



COLLEGIUM

THE HONORS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Dr. Scott Huelin



These last few months have been among the most challenging I have experienced in my professional career. I'd even call this strange time "apocalyptic," but not in the common sense of the term. We tend to think of "apocalypse" in

connection with world-ending disasters, but in Greek, literally means "an unveiling or uncovering, a revelation." What, then, has this strange time revealed to us? The collision of a public health catastrophe, a profound economic collapse, and widespread social unrest has left me, and I suspect all of us, newly aware of the fragility of the good things in our lives, things we so often take for granted.

During the weeks of spring semester that the Honors Community was in diaspora, many students reported to me that their departure from campus had given them new appreciation for the common goods of college life: challenging seminar discussions, Modero coffee, a brick-and-mortar library with cloth-and-paper books, midnight milkshake runs, and office hours, to name but a few. And the seniors among us have missed out on many of the typical rites of passage for college graduates. While it might seem petty to complain about the loss of these things, I think it is not only acceptable but appropriate to lament the loss of these goods. Each of them is a gift from God that witnesses to his goodness, and, together with many other good things, they comprise the Union experience. And in being so suddenly wrenched away from them, we suddenly become aware of how fragile and fleeting these good things are.

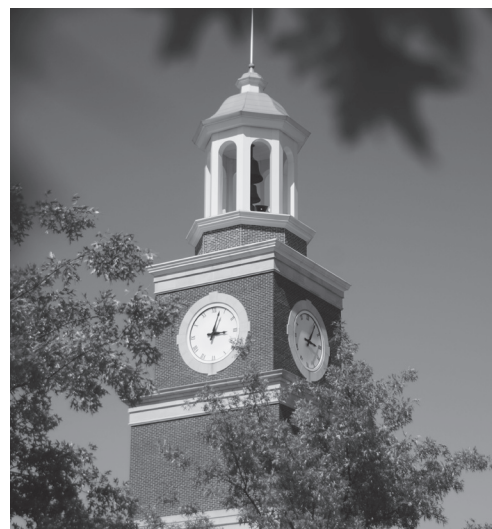
You alumni have, no doubt, experienced similar losses. You may have lost a job, thus robbing you of both income and experience. If you are among the working-from-home, you may be feeling the effects of extended social isolation. Some of you have had weddings postponed or much reduced in scope and in celebration. Others of you have had mission trips and vacations canceled. These, too, are worthy of lament. God knows what you have lost, and he knows that you are grieving that loss, so why not be honest with him and yourself and take your griefs to him?

While all of us have lost something in recent months, some students have reported to me discovering (or rediscovering) other good things in this time of exile: baking, gardening, family meals, daily walks, and personal discipline, among others. How delightful to find beauty coming from ashes, joy from mourning, and praise from heaviness! But these goods, too, are fragile. We have no guarantees what tomorrow will bring, and so we must learn to receive all good things with the open-handed receptivity urged on us by the Preacher of Ecclesiastes: gratefully receiving God's good gifts without grasping them idolatrously. And the best way I know to learn to do so is to lament.

Lament is that spiritual exercise in which we place our very real griefs, and those of our neighbor, before God and cry out for his help. It is what the Hebrews do in Babylonian exile as they sit by the banks of a foreign river and remember their lost home (Ps 137). It's what Jesus does when considering Israel's hard heart (Mt 23) and when anticipating his suffering on the cross (Mt 26). And it is what his followers are called to do, not just for ourselves, but also for others: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6.2). But how do we, newly reminded of our vulnerability, learn to lament? The Psalms

provide us with a school for lament: Over a third of the 150 Psalms are classified as laments. Praying these psalms, letting these words form your feelings, will teach you how to respond faithfully to the fragility of earthly goodness.

In this time of pandemic, recession, and injustice, we need to learn once again to lament. We should lament for lives and livelihoods lost. We should lament for those victimized by police brutality and by economic inequality. And we should especially lament with and for our fellow citizens who have been disproportionately affected by all three disasters, namely African-Americans. If your life and the lives of those you love have escaped unscathed from this apocalyptic moment, give thanks and "rejoice with those who rejoice," but do not neglect to "weep with those who weep" (Rom 12.5). And if your life and the lives of your loved ones have been shattered, find those who will help you bear those burdens. May all of us rise up to bear the burdens of our neighbors by weeping with them and working for healthier communities.



