immediate & Future Plans: Pursuing a Master's in Computer Science Cyber Security here at UTC in Fall 2021. Always busy, Chase anticipates working at internship(s) this summer and throughout his graduate study. After earning his master's, Chase looks forward to securing a full-time position at a government agency in the local area. He details his future goals, stating, "I'd like to pursue a career in network security and threat identification/mitigation. I would also find research in distributed systems interesting too, like the conceptual Mesh of Things, which is kind of like the Internet of Things 2.0."

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Surviving. Chase explains, "In all seriousness, when I first came into the university I never saw myself doing 80% of the things I've done. Completing a 60-something page thesis as an undergraduate was pretty exhausting~and exhilarating~so I'd have to say that's my crowning achievement."

Christopher Clark, B.S. Business: Accounting, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Could SOX Be Better?: Exploring the Advantages And Shortfalls of Sarbanes-Oxley

Director: Anne Wilkins, D.B.A., C.P.A., UC Foundation Associate Professor of Accounting

Immediate & Future Plans: Studying for, taking, and passing all four parts of the uniform CPA exam this summer. Starting on September 20, 2021, Christopher will be an auditor for LBMC in Chattanooga. In the next five years, he plans to continue work as an auditor "to learn about all different kinds of companies and business practices."

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Chris cites the opportunities to complete, "different internships to find what I love to do, and getting a job doing that" as his greatest accomplishment.

Quin Crumb, B.F.A. Art: Graphic Design, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Contradiction Design

Director: Matt Greenwell, M.F.A., UC Foundation Professor of Graphic Design

Immediate & Future Plans: Working at Branch Technologies, hanging out and making prints at The Open Press, skating and swimming with friends, and making art in any capacities possible. In the next few years, Quin plans to help build the art and design community in Chattanooga by spending his time and energy making art, teaching others, and collaborating with friends. He'll also keep up with skating, spending time with the people he loves, and eventually finding a graduate program that excites him and takes him to the next stage professionally and personally. He says, "Ultimately I just want to make sure I never stop making things and encouraging others to do the same."

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Learning how to Tre Flip.

Honors College Graduates

Greyson Dukes, B.S. Environmental Science: Biodiversity, Conservation & Natural Resources, Minors: Philosophy, Religious Studies, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Assessing Lichen Diversity

Director: J. Hill Craddock, D. Phil., UC Foundation Robert M. Davenport Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Serving as a greenhouse manager for UTC, where he oversees the chestnut research greenhouse with Dr. Craddock. Grey also hopes to do some hiking, attend a service at a snake-handling church, and travel back to San Salvador, Bahamas to continue his thesis research. Grey is dedicated to incorporating sustainable practices “into everything I do, and bringing the abstract beauty of nature into people’s homes.”

Greatest accomplishment(s) at UTC: The completion of his departmental honors thesis, and being named Senior of the Year in the Philosophy & Religion department as a junior.

Laurel Getty, B.S. Interior Architecture, Minor: Business Administration, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Design During a Pandemic: Application of the WELL Building Standard to Historic Engel Stadium

Director(s): Jessica Etheredge, M.I.S., Associate Professor of Interior Architecture and Design, and Tonya Miller, M.F.A., Assistant Professor of Interior Architecture and Design

Immediate Plans: Laurel received a fellowship to pursue a Master’s of Architecture at Clemson University in South Carolina and will be moving there in August 2021. This summer, she’ll be working at Rardin and Carroll Architects designing campus buildings and churches. In the next five years, she will be a registered architect and hopes to work for a commercial architecture firm designing hospitals, schools, airports or hotels.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Expanding her worldview! Laurel says, “I had the amazing opportunities to study abroad in Paris, Peru and South Africa through the Honors College and College of Business. I made memories that I will never forget and gained knowledge about other cultures that I will bring into my future career and life.”



Honors College Graduates

Lauren Gilmore, B.A. English: Rhetoric and Professional Writing, B.A. Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures: French, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Building a (Great) Wall: A Semiotic Analysis of the Rhetoric of President Donald J. Trump

Director: Lauren Ingraham, Ph.D., Director of General Education and Professor of Rhetoric & Professional Writing

Immediate & Future Plans: Starting UTC's Master's in Public Administration (MPA) program with a concentration in Nonprofit Management. After graduate school, Lauren will secure full-time work in a managerial position, ideally working in the nonprofit sector "and making a difference in the little ways [she] can."

