

THE HONORS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2020



The end of the semester is near! From finals, to freedom!

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My Favorite Quote

From Editor Leah Freeman:

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started." -Mark Twain

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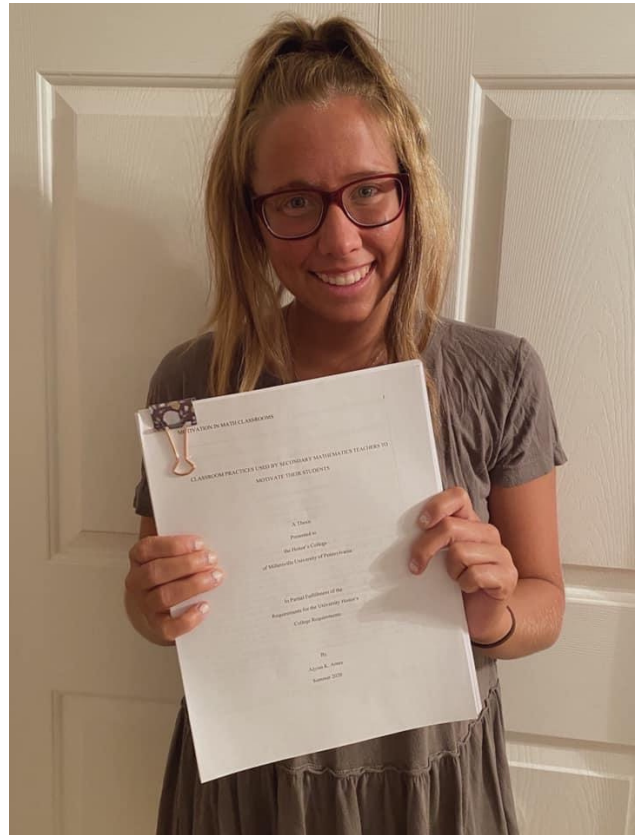
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ALYSSA AMES

By Owen Wallace

Alyssa Ames is a senior who will be graduating with a BSE in Mathematics and a minor in Psychology in May. This year, she was awarded the competitive Clarence Schock Fellowship, which is a scholarship that recognizes academic achievement, public service, commitment to environmental preservation, enhancement of community life, and understanding of Clarence Schock's respect for education and philanthropy. Alyssa was selected by a committee of MU faculty and administrators for this prestigious award.

The scholarship application involved completing a written essay addressing its stated foundations, a cover page, an introductory essay, two letters of recommendation, an unofficial transcript, and a resume. This fellowship covered the vast majority of her tuition for her senior year.

As a member of the Honors College, Ames submitted her thesis to the Franklin House in August of 2020. Her thesis is entitled "Classroom practices used by secondary mathematics teachers to motivate their students," and was completed under the advisement of Dr. Cynthia Taylor from the mathematics department. She explored the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational strategies used by teachers on their math students, focusing her interest in the actions used to promote autonomy, competence, and relatedness. During the process of completing her thesis, she had the ability to work with four high school math teachers, along with employing online surveys and semi-structured interviews in order to collect data from urban and non-urban settings.



Alyssa offers the following advice for those working toward successful completion of their own thesis:

- **Start early**...give yourself plenty of time in case you end up scratching ideas or moving plans around.
- **Find a topic that interests you!** It makes the experience more fun and valuable.
- **Find an advisor that you really connect with.** My advisor was phenomenal and really helped me make the most of the experience.

"It [a thesis] is a lot of work, but it was, by far, the most rewarding academic achievement for me here at Millersville."

– Alyssa Ames

ON THANKSGIVING BREAK: POEM

BY ELIAS PELUSO

NEARING THE END OF FALL 2020 AT MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN, WHEN AUTUMN COMES AROUND,
AND EXCITEMENT'S IN THE AIR; THIS SEMESTER'S WINDING DOWN,
THOUGH MANY OF US WERE NOT IN-PERSON FOR THIS RUN,
MILLERSVILLE'S CAMPUS CLOSES NOVEMBER 21.