HONORS *at* UNION

EXCELLENCE-DRIVEN CHRIST-CENTERED PEOPLE-FOCUSED FUTURE-DIRECTED

LIFE AFTER COLLEGE: THE GROWING SEASON

Joshua Smith ('11) is a sixth-generation farmer who graduated from Union University with a degree in Conservation Biology and an Honors minor. He earned an M.S. in Natural Resources with emphasis in soil ecology. He then practiced Urban Agriculture for several years in Kansas City before returning to his roots in West Tennessee and joining his family's many agricultural enterprises, including cattle, flowers, organic vegetables, and agricultural equipment sales.



Life after college is an exciting adventure! No matter who or where you are, we are surrounded by so many fascinating things that surface our fears, reveal our insecurities, overwhelm us with compassion, and engulf us in exhilaration. Our Creator has made us creatures of thought and experience, and the two must go hand in hand for our lives to be full.

I spend my days on my family's 70-year-old small farm growing vegetables, raising cows, and repairing and selling agricultural equipment. My life is full and continues to expand with new friends, flowers, and most recently three hives of honeybees. But I didn't always cherish the fertile soil, new-born calves, and good neighbors. In fact, after college I struggled like most of us do with questions of identity and purpose. I would like to share some of the good seeds that were sown into my life then that are now bearing beautiful fruit.

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR ANXIETY ABOUT THE FUTURE.

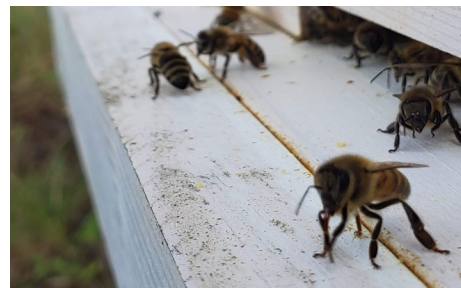
I will never forget how in my early 20s my parents encouraged me to acknowledge my anxiety about the future. Both my parents were no strangers to the unknowns of life. Both are from agricultural families and have learned to endure with joy everything from unpredictable weather to falling grain prices. I learned from them to reduce anxiety by forming a plan in the present and focusing on what specific step you can do today to realize your plan. Still, after many growing seasons, every time I become anxious about farm life, I make a list acknowledging my unmet goals and unfinished tasks. It then becomes clear what is most important to complete today in order to move forward.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF. YOU'RE STILL IN THE GROWING SEASON.

In gardening, vegetables and flowers are referred to as either annuals or perennials. Annuals, like lettuce, grow for one year and must be replanted the next. Perennials, like fruit trees, however, continue to grow back each year becoming more vivacious as the seasons pass. In my experience, people are more like perennials than annuals. It often takes years before a good apple or peach tree will bear a decent yield of delicious fruit.

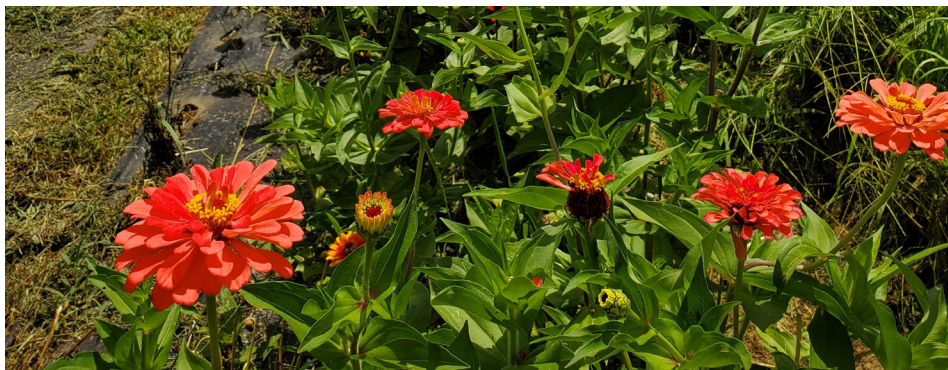
The same is true with us humans. We need seasons of growth and experience before we begin to bear fruit or actualize many of our dreams. So be patient with yourself. You are still in the growing season. Take every opportunity to learn something new, not just with your mind but with your body also. Travel to new places. Work with your hands. Try new foods. Meet new people. Learn to

refine your passion but recognize it's okay to work a job that is not perfect in order to enable your dreams and still provide for yourself and other dependents. Do not make excuses. Accept responsibility for your actions, good and bad. When you make mistakes, own them and learn from them. They will be some of your greatest teachers.



