



Hi, Tigers! For those of you who find this as your first Honors Newsletter, welcome to the RIT Honors Family. My name is Brandon Keller, and I am this year's Honors Council president. I hope that you enjoy this special issue of "Get with the Program". The Newsletter Committee has gone above and beyond in order to deliver this special issue despite co-ops, research, and everything else, so enjoy the read!

Though this year may not look like any we have faced before, I am beyond certain that we are all capable of getting through the challenges ahead. No matter where the next few months take us, remember that the honors program and those of us in it are there for you, every step of the way. On behalf of the entire Newsletter Committee, I want to wish you all the very best of luck as we kick the year off.

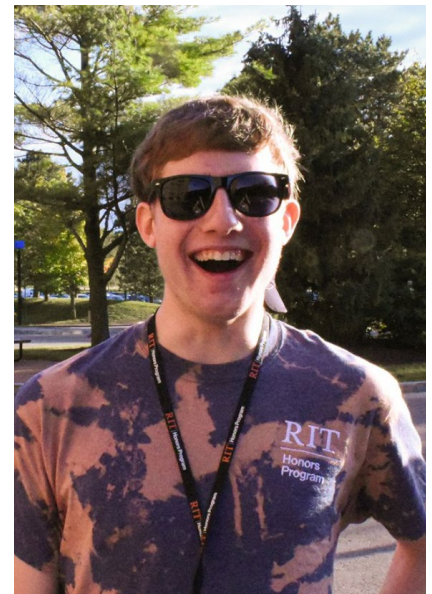
ADVICE FOR A YOUNGER ME

When I first started at RIT seemingly ages ago, there is a lot that I wish I knew. Here are three things that I would tell my younger self if it were possible.

First, try your best to stay social despite the circumstances. With social distancing and other public health guidelines, it can be hard, but technology is connecting us together in the absence of physical contact. Whether it be phone calls, a Discord server, or even just a Snap streak, make an effort to connect with your fellow Tigers. A local support system can do wonders even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Second, try your best to get involved. Honors has several awesome committees and a council eager to hear your input. As a program we will be adapting to ensure that everyone who wants to participate can, and other clubs and organizations around campus will be doing the same thing. Getting involved with whatever organization(s) it may be can help you make a lot of awesome friends and help to keep you entertained throughout the year.

Lastly, be sure to ask for help when you need it. Classes can be hard, some topics might not make sense the first, and homework can sometimes frustrate you, but there are countless professors, TAs, and others able and willing to help out along the way. For many, the first semester of college is among the most difficult, and I would bet my bottom dollar that that is because freshmen are too scared or embarrassed to get help. I assure you there is nothing wrong with getting help, and there is absolutely nothing to be embarrassed about. Ask any successful student, and the answer will be the same, getting help is normal, expected, and nobody will think any less of you for doing so. If anything, professors and TAs will think more highly of you for taking the initiative to find help when struggling.



MESSAGE FROM AN HONORS ALUMNUS

On a particularly bad day during the winter break after my first semester at RIT, a close friend told me a parable to cheer me up: the story of “this too shall pass.” Now that I’m holed up in an apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with that same person, I find myself thinking that phrase more often. This too shall pass.

This is not how I thought my graduation would go. I missed those last weeks of time with my friends and an actual graduation ceremony. I feel very fortunate that I lined up a full-time position through one of my co-ops while I was still a student. I have a lot of sympathy for my fellow graduates who are entering a turbulent job market without the same safety net.

I also feel a lot of sympathy for incoming freshmen. I remember my first semester fondly, even if I ended up in an Honors English class on Shakespeare that was not my speed. This upcoming fall semester will probably be weird and different. But one thing should stay the same: there are lots of people around to help you through it.

When RIT was moving online last semester, a lot changed. While some changes were tough, some honestly ended up being for the better. For example, the computer science department added a virtual Discord-based tutoring center. As a student lab instructor, I loved being able to help students more quickly without running in circles in the physical room. Lots of my communities, from classes to Honors, also moved online in similar ways so I never felt alone, even if I was sitting by myself in my room at my parents’ house.

This pandemic is a strange time and we are all caught in the middle of it against our wishes. Unfortunately, there is not much we can do besides our individual best. Be compassionate to the people around you: faculty, staff, students, and anybody else who is a member of your community. And remember, that this too shall pass.

Tessa Nijssen

Graduated with a Bachelors of Science in
Computer Science in May 2020

TIPS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

BY SARAH OAKES

- 1 Stay organized! Using to-do lists and planners to keep track of deadlines and assignments is critical for online classes. You don’t want to forget about one of your assignments!
- 2 Create a schedule and stick to it! Blocking out time in your calendar to work on a course every day (or every few days) will help keep you on track and manage your time better.
- 3 Set intermediate deadlines for large assignments! Projects that may not be due for a month may sneak up on you if you are not careful. Breaking up a large project into smaller goals will help you to keep moving forward. You can also reward yourself for meeting the smaller deadlines with some sort of incentive.
- 4 Don’t procrastinate! You just created that schedule for your schoolwork, now stick to it! Never wait until the last minute to do online assignments as you never know when the internet or server will crash.
- 5 Get ahead if you can! If you know an assignment happens every other week or you have a syllabus that lists all of the assignments for the semester, plan for that! Get ahead if you know you’re going to be busy at a certain time.