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Finishing her departmental thesis. Lauren explains that her thesis "was one of the hardest things I had to do in my undergrad and I am very proud to have finished it." She is also proud of completing a double major, and studying abroad, which has been her dream since high school.

Emily Halvorson, B.A. Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures: Spanish, B.S. Psychology, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: "Sticks and stones": experiencing microaggressions from the perspectives of the victim, bystander, and perpetrator

Director: Kristen Black, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending Vanderbilt University's Graduate Program in Medicine, Health and Society in Fall 2021, after which she will pursue a career in health psychology.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Successfully defending and finishing her departmental honors thesis.

Olivia (Spaghetti) Haslett, B.S. Secondary Education: English, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: It Crits Different: Analysis of Dungeons & Dragons and Tabletop Roleplaying Games as an Oral, Collaborative, and Immersive Genre of Literacy

Director: Dominik Heinrici, M.A., Lecturer in English

Immediate & Future Plans: Starting a Master's degree in Rhetoric with a focus in Digital Humanities at UTC. After her master's program, Olivia will pursue "a doctorate in Rhetoric and Digital Humanities, working in e-sports, video game development, and teaching the youths as the Cool (TM) English teacher."

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Pursuing honors wholeheartedly and graduating Summa Cum Laude.

Honors College Graduates

Tom Herschberg, B.S. Computer Science: Cyber Security, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Simplifying the Creation of Virtual Topologies using MPI Sessions

Director: Anthony Skjellum, Ph.D., Director of SimCenter and Professor of Computer Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Joining the computer science Ph.D program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a Computer Science Excellence Fellow. After degree completion, Tom will join an industry research lab such as IBM, Intel, or Google.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Submitting a paper to a journal (ACS Macromolecules) as the first author in collaboration with Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Briley Holbrook, B.S. Early Childhood: Child and Family Studies, Minor: Criminal Justice, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: The Changing Classroom: A Thematic Analysis on the Impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Children and Educators of a Montessori School

Director: Bethany Womack, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Social Work

Immediate & Future Plans: Briley has applied to the University of Tennessee at Martin's Clinical Mental Health Counseling program and will hopefully attend in Fall 2021. In the next few years she'll be finishing graduate school and receiving her LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor).

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Completing a thesis that she's proud of amidst all the changes with COVID-19!

Hannah Holmberg, B.S. Physics: Biophysics, Minor: Chemistry, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Molecular Dynamic Simulation of the Complex Folding Patterns of Apolipoprotein A1 in Various Concentrations of Potassium Chloride

Director: Luis Sanchez-Diaz, Ph.D., Lecturer in Physics

Immediate & Future Plans: Hannah has applied to Eastern Tennessee State University to pursue a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences. In five years, she hopes to graduate with her doctorate and begin a career in cancer biology research.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Physics tutoring. Hannah hopes she has helped "students in physics labs to learn even just a little bit about physics and [helped] them to like it even just a little bit."

Honors College Graduates

Lilith Ann Jackson, B.F.A. Art: Graphic Design, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Accessibility, Aesthetics, and Community: Lessons for Designers from the Zine Archives

Director: Becky Nasadowski, M.F.A., Assistant Professor of Graphic Design

Immediate & Future Plans: After graduation, she plans to work, save money, and enjoy the summer. Her longer-term goals include participating in a work-away program in Europe to travel and learn about herself before entering the job world. Eventually, she would love to work in a bigger city and do graphic design with some kind of branding agency.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Writing a departmental honors thesis with the best faculty in the entire world.

Seth LaRue, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Minor: Chemistry, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Calibration Study of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's Clinical Infectious Disease Control Research Group's Bacterial Assessment Protocol

Director: Henry Spratt, Ph.D., Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending medical school. Seth has applied to LMU-DCOM, Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, Lake-Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, and William & Carey College of Osteopathic Medicine. Through medicine, he hopes to serve his community to the best of his ability.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Making the Dean's List every semester.