BUT THIS FALL WASN'T BAD, IN FACT, QUITE THE CONTRARY.
BECAUSE WE WORKED TOGETHER, IT TURNED OUT QUITE MERRY.
ALTHOUGH WE WILL ALL BE AT HOME THIS FALL BREAK, THIS TIME,
WE'LL BE WITH FAMILY: THE BEST THANKSGIVING PASTIME.

WHEN THANKSGIVING RECESS ENDS, THAT IS OUR TELLING SIGN.
ON NOVEMBER 30TH, ALL CLASSES RESUME ONLINE.
AFTER, THERE ARE TWO WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER TO GO,
BUT OUR STUDENTS WILL ALWAYS FINISH STRONG IN THE SHOW!

AND WITH THIS CLOSING STATEMENT, LET'S COMPLETE THE YEAR RIGHT:
HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL, AND TO ALL, A GOOD NIGHT!

FAVORITE THANKSGIVING EXPERIENCES

"Carving pumpkins with my sister a couple days before Halloween and making fresh homemade biscuits a few hours before we eat on Thanksgiving," -Victoria McPeek, Freshman, Class of 2024, Meteorology Major

"I love spending Thanksgiving in Manhattan, VA, with my family to have dinner and to go to the waterpark." -Collin Hood, Freshman, Class of 2024, Math Major

"Fall is always that time for raking leaves, and it's been a tradition [in my family] to rake the biggest pile we can and then have a blast jumping in it!" - Leah Miksa, Freshman, Class of 2024, International Business Major



"One of my favorite Fall activities is to go to Pine View Dairy to spend some time with the dairy cows!" - Madison Whitcomb, Junior, Class of 2022, Mathematics and Economics Double Major

FAVORITE THANKSGIVING EXPERIENCES CONT.



"Every year, during Thanksgiving Break week, my family gets ready for Christmas! On Thanksgiving Day, after we've had our annual feast, we begin to decorate our Christmas tree. That same night, we always watch The Polar Express while drinking hot chocolate... for my family, it is the extra motivation to work hard in the final push of every Fall semester." -Elias Peluso, Sophomore, Class of 2023, Robotics Major

"For the past few years, I have had a great time going to Cherry Crest Adventure Farm with my friends... It's even a safe activity to enjoy this year, since it is all outdoors and you can safely social distance!" -Annie Tepe, Senior, Class of December 2020, Math Major

"Every year, my mom makes an amazing green bean casserole and my dad makes arroz con gandules for our Thanksgiving dinner..." -Alexis Cordova, Freshman, Class of 2024, Major in Mathematics Education (7-12)



"November is the perfect time to dress up as Jack Skellington because it's right between Halloween and Christmas!" -Elias Peluso, Sophomore, Class of 2023, Robotics Major

HONORS STUDENTS' FAVORITE MASK PHOTOS



Brooke Shimer, senior, class of 2021, psychology major



Teagan Gallagher, freshmen, class of 2024, a dual early childhood and special ed major and Shaziya Roberts, freshmen, class of 2024, early childhood education major



"Be smart, wear a mask!" - Alyssa Munro, sophomore, class of 2023, meteorology major

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW: ERIC RYNDOCK



Interview conducted by Elena Antonucci

Dr. Eric Ryndock, Honors professor for Honors Biology (BIOL 108H), the Honors College wants to thank you for all your hard work in assisting with MU's Honors College education!

What is your position(s) at Millersville University?

"Assistant Professor of Biology."

When did you begin working at Millersville University?

"Fall 2019."

Where did you get your degrees and education from? "B.S. in Biology from Millersville University; Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology from Penn State University College of Medicine; Postdoctoral Scholarship at The Wistar Institute."

When did you realize you wanted to work in the department you currently work in? "During my postdoctoral scholarship, I taught as an adjunct professor at Drexel University. I realized that I wanted a career where I could merge my passion for teaching and research... When the opportunity opened up to return to MU, I didn't hesitate to come back to my alma mater where my education all started."