CONNECT OR STAY CONNECTED TO A CROSS-GENERATIONAL COMMUNITY GROUP

Like in agriculture, the unpredictable future and growing season should never be faced alone. Humans are community creatures. We need interaction with every generation in order to live full lives. Exposure to others of diverse ages and cultures provides a healthy perspective of ourselves in relation to others. Youthful passion—when tempered by aged wisdom—can be life-changing. Rubbing shoulders with experienced, hard-working men and women teaches you to not make assumptions about other people. It is from our elders we learn how to be kind and generous to others. Jesus wasn't stingy with you. Give freely and abundantly! Remember as you grow, keep your hand to the plow and heart open towards Heaven and others, and may our good God provide for you a bountiful harvest.



THE BOOKSHELF

What are Honors faculty and staff reading this summer?

Dr. Justin Barnard

Matthew Crawford, *Why We Drive*
Graham Green, *The Power and the Glory*
Alan Jacobs, *In the Year of Our Lord 1943*
Gilbert Meilaender, *Thy Will Be Done*

Rebecca Edgren

A. R. Ammons, *Brink Road*
Austin Channing Brown, *I'm Still Here*
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*
Tracy K. Smith, *Wade in the Water*

Dr. Scott Huelin

W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
Zena Hitz, *Lost in Thought*
Adam Neder, *Theology as a Way of Life*
James K. A. Smith, *On the Road with St Augustine*

Prof. Joy Moore

Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Beauty in the Light of the Redemption*
Zena Hitz, *Lost in Thought*
Debby Irving, *Waking Up White*
Alan Jacobs, *How to Think*
C.M. Millward, *A Biography of the English Language*
Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*

Dr. David Thomas

The *Philokalia*
C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*
John Warner, *Why They Can't Write*
N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology*
The Indispensable Calvin and Hobbes

What are you reading? Email honors@uu.edu to let us know for a special Winter Books edition of the newsletter.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

David Banister ('20): pursuing a Master of Divinity at Fuller Theological Seminary. Pasadena, CA.

Victoria Brooks ('14): Receptionist at the CW Television Network, pursuing television writing. Los Angeles, CA.

Josie Carrier ('20): pursuing a PhD in Sociology at Pennsylvania State University. College Station, PA.

Wesley Chatham ('18): pursuing an MDiv at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jackson, TN.

Kalee Hall ('15): pursuing a PhD in English at Brandeis University. Boston, MA.

Sarah (Bequette) Hartsfield ('16): Marketing Communications Manager for Tag Coffee Roasters. San Antonio, TX.

Heather (Vidal) Hetrick ('16): Laboratory Specialist for the Department of Biology, UU - Germantown. She and JonMark ('16) had their second child in April. Memphis, TN.

Jordan Hussey ('19): ELL teacher at Metro Nashville Public Schools. Nashville, TN.

Emily Johnson ('18): Copywriter for Precept Ministries. Chattanooga, TN.

Sam Jones ('17): pursuing an MFA in Film and Creative Media at Lipscomb. Nashville, TN.

Emily (Georgoulis) Kresnicka ('15): User Experience Design Expert. Peoria, IL.

Phillip Kurtzweil ('15): studying at University of Kansas School of Medicine. Kansas City, KS.

Dillon Lisk ('16): pursuing a PhD in Mathematics at the University of Missouri. Columbia, MO.

Hannah (Carroll) Mathis ('19): on staff for InnerFire Ministries & pursuing music. Nashville, TN.

Spencer McCloy ('20): pursuing a PhD in Economics at Florida State University. Tallahassee, FL.

Matthew Owen ('19): Design Engineer at Young Touchstone. Jackson, TN.

Briley Ray ('19): pursuing an MDiv at Beeson Divinity School. Birmingham, AL.

Rachel Sette ('17): just completed OTD in Occupational Therapy at The Ohio State University. Mason, OH.

Timothy Simpson ('16): Lead Editor and Photographer for 901Music. Greenville, SC.

Jacob Lloyd Smith ('16): pastor of Union Baptist Church. Sulphur Springs, TX.

Luke Sower ('20): starting law school at Arizona State University. Phoenix, AZ.

Brandon Swing ('14): pursuing a PhD in Musicology at University of Colorado, Boulder.

Zach Tyler ('20): private school dorm parent. Lake Tahoe, CA.

Trey Weise ('14): English teacher at Melrose High School. He and Megan ('15) have recently become foster parents. Memphis, TN.

Abigail Wills ('17): starting a PhD in English at Baylor University in the fall. Waco, TX.

MaryAnn (McClendon) Wylie ('15): she and Zach ('17) are new parents to a baby boy. Jackson, TN.

Want to update us on what you're doing? Email us at honors@uu.edu with your most recent news and contact info.

STUDENT REFLECTION: DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC HONORS

Joanna Cumbie ('19) was the first graduate to earn Discipline-specific Honors in Special Education. Now a participant in the Memphis Teacher Residency, she agreed to share with us a reflection on her DSH experience and how that work might influence her professional life going forward.