Allycia Lee, B.S. Chemistry: Biochemistry, Minor: Biology, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: A metabolomics-based approach to the screening of endometrial cancer: development of a gas chromatography-ion trap mass spectrometry-based method

Director: Steve Symes, Ph.D., UC Foundation Professor of Chemistry

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending medical school at UT Health Science Center beginning Fall 2021. She hopes to be a member of the first cohort for the new 3-Year MD program and is waiting to receive a decision for this specific program. Otherwise, she will be a part of the traditional 4-Year MD degree.

In five years, Allycia hopes she will have graduated and be in her residency phase in pediatric medicine. As for her personal life, she desires to be "healthy and happy doing the things that I want to do."

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Admission to medical school is certainly one of her happiest moments, but Allycia goes on to say, "I am most proud of how much I have grown through my time at UTC both personally and as a leader. I never imagined how important a role I would come to play within my department, becoming a mentor for those around me. It's been a tough year all around, so perhaps just making it to the finish line is the greatest accomplishment of all."

Honors College Graduates

Ximena Leon, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Minor: Chemistry, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Increasing Stress Tolerance in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* using Lipocalin Genes

Director: Jose Barbosa, Ph.D., Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Starting graduate studies in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program (IGP) in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences at Vanderbilt University in Fall 2021. In graduate school and beyond, Ximena hopes to enjoy her time in Nashville and with her family! She'll also be adopting a new puppy to keep her "sane" during grad school. Continuing what she started in college, she looks forward to doing scientific outreach and community service activities. She says, "I hope that I get to do some research mentoring with summer internship programs at Vandy. That is by far my favorite thing to do! I also hope I [find] clarity with what field of biomedical research I want to pursue. I just can't wait for new experiences and opportunities that will come in the next few years!"

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Persevering through an extremely stressful year!

Rebecca Messer, B.S. Early Childhood Education: Child and Family Studies, Innovation Scholar,
Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Shining a Light in the Darkness: The Developmental Impacts of Internment in U.S. Immigration Detention Centers on Detained Latinx Children

Director: Rita Groh, Ph.D., Lecturer in Political Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Either beginning a graduate program or taking a gap year to work full-time with a nonprofit focused on disaster relief or child crisis assistance. Rebecca recently applied to the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) Master's Program, an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action. Rebecca says, "In the next five years, I would like to be employed full-time with a nonprofit that focuses on assisting children experiencing crises. Specifically, I am hoping to work with an organization that assists children previously or currently detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)."

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Completing her thesis during her junior and senior years.

Honors College Graduates

Jesse Moore, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Minor: Chemistry, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Mentally Restorative Areas for Students: Impacts of Nature on Psychophysiological State

Director: Jodi Caskey, Ph.D., Lecturer in Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Working as a phlebotomist to gain patient care hours, after which she will attend a graduate program for physician assistant studies. Jesse has applied to Trevecca, South College, and UT Health Science Center for 2022 admission. Looking forward, Jesse hopes to live in middle Tennessee to be close to her family while working in medical research. In her free time, she'll spend it at the lake or traveling to new places with family and friends.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Jesse says that her greatest accomplishment was "taking advantage of all the wonderful opportunities that the Honors College has offered me. From paid research fellowships, international travel, competitive research presentations, community engagement projects, to relationships with friends and academic mentors, the experience I have had here has been priceless."

Sophia Neglia, B.S. Chemistry, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Synthesis, characterization, and reactivity of organometallic complexes for catalytic carbon-hydrogen bond activation

Director: John Lee, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending The University of Delaware for a Ph.D. in Biochemistry. After graduate studies, Sophia hopes to be "communicating and/or teaching science in a non-stressful environment."

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Juggling her major, the Honors College, undergraduate research, thesis work, all while participating in a sport (cross country) that competes throughout the school year (fall/winter/spring).

Gavin Page, B.S. Environmental Science: Biodiversity, Conservation & Natural Resources, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Troglifauna of Van Buren and White County: A Survey of Four Caves in the Mideastern Cumberland Plateau

Director: Stylianos Chatzimanolis, Ph.D., Guerry Professor of Biology
Immediate & Future Plans: Gavin was recently accepted to the Masters of the Environment (MENV) program at the University of Colorado Boulder. He also looks forward to engaging in teaching opportunities or serving in the Peace Corps.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Completing his departmental honors thesis.