What do you enjoy about being an Honors College professor? "While there are some biology majors within the Honors College, I enjoy the different experience of teaching Honors biology to a more diverse background of students."

What are your teaching methods during this Fall semester, with the changes due to COVID? "I am currently teaching using a mix of asynchronous and synchronous formats. Most of my asynchronous formats involve recorded lectures... My synchronous sessions are mainly labs, and I believe the students are enjoying the experience. Some of the synchronous activities we have performed together include case studies, take home experiments, and data analysis of mock experiments."

Is there anything else you would like to add about the topic, or say to the Honors Students? "Right now we are in the midst of a global viral pandemic. It is important to keep realistic short term and long term goals. For short term goals, remember to practice the safety guidelines outlined by public health officials and find ways to stay engaged in your learning. The one thing you cannot get back in life is time, and I want to give a thanks to all of the students who trust the professors at MU to provide you with an education, even during the most difficult of circumstances. For long term goals, remember that although this feels like an eternity, life will eventually resume to normal. Use this time as a lesson to cherish the opportunities we have and never pass up on one in the future."

20 TIPS TO GET YOU THROUGH FINALS

By Natalie Flory

1. **Plan Ahead** - Organize yourself, create a study schedule, and know what kind of information will be on your final.
2. **Ask Questions** - If you're having any trouble in classes reach out to other classmates, and especially to your professors; if you need the help, you can get it, so don't wait until the last minute to ask questions.
3. **Utilize the Writing Center** - The Writing Center is an amazing resource to help you with any papers you have: final papers included!
4. **Have a Study Buddy** - Grab a friend to review with: maybe a classmate or someone who motivates you, or try to pair with someone that will help you get work done... Specifically, try to teach each other the content; explaining things to someone else can be a great way to remember information and make sure you properly understand it.
5. **Take Study Breaks** - Don't drain yourself by cramming all at once.
6. **Eat Snacks!** - Don't forget to stop to eat something; fuel your body and brain with a snack to help you keep going.
7. **Don't Cram** - All-nighters may seem like a good idea, and cramming may seem like a plan, but don't do it. It will just leave you tired and less productive in the long run.
8. **Get to Know Your Professors** - If you haven't already, get to know your professors. They are here to help you, so go to office hours if you need help and reach out with questions.
9. **Change locations** - Don't stay in the same place to study all the time; sometimes a location change is all it takes to feel more productive and focused.
10. **Have a Good Playlist** - A good playlist or background noise can be helpful for some when studying



20 TIPS TO GET YOU THROUGH FINALS CONT.



11. **Make Study Guides** - Break down the main ideas that you have learned, and make a review document. Feel free to have others add to it, too. More options: make a Quizlet, flashcards, or finding another way that works.
12. **Review Syllabus** - Throughout the next few weeks, keep reviewing your syllabus or class schedule. Make sure you know what deadlines are coming up.
13. **Get up and Move** - Don't sit studying for long periods. Get up and stretch often. Take a walk during a study break or build in time for some exercise that fits you.
14. **To-Do Lists** - Prioritize your list in an order that ensures that everything gets done.
15. **Make a Schedule** - Schedule time to study, and plan out what order you will complete tasks, and try to stick with it.
16. **Take Notes** - Make sure you are still taking good notes that will make sense to you later. Good notes make for easier review.
17. **Have a Clean Workspace** - A clean workspace can do wonders for focus, organization, and mindset. When studying, don't overcrowd your area: keep it clean and distraction-free.
18. **Review Daily** - Studying for finals will not seem like such a chore if you break up your review. Take 30 minutes or so a day to review for each class, and then make sure that you are staying on top of information.
19. **Predict Test Questions** - Create your own test with a list of some questions you think could appear on the exam, even on Quizlet. Test how confident you feel answering questions, and figure out your problem areas.
20. **Get Rid of Distractions** - Online classes make it difficult for many to focus, so put your phone away and unplug as much technology as possible. Removing distractions can make you more focused and productive.