For Discipline-specific Honors I created a research-based handbook for a campus organization. The handbook was created as a resource for training mentors, as a tool for mentors to learn more about supporting young adults with intellectual disabilities at college. This was the first project of its type, and the freedom to create a project that had not been done before both drew me to DSH and gave my research a greater purpose. Although completing the project came with challenges, I have expanded my ability to internalize research articles so that they can be implemented in a handbook or in my future classroom.

When I decided to complete the DSH program for special education, I quickly learned that I was to be a mixture of a trailblazer and a guinea pig. No one from the Education department at large, let alone the small Special Education department, had ever completed DSH. Trying to conceptualize what my end goal would be for several years' worth of work was both overwhelming and a bit discouraging at first. When looking through past projects, I saw some interesting topics discussed, for the most part, in a thesis-type paper.

At this point, I was a very involved EDGE mentor and wanted to know more about

how to support my mentee and other EDGE students. The EDGE program allows students with intellectual disabilities to take Union courses along with life skills courses to help better prepare them for a successful future. Traditional undergraduate students volunteer to mentor and befriend EDGE students. Knowing that I desired more information on how to mentor young adults with intellectual disabilities, I figured that other mentors, who might not have an education background, would also benefit from such materials. The idea of researching higher education for students with intellectual disabilities was proposed, with the hope that I could create a handbook for future EDGE mentors. Although no previous project had taken the form I was suggesting, I received the green light and was able to begin my path for research.

However, one difficulty soon arose in the process of aligning my research with the classes that I was contracting. I was studying higher education, whereas my degree was only concerned with K-12. Since I was doing thesis-specific research I was to be exempt from other assignments to help with the workload. In the first several courses that I contracted, I was concerned that my content knowledge would suffer from not completing some of the assigned activities. Because of this fear, I ended up completing all the course work, along with my extra research and writing assignments for DSH. But the final course that I contracted fell during my senior year when I was also student teaching. It was the only course where I did not complete the assignments that I was exempt from, due to a sheer lack of time and energy.

Although working on DSH while student teaching and taking education courses was difficult, and although I did not immediately see the connection between my DSH project and my course work, much of what I have learned about higher education will impact my teaching practices and philosophies in K-12 schools. For one thing, I think that it has uniquely prepared me to continue research while I am teaching. There has been a large push to ensure that educational practices are research-based, but to ensure that you are providing your students with the most recent and appropriate teaching you must be well versed in current scholarship. Throughout my research, I learned how to read lengthy, intimidating articles and take the applicable information that I needed. Since my end goal was to create a handbook that would be accessible to all mentors, I had the unique opportunity of focusing on the direct application of what the research said. The more I studied the topic of higher education for students with intellectual disabilities, the more I grew to love it. A lot of research stressed the need for students to begin preparing for higher education earlier in life, giving me the desire to help educate students and families about their future choices. I now plan to be an advocate for students and families by introducing them to their options early on and providing resources that will help them consider the many possibilities the student has and ways that they can begin to prepare for their successful future.

SNAPSHOT: HONORS BANQUET 2019

As some of you know, last summer marked the ten-year anniversary of Dr. Scott Huelin's appointment as Director for the Honors Community. Many alumni joined us that May as we turned our end-of-the-year banquet into a surprise party for the Huelins (back in the old days when people still threw banquets).

This sketch of the evening was originally written for publication in early 2020. In light of this spring's events, it now carries a different weight—perhaps bittersweet, but also more deeply hopeful. May of 2020 saw us gathering for our annual banquet via Zoom, not in person, and yet as our work goes forward daily, we're reminded that conversation (in the full, complex sense of that word), delight, and gratitude are still at the heart of what we do.

The party began as usual, except that the crowd of guests milling around the Grant Center swelled much larger than its normal

size, and talk was livelier than usual with the excitement of welcoming far-flung friends into the room. Huelin had been told that, *Well, gee, lots of faculty and alumni were RSVPing this year*, but as far as he knew, it was a typical banquet. Dinner commenced happily, punctuated by a farcical faculty skit (picture Dr. Fonsie Guilaran in a wig a tank as Richard Simmons) and the recognition of 2019 graduates.

Only when the last graduate had taken a seat and Huelin prepared to mount the stage for his Director's Address, Prof. Joy Moore instead invited him to keep his seat: there would be a surprise second half to the evening.