Honors College Graduates

Alexandra Paladian, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Minor: Chemistry, Innovation Scholar,
Honors College Scholar

Thesis: The Effect of the Apolipoprotein A1 (APOA1): The Stability and Folding in Potassium Chloride Environment

Director: Luis Sanchez-Diaz, Ph.D., Lecturer in Physics

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending St. George's University School of Medicine in Fall 2021. Alexandra will be starting a 4-year M.D. program, with the first two years in Grenada in the West Indies and the following two years in clinical rotations in the U.S. After clinical rotations, she hopes to be matched with a dermatology residency program. She hopes to one day open her own dermatology practice and travel between her studies and residency.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Being part of the Honors College, expanding her horizons, and challenging herself academically. She says, "As a part of Innovations in Honors, I am grateful [to have taken] the Innovation Lab class and given back to the community of Chattanooga, specifically to the Chattanooga Rescue Mission by providing their residents experiencing homelessness proper dishware in their kitchen and dining hall."

Jay Patel, B.S. Computer Science: Software Systems, Minor: Business Administration, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Applying deep learning for cell detection in time-lapse microscopic images

Director: Hong Qin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Computer Science and Engineering and Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Securing full-time employment, and later, getting a master's degree.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Finishing his bachelor's degree and completing internships.

Akbar Rahmani, B.S. Political Science & Public Service: International Relations and Comparative Studies,
Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Chinese Governmental Repression: The Cases of Tiananmen Square and Umbrella Movement

Director: Irina Khmelko, Ph.D., UC Foundation Professor of Political Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Pursue a graduate degree and/or apply for jobs in Nashville, TN or Washington, D.C. Akbar was recently accepted to University of Indiana Bloomington's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs and UTC's Master's of Public Administration Program. He plans to attend IU Bloomington, where he will get his degree in either international affairs or public affairs. Within the next five years, he plans to be living in the Washington D.C. area working on international policy or international affairs. His dream careers include working in a global office for Save the Children, within the State Department, or in an embassy around the world.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Receiving three scholarships to help pay for school, which in turn allowed him to focus on internships with Save the Children Action Network and the Kim White For Mayor campaign.

Honors College Graduates

Abigail (Abi) Reese, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, B.S. Chemistry: Biochemistry, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Breast Cancer Treatment Causing Cardiovascular Complications: How Can We Prevent It?

Director: Laurel Rhyne, M.S.N., APRN, ACNP-BC, M.Ed., Lecturer in Nursing

Immediate & Future Plans: Abi has applied to several medical schools hoping for admission in the fall. After finding a specialty she loves during medical school, Abi will practice medicine in an underserved community.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Completing a thesis after two years of research, unforeseen challenges, and many redirections.

Claire Reticker, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Vegetarianism Amongst UTC Students

Director: Sarah Farnsley, M.S. Lecturer in Biology

David Shepherd, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Chromosome Mutation as a Mechanism of Speciation

Director: Fernando Alda, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Awaiting acceptance to medical school.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Establishing relationships within the Honors College. David states that as a transfer student arriving on campus shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, he appreciated “the efforts that the Honors College put into helping students transition into their professional lives.”

Caelan Shurina, B.I.S. Integrated Studies, William E. Brock, Jr., Honors College Scholar

**December 2020 graduate*

Thesis: Starting a Residential Real Estate Business

Director: Stuart Benkert, Ph.D., Department Head of Performing Arts and Professor of Music

Immediate & Future Plans: After graduating in December 2020, Caelan is devoting herself fully as the wife of the love of her life, mother of an adorable toddler, and mother of a little baby to be born in early May! Caelan juggles family life and property management for her and her husband’s rental property business. In the next few years, she hopes to grow her family, buy another property, and take a family trip to Japan.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Her whirlwind wedding planning and honeymoon. In a few months time, Caelan and her now husband moved up their planned wedding date, she changed majors, received a refund for a study abroad trip, and used the money for the honeymoon. She says, “It was an awesome way to start our married life in college.”