THESIS TALK WITH BRADBURY

“My name is Ginger Bradbury. I am graduating Spring 2021 with a dual major in special education and elementary education. My honors thesis I am currently working on is focused on grief in the classroom; I interviewed 10 Millersville professors involved in the field of education on their thoughts, experiences, and ideas relating to grief in the classroom. As a future educator, this is a topic that is rarely discussed in pre-service programs, and yet, is an unavoidable reality.”

Helpful tips from Bradbury for those beginning their thesis:

1. **“The more interested you are** in your topic **the more fun** you will have. Research is rewarding, but also can be extremely fun if you choose a captivating topic.”
2. **“Begin thinking about potential topics** you may be curious about **during your freshman and sophomore year.”**
3. **Talk to others!**—For example, my topic came to fruition while volunteering at Hospice with my mom. During my sophomore year, I communicated with my mom that I was worried about interacting with students who have lost a loved one, and my mom then replied that I could use that for my thesis topic. Sometimes your friends and families may be able to point out topics that you are passionate about. Further, professors are excellent resources. With my thesis, I have had many professors provide input, help me sort my thoughts, and give me confidence in the relevance of my topic. It is also helpful to form connections with the staff at the library. Librarians helped me immensely with researching my topic and guided me through the IRB process. Dr. Pennucci even helped me create a website to showcase my research! “If your research requires transcriptions, I highly recommend using Kurzweil 3000 or MU video subtitles to speed up the process.”
4. “Overall, my biggest take away would be to **ENJOY it!** During my freshman and sophomore year, I dreaded the idea of research and writing thesis. I was intimidated. Once I found a topic I loved, I realized that research is fulfilling and satisfying... rather than dreadful. I now would consider it one of my hobbies and have a desire to continue to learn more about grief.”



Thesis in progress of finalization, and defended October 26th, Ginger started research for her thesis through MU's McNairy Library Research Fellows program:

<https://blogs.millersville.edu/libraryresearchfellows/>

Check out Bradbury's Research at

<https://sites.google.com/view/griefintheclassroom/home>

ZOOM OFFICE HOURS CALENDAR

Monday:

Beth: 9-11am
Alanna: 10-11am
Dr. Thyrum: 1-2pm
Michael: 3-4pm

Tuesday:

Beth: 9-11am
Michael: 11-12am
Dr. Thyrum: 1-2pm

Wednesday:

Beth: 9-11am
Dr. Thyrum: 1-2pm
Alanna: 4-5pm

Thursday:

Beth: 9-11am
Dr. Thyrum: 1-2pm
Michael: 4-5pm

Friday:

Beth: 9-11am
Alanna: 11-12am
Dr. Thyrum: 1-2pm

ZOOM MEETING ROOMS:

Dr. Thyrum's Personal Room:
<https://millersville.zoom.us/j/2946295508>

Beth's Personal Room:
<https://millersville.zoom.us/j/5912081934>

Alanna's Personal Room:
<https://millersville.zoom.us/j/7708911082>

Michael's Personal Room:
<https://millersville.zoom.us/j/4720493672>

THESIS TIP AND MOTIVATION OF THE MONTH!



Jacob Dickens, English major, '21, Honors College, Thesis in progress:

“My helpful tip is to always be ready for your project to change and evolve, even when you're right in the middle of it. My initial idea for my thesis back in December is nothing like the project I'm currently working on, and it may change even further by the time I finish it. Overall, it involves avoiding biting off more than you can chew initially, preparing to stumble onto something that grabs your interest while researching that you might want to focus more heavily on, and preparing to let go of ideas that aren't working.

Don't think that just because you have an idea of how the thesis will look now that it will stay that way throughout the process. Always be ready and willing to adapt. Motivation-wise, I'd say don't be hard on yourself for not doing as much as you would like for your thesis. Balancing schoolwork and thesis work is difficult, and nobody's expecting you to win a Pulitzer or Nobel prize with your thesis. It's okay for you to have days where you don't end up doing much research at all. Don't push yourself too hard over it.”