TIPS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

BY SARAH OAKES

- 6 Eliminate distractions! It can be extremely difficult to concentrate on online classwork when there are distractions. Try to stay focused by going to a quiet area, turning off social media, and removing all other distractions from your work area.
- 7 Stay motivated! Make your classes a priority! Try to set a goal for each class (like getting an A) and stay motivated to work toward that goal!
- 8 Ask for help! Classes may be online (at least partially), but professors are still here to help! Don't be afraid to email a professor or TA if you are confused about something in class or need assistance on the homework!
- 9 Take breaks! Take short, periodic breaks during long work sessions in order to avoid burning out. Just make sure that you go back to work once your break is over.
- 10 Take care of yourself! All in all, your physical and mental health are the most important things. Make sure that you take care of yourself before worrying too much about your classwork. We want you to succeed academically, but not at the expense of your health and well-being!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: ANNA DIGNAN

Though campus may have been empty this summer, work still continued safely at home for RIT students. Anna Dignan is one of those remote undergraduate student workers. From the comfort of her house, her project involved working with simulated James Webb Space Telescope observations under the guidance of RIT professor and astrophysicist Jeyhan Kartaltepe. Over the course of ten weeks, she learned how to write code in the programming language Python. The scripts she created and modified were employed to analyze simulated galaxies; this was done in the hopes of identifying methods to detect galaxy mergers at high redshift.

This is not Dignan's first summer spent doing research at RIT. Last summer, she was part of the Fast Forward Summer Research program as an incoming physics major and College of Science freshman. She conducted research for Michael Zemcov, who is also an astrophysicist. Dignan strongly encourages student participation in research as early as possible. Getting involved is as simple as sending an introductory email to a faculty member whose work you admire and wish to assist. Beyond adding to your resume, research is a great opportunity to make connections with other faculty and students in your field of interest. It is also valuable to get a taste of what a career could look like for someone in your major.

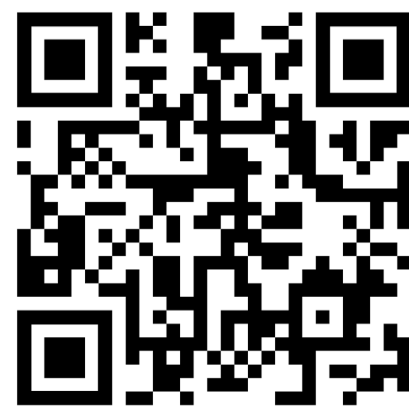
When she is not aiding professors with their research or studying, Dignan is volunteering for various clubs around campus. Her favorite volunteer experience was co-running a table at RIT's Girls in STEM fair. The fair was a chance for girls in grades K-12 and intrigued by science to further explore their interests. Dignan's table demonstrated how to make slime from common ingredients and allowed the girls to make their own.

Besides physics and the honors program, Dignan also likes playing cello and piano, petting her cat, and spending time with friends. In addition to engaging in research, she urges incoming honors freshmen to set aside time for socializing. Whether it's watching a movie in the dorms or just grabbing a coffee, any activity that forms memories, reduces stress, and brings you emotionally closer to others is an essential part of the college experience.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Free electives far too often go underutilized. They can open a lot of doors to exciting opportunities, and with RIT moving to ramp up the free elective credits included in degree programs, there is more potential than ever for our newer students. One of the possibilities is to fill your free elective slots with classes during a study abroad program. Though this is by no means an ideal time to travel, it is a great time to start planning for future semesters. There are countless international destinations to choose from, and there is a full team of staff at RIT Global that would be thrilled to work with you to find a plan that works for you and your academic requirements. Another option is to pursue a minor. There are over 100 minors to choose from at RIT, and there are no bad choices. Perhaps you can even do a minor abroad! Be sure to chat with your academic advisor to discuss any potential plans for the future.

TAKE THE POLL!



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HONORS DISCORD

RIT Honors has launched a Discord to bring our community closer together in these times of social distancing. The link to join is: <https://discord.gg/DACPbH>

**Make sure to wear
your mask and wash
your hands often!**



Honors Newsletter Committee produces the Honors Newsletter. We are a team of interdisciplinary students who all enjoy writing and learning about the exciting events that happen around the Honors Program. We do surveys, event write-ups, puzzles, and general informational articles to put in the newsletter. Overall, it is an interesting committee to be a part of and we highly recommend it!

OUR TEAM:

RYAN BROWN

BRANDON KELLER

ISABELLA MADEIRA

ANNA DIGNAN

SARAH OAKES

KAYLEIGH PATTERSON

PET PHOTO GALLERY

Contributors to this newsletter have gathered photos of their pets to share!