Honors College Graduates

David Smith, B.S. Biology: Preprofessional, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Fatty acid-mediated effects on membrane remodeling, virulence phenotypes, and antimicrobial resistance in *Vibrio alginolyticus* and *Vibrio fischeri*

Director: David Giles, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology

Immediate & Future Plans: Conducting biological research in Spain this summer under the 2021 URace Cadiz, Spain cohort. David has been accepted to North Carolina State University for a master's in biochemistry complete with a lab research assistantship. After his master's work, David plans to attend medical school.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: David is thankful for his undergraduate experience. He says, "I was able to travel, do rewarding research, and become a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. All of these [experiences] have given me countless memories and the opportunity to work with great people."

Brooke Sobo, B.S. Political Science & Public Service: Legal Studies, Minor: History, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Presidents and Populist Politics

Director: Jeremy Strickler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Taking a gap year to save money and study for the LSAT. Brooke is looking forward to law school admission for 2022 and then getting started in her career.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Attendance at the CSPP (Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress) conference in Washington D.C. for the 2019-2020 academic year. Here, Brooke presented original research on the presidency, had her work published in their review, and spent a weekend in D.C. with other national and international students studying aspects of government, policy, and law.

Elise Steele, B.A. English: Creative Writing, Minor: Communication, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Preaching to the birds: a poetic exploration of nature and human experience

Director: Kris Whorton, M.F.A., Senior Lecturer in English

Immediate & Future Plans: Taking a break from the school routine! For now, Elise will be staying in Chattanooga and will eventually continue her studies in writing and literature. She says she hopes to be "confident in whatever path I find myself on, and more importantly, I hope that I'm surrounded with people I love."

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Achieving her first national poetry publication through Cornell University.

Honors College Graduates

Sarah Still, B.S. Criminal Justice, Innovation Scholar

Thesis: Race, Sex, Exoneration, & Compensation: How Do They Relate? What is Done? & What Needs to be Done?

Director: Courtney Crittenden, Ph.D., UC Foundation Associate Professor of Criminal Justice

Immediate & Future Plans: Working on law school applications currently, and looking to a future committed to “positively impacting others’ lives” through law and beyond.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Learning more about herself through her college academics and experiences.

Jonah Stokes, B.A. English: Creative Writing, B.A. History, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: American Sissy: Original Poetry

Director: Richard Jackson, Ph.D., UT National Alumni Association Distinguished Service Professor & Ellis K. Meacham Annual Writing Workshop and Creative Writing Professor English

Immediate & Future Plans: Jonah was recently accepted to and offered a teaching assistantship for the MFA Creative Writing program at West Virginia University. Jonah says, “My biggest hope for my post-graduation plans is to continue spreading positivity and warmth, aspects that the Honors College has truly celebrated in my time at UTC. I hope to be working as a lecturer or teacher to evoke creativity in others.”

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Multiple publications in the Sequoyah Review. These validated Jonah’s major and love for writing.

Stephanie Swart, B.F.A. Art: Photography and Media, Minors: Communication, Art History, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Amateur Photography: Finding New Perspectives and Seeking Authenticity

Director: Phillip Lewis, M.F.A., UC Foundation Associate Professor, Photography & Media Art

Immediate & Future Plans: Moving back to Franklin, TN and beginning a career that involves photography “in some form or fashion.” Stephanie hopes to work for a print publication in the future.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Serving as Managing Editor for UReCA (the NCHC Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creativity Activity) and Photo Editor for the University Echo.

Honors College Graduates

Corinne (Cori) Tinkham, B.A. Sociology and Anthropology: Anthropology, Minor: International Studies, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Albinism in Sub-Saharan Africa: Examining Identity Formation and Degradation

Director: Zibin Guo, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology

Immediate & Future Plans: Working as an archaeological crew member with the Southeast Conservation Corps this summer! The position is through the Americorps program and Cori will be working on St. Simons Island and Cumberland Island off the coast of Georgia. After the Americorps position is over, Cori will study and prepare for the GRE and the LSAT. She is still deciding between law school, studying public interest law, or pursuing a higher degree in anthropology and specializing in the anthropology of food, nutrition, and subsistence patterns. As she says, “maybe both!”

