

ACES JAMES SCHOLARS DISCUSS WHAT THE HONORS PROGRAM MEANS TO THEM

The Advantages of Being a James Scholar

By Katie Baker, Junior ACES James Scholar & Honors Council Member

I chose to become an ACES James Scholar primarily for the opportunity to do funded research, but I quickly realized that the James Scholar Honors Program is much, much more. The students and faculty members who participate in this program have assisted me in creating almost all of the relationships and connections that I have made within the College of ACES. Looking back to my freshman and sophomore years, I am positive that my successes are directly related to activities done within this program. Becoming a James Scholar is a golden opportunity that no eligible student should pass up!

Networking Through the Honors Program

By Meg Dill, Sophomore ACES James Scholar & CURSUS HONORUM Editorial Assistant

For me, the best part about being in the ACES James Scholar Honors Program has been meeting lots of different people whom I otherwise would not have met. As a writer for *CURSUS HONORUM*, I have had the opportunity to interview many interesting people, including Chef Ledent, the new French Chef who works at the Bevier Café, and Dr. MacDonald, who is a professor of Chinese Literature. Other opportunities for meeting people include the annual retreat and interacting with faculty in order to complete the honors projects. I have learned a lot from the people I have met through the James Scholar Program, and I am thankful for the relationships I have been able to build.

Why YOU Should Become an ACES James Scholar!

By Eleanor Hodak, Senior ACES James Scholar & CURSUS HONORUM Correspondent

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is a big place. Large universities such as ours offer lots of options and opportunities, but their size also permits students to make their way through four years of college without ever pushing themselves above and beyond their diploma's call of duty. The ACES James Scholar Honors Program is the perfect way to get involved and really make higher education work for you.

As an ACES James Scholar, you must take one honors class per academic year, attend an annual retreat, and complete an independent honors project sometime before graduation. If you decide to rise to the challenge, you will graduate from UIUC with a bronze medallion, honors recognition on your transcript, and -- more importantly -- the knowledge that you made the most of your time here.

I was one of those students content to push myself academically in my classes but make no further commitment to ACES. I did other things, but somehow I had made it through two-and-a-half years on campus before ever talking one-on-one with a professor. Now I'm set to complete my honors project in conjunction with Dr. Vining and the Shedd Aquarium. I'll be displaying my findings at poster presentations and submitting my paper to scientific journals.

Graduation in May will seem that much sweeter knowing that instead of coasting through college, I took advantage of Illinois' reputation as a research university. Future employers and graduate college admissions officers will acknowledge that I took a less-traveled path and will reward me for it.

I encourage you to become an ACES James Scholar, rise to the scholastic level that you're capable of, and separate yourself from the undergraduate pack.