The ensuing surprise party-within-a-party featured words of thanks from current students, alumni, and colleagues. Rob Griffith and Trey Weise pulled out guitars hidden in the next room and performed a musical tribute; Shea McCollough spoke for the class of 2019;

and Rebecca Edgren for the alumni in general. Dr. Justin Barnard gave a roast and toast (featuring a game of Huelin Buzzword Bingo with peacock-themed prizes), culminating with the presentation of gifts to the Huelin family.

This winter, a 15-foot Cherrybark Oak sapling was planted on campus in honor of Huelin's long and ongoing work of hospitality, following in the footsteps of Abraham, who welcomed unexpected guests by the oaks of Mamre (Gen 18).

The program concluded with singing the Doxology and a long, lively reception over coffee & cake while guests visited with the Huelins.

Special thanks to all of you who travelled to join us, or wrote notes, poems, and tomes to Dr. Huelin for the occasion. It was a night of rich gratitude, made richer by your help and presence.

HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 2019

Dr. Jeremy Begbie delivered the 21st annual Scholar-in-Residence lectures on "Hearing Afresh: The Christian Resonances of Music." Dr. Begbie is a professor at Duke Divinity School, where he founded the Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts, and a Senior Member at Wolfson College, Cambridge, and an Affiliated Lecturer in the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge. His lectures and presence on Union's campus were moving, thoughtful, and lively—a true highlight of the year.

APRIL 2019

Senior Jon Hall was awarded a Lilly Graduate Fellowship to pursue a PhD in French & Francophone Literature at the University of Indiana. His wife and fellow Honors alumna Melissa Lieffers joined him to pursue a PhD in medieval Spanish literature.

The Justice class travelled to Memphis for a day at the Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel.

MAY 2019

Dr. Jason Crawford, who teaches for the English Dept. and the Beauty course, was named Union's Faculty of the Year.

SUMMER 2019

DSH students John David Logan and Spencer McCloy were named 2019-2020 Values & Capitalism Young Scholars by AEI's Values and Capitalism initiative. They received scholarships and pursued original research projects under faculty guidance for the year. They ultimately presented and defended their research before a panel of experts in Washington, DC.

AUGUST 2019

The 10th cohort of General Honors matriculated, with 43 students from 14 states (and some extra countries thrown in).

OCTOBER 2019

The Wisdom class presented at the Baylor Symposium on Faith & Culture for the 9th consecutive year. The theme was The Character of the University.

JANUARY 2020

Three DSH students in History (Luke Sower, Leah Atkins, and Katie Allison) presented their research at Phi Alpha Theta's Biennial Convention in San Antonio.

MARCH 2020

Dr. Perry Glanzer visited campus in early March to deliver the 22nd annual Scholar-in-Residence lectures: "Identity Wars: Battling for our Humanity in American Higher Education." Dr. Glanzer is Professor of Educational Foundations and a Resident Scholar with Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion. He is the author or co-author of numerous books, chapters, and articles. His lectures enriched Union's current discussion of general core revision.

Watching our students and faculty respond to COVID-19 and the sudden shift to online learning, was perhaps a hidden highlight of the spring semester. In the late days of March, surveys and correspondence with students revealed much good-hearted thoughtfulness about pursuing virtue and the good life under trying circumstances.

MAY 2020

Our strange, strange spring concluded on a surprisingly meaningful note with the annual Beauty Gallery and the annual banquet—both via Zoom.





HONORS COMMUNITY
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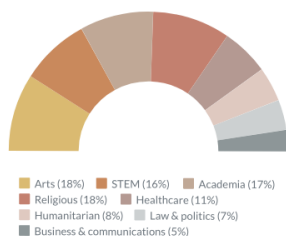
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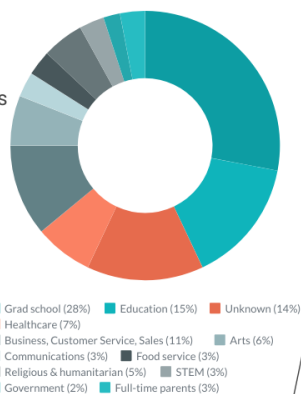
Our Digits

- 278 grads in last 9 years
- living in 6 countries, 30 states, & 1 district
- 28% are in graduate school
13% have earned graduate degrees
- 12% are parenting

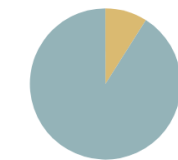
Vocational interests of roughly 50% not represented by occupation



Alumni occupations



9% of UG student body



36% of Awards Day 2020



18% of RAs

19% of LGLs



48% of Debate Team

- 183 current Honors students
- in 63 different majors
- 33 of them enrolled in 16 different Discipline-specific Honors programs
- high-count departments: Biology, Theology & Missions, Nursing