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: “Continuously pursuing the betterment of myself throughout an extremely difficult four years. My younger brother was the biggest supporter of my dreams to study anthropology, and he would be proud to see me standing here today despite all of the challenges I’ve faced.”

Mackenzie Nicole Wall, B.S. Chemistry: Biochemistry, Minor: Biology, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Understanding Shear Thinning Using Brownian Dynamics Simulation

Director: Luis Sanchez-Diaz, Ph.D., Lecturer in Physics

Immediate & Future Plans: Attending either medical school or graduate school. She has applied to the Quillen College of Medicine, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine, and to the Morehouse Master of Science in Medical Sciences Program. Her plan is to be on her way toward becoming a primary care physician, obstetrician-gynecologist, or orthopedic surgeon. Along with the start of a medical career, she also hopes to see more of the world, especially more of Asia and her mother’s birthplace - the Philippines - where she hopes to visit with her grandmother and extended family.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: As a first generation student, the achievement of attending and graduating college is already such a monumental occasion in her and her family’s lives. But to narrow it down, out of the many wonderful experiences at UTC, her greatest accomplishment was completing research with Dr. Sanchez-Diaz and Dr. Jared Pienkos. Both projects were new and challenging, unlike any other experience she had had thus far in college. She says, “they challenged me as a scientist and as a scholar. I was able to learn so many new skills and in Dr. Pienkos’s project I was even able to synthesize a crystal structure of bitopic tris(pyrazolyl)methane molecules that had not been previously created anywhere else in the world!”

Honors College Graduates

Daylia Wallace, B.S. Health & Human Performance: Exercise Science, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Retrospective Analysis of Injuries and Persisting Injury Effects Among Students Who Have Participated in Club Sports and Intramural Activities During the Prior Year

Director: Marisa Colston, Ph.D., Department Head and Professor of Health and Human Performance

Immediate & Future Plans: To take a gap year to travel and relax before jumping into a career and/or graduate school. This year will also allow her to explore more opportunities. Currently, she is considering either an accelerated-BSN program followed by an MSN program to become a Nurse Practitioner, or to get a Masters in Athletic Training, potentially followed by a PhD.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: “There were points where I didn’t think I could pull it off, but I did it! I’m a first generation college graduate, and I did it in four years, with honors, a 4.0, and in my opinion, outstanding thesis work. I’d say that’s a pretty big accomplishment!”

Jessica Wicker, B.S. Political Science & Public Service: International Relations and Comparative Studies, B.S. Environmental Science: Environmental Policy and Planning, Innovation Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Displacement and Gentrification in Chattanooga from Revitalization and Renewal

Director: Marcus Mauldin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science

Immediate & Future Plans: Serving in Americorps VISTA for a year working in the US Forestry Service, helping to build volunteer capacity and partnerships for the Cherokee National Forest in Cleveland.

After her Americorps term, Jessica plans to attend graduate school and continue working for the U.S. Forest Service or in the National Parks Service.

Greatest Accomplishment at UTC: Studying abroad for a semester in Croatia.

Brianna Williams, B.A. English: Rhetoric & Professional Writing, Minor: Communication, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar, Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Weird and Cosmic Short Horror Fiction and the Illustration of Existential Fears

Director: Michael Jaynes, Ed.D., Senior Lecturer in English

Immediate & Future Plans: Continue her internship at local newsletter NOOGAtoday, along with a smaller internship within the same company’s branded content studio. In the next few years, Brianna hopes to be a full-time editor at the same media newsletter company.

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: (Almost) making it through a pandemic! She’s also really proud of the work she’s done through her internship, and she says, “I’m proud of everything I accomplished that I was once very afraid of.”

Honors College Graduates

Lauren Williamson, B.F.A. Art: Graphic Design, Minor: Spanish, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar,
Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Thesis: An Exploration into Constructed Space

Director: Matt Greenwell, M.F.A., UC Foundation Professor of Graphic Design

Immediate & Future Plans: Getting a job at a marketing firm where she can gain experience in various design methods and be exposed to a range of different design problems. In the next few years, after some field experience and further defining her practice, she hopes to attend a graduate program for Latin American studies or graphic design. She says, “I am open to many different career paths, but some of the main ones I am considering are design researcher, creative/art director, or art history/design professor.”

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: Studying abroad in Peru. “It’s amazing how being immersed in a different culture can change your outlook on yourself and the world around you.”

Emily Wilson, B.S. Business Marketing, Minor: Communication, William E. Brock, Jr. Scholar,
Honors College Scholar

Thesis: Analyzing the Social Aspect of E-Cigarette Prevention Campaigns with College-Aged Consumers

Director: Chia-Wei (Joy) Lin, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Marketing

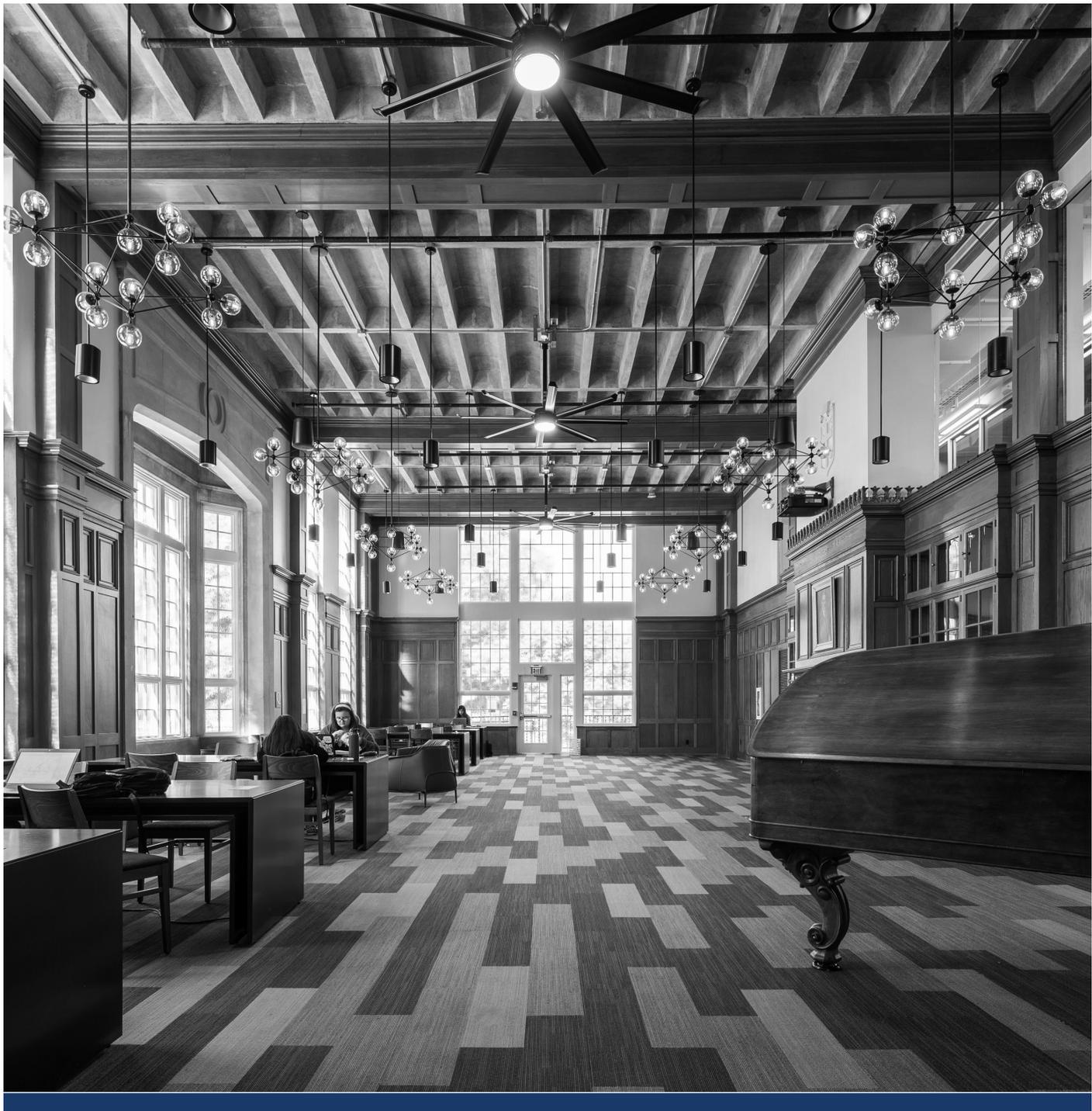
Immediate & Future Plans: Graduate school to pursue a master’s degree in marketing. Emily has been accepted to the University of Cincinnati and the University of Alabama, both of which are ranked in the top 20 in the U.S. for their programs. She hopes to fine-tune her skills in marketing by working at an agency, and later, teach as an adjunct professor, concurrent with her career. As she says, “I want to give back to students by teaching a subject that I am so passionate about, because those are the BEST professors I’ve had here. I would also love to become so specialized in my field of study that I am a professional speaker for events!”

Greatest Accomplishment(s) at UTC: In addition to her time on the homecoming court, Emily cites that completing her departmental honors thesis was most meaningful to her. As she stated, “Nine long months of diligent work paid off, and I am so incredibly proud of the discoveries we made about the preventative advertisements in the e-cigarette industry.”

May & August Graduates

Jhédienne Adams	Ximena Leon
Elizabeth Allen	Rebecca Messer
Linnea Anderson	Jesse Moore*
Evann Bailey	Sophia Neglia
Raiza Barahona Hernandez+	Gavin Page
Catherine (Gracie) Bell	Alexandra Paladian
Celeste Benjamin*	Jay Patel
Ellie Tripp Bixler	Akbar Rahmani
Carmen Black	Abigail (Abi) Reese
Briana Brady	Claire Reticker*
Samantha Burger	David Shepherd
Francesca (Frankie) Cable	Caelan Shurina+
Chase Carroll	David Smith
Christopher Clark	Brooke Sobo
Quin Crumb	Elise Steele
Greyson Dukes	Sarah Still
Laurel Getty*	Jonah Stokes
Lauren Gilmore	Stephanie Swart
Emily Halvorson	Corinne (Cori) Tinkham
Olivia (Spaghetti) Haslett	Mackenzie Nicole Wall
Tom Herschberg	Daylia Wallace
Briley Holbrook	Jessica Wicker
Hannah Holmberg	Brianna Williams
Lilith Ann Jackson	Lauren Williamson
Seth LaRue*	Emily Wilson
Allycia Lee	

**August 2021 graduate*
+December 2020 graduate



Honors College Advisory Committee

Bo Baker
Stuart Benkert
Sydney Ellis
Eyam (Delali) Gapzekpo
David Giles
Kelli Hand
Lauren Ingraham
Mark Kilgore
David Levine
Bento Lobo
Abeer Mustafa
Oluwadamilola (Lola) Oke
Ollyvir Reagan
Annie Tracy Samuel
Cathy Scott
Koy Skinner
Darrell Walsh
Cecilia Wigal
Anne Wilkins



Honors College Advisory Board

Maxfield Bahner

Carmen Carson

Kelly Jo Fulkerson Dikuua

Valisa Griffin

Tom Griscom

Sarah Kennedy

Grant Law

Fred Obear

Meshia Seay

Elaine Swafford (Chair)

Andy Walker

Todd Womack



The Honors College Staff

Linda Frost, Ph.D., Dean

Gregory O'Dea, Ph.D., Associate Dean

Sherese Williams, M.A., Assistant Director

Owen Foster, M.I.D., Director, Innovations in Honors

Jayda Coons, Ph.D., Lecturer

Leslie Pusey, M.Ed., Director, Office of National Scholarships

Rebekah Caldwell, A.A., Administrative Specialist

Delali Gadzekpo, Student Assistant Director

Molly Martin, Student Assistant Director



Congratulations, Honors Graduates!

Thank you for your support of the Honors College!

If you haven't already, please follow our social media
and keep in touch!



www.facebook.com/utchonors



www.instagram.com/utchonors



www.twitter.com/utchonors



