The articles in this newsletter will give you a further sense of who our current Scholars are, what they have been up to, and some brief information regarding our academic initiatives and offerings.

As we move into 2016, I am reminded that the New Year in the Chinese Zodiac is the year of the Monkey. The Monkey is known as a clever animal, and humans born in this new year are thought to be smart, clever, and intelligent. In fact, our very own Leonardo Da Vinci was born in the year of the Monkey in 1452. While not necessarily a believer of astrology, I predict that 2016 is the year of the Scholar too. I wish you all good luck, good health and success in the New Year.

Warm regards,
Professor Ziegler
Professor William Ziegler
Executive Director, Binghamton University Scholars Program
Associate Professor, Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science

It is hard to believe that another semester has wrapped up. As we approach the New Year, I am reminded of all of the wonderful things we have accomplished this Fall. At the end of August we welcomed 147 new freshmen Scholars to our program. Each year, our incoming class surpasses the preceding one in average GPA and SAT scores, and I continue to be impressed by our new students’ professionalism and personal achievements. If past performance is any indication of future performance, these new students have an incredible four years ahead.

This academic year, the Scholars Program will offer 25 sections of credit-bearing courses, over 80 students will complete their Scholars experiential activity requirement, and over 40 students will complete their Scholars capstone requirement. In conjunction with our academic offerings, our Scholars have had a jam-packed semester of social events. Following our Induction Brunch in August, Scholars were welcomed to a “mocktail” party at the President’s home. In October, we went hiking near Ithaca to see the famed Taughannock Falls. Later that month, we chartered buses to Philadelphia for a weekend day of fun exploring historical sites and museums. Scholars also attended First Friday in downtown Binghamton, and engaged in many other activities such as bowling and apple picking.

Additionally, in November the Scholars united to cook and serve their own Thanksgiving dinner for President Stenger and the Scholars Program. It is not an easy task, planning and preparing a dinner for 200 students, but our Scholars do it seamlessly and with grace each year. I am very grateful to the Scholars who work so hard and are dedicated to making these events such a success. I am also very grateful to President Stenger, Provost Nieman, and Vice Provost Loewen for their tireless support of the Scholars Program, and to all of our professional mentors for their guidance and donation of time and energy. Additionally, we could not accomplish all that we do without great support from Katherine Bouman, Mary LaCourt and our student assistants.

Dear Scholars and Friends of the Binghamton University Scholars Program,

Warm regards,
Professor Ziegler
Professor William Ziegler
Executive Director, Binghamton University Scholars Program
Associate Professor, Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science

From the Desk of Professor Ziegler
For those of you who don't know, the Binghamton University Scholars Program Office, formerly located in the College in the Woods library, is now located on the ground floor of Rockefeller Center in Hinman. The new office, affectionately referred to as "30 Rock" by members of the program staff, features both traditional staples of the Scholars Program as well as several new perks.

The office features a new Scholars Project Lab, where students can collaborate on group projects and rehearse oral presentations. This room can be reserved in advance through an online form. Contact Mary Lacourt, Administrative Assistant, if you have a room request.

On the social side of things, the Scholars Office features a new student lounge where students can relax between classes and play video games, drink coffee, or work on assignments. Overall, the new office makes the program staff more accessible, increasing the family feel of the program. The office is open Monday through Friday during business hours, so feel free to stop by!
The Freshman Experience

By Alexis Shore, Undecided, Class of 2019

We all come into college with a blank slate, entering into a new world where we can essentially redefine ourselves. However, this can be a time of difficult transitions. The Scholars Program helped me adapt to college life. We did not even have to worry about finding friends, because the day after move-in, we already had a social event with other students in the program. At the Scholars Induction Brunch, we were welcomed both to the program and to the university by Professor Ziegler and President Stenger among others.

Personally, I felt that this brunch gave me a sense of comfort and a feeling that at Binghamton University, I would not be just a number among the masses. The following week, we were all invited to President Stenger’s house for a “Mocktail Party.” How many college freshmen can say they went to a party at the house of the president of their university?

The aforementioned events promoted friendships and a sense of community among the Scholars. Moreover, as if these events were not enough to help us adapt and begin to call Binghamton home, the Scholars Program provided each of us with a student and a professional mentor.

It is reassuring to know that there is always someone available to both advise us and to provide social, academic, and professional opportunities. Overall, being a Scholar has definitely eased the transition to college, and the wide variety of opportunities that we receive are going to make my freshman year unforgettable.
The Scholars Spotlight

By Maggie Fox, Chemistry, Class of 2018

Featuring three high-achieving Scholars

Jason Anesini, a sophomore majoring in biochemistry is involved in Greek Life on campus and sees the community as a great way to make friends. He is also currently working in an Organic Chemistry Lab. Jason said, “I have no real research experience so it’s great . . . the hard work I put into my classes got me recognized for a lab position.”

Another highly accomplished Scholar is Abigail Giles, a junior majoring in biology with a concentration in cell and molecular biology. Abigail is involved in many different facets of campus life. She is a Residential Assistant in Endicott which allows her to work with “a staff that shares similar ideals and attitudes.” She is also the Secretary of the Scholars Program, works in a research lab focusing on the use of two common pesticides and their effects on fruit flies, and is a star on the soccer field for the Women’s Club Team.

Dakota Desantis is a sophomore double majoring in psychology and financial economics. Dakota is currently the Public Relations Vice President of Broome Hall. He is also a tour guide on campus, and has said one of the best parts of the job is getting the chance to help prospective students understand how Binghamton has helped him change and grow as a person. In addition to helping promote the image of our school, he is also in a Psychology Research Lab which he is hoping will help him explore new fields that might peak his interest.

These are only three of the over three hundred Scholars in the program, and their accomplishments speak to the multitude of things that we have done, and are capable of doing as a community.
This October, the Scholars Program took a historic trip to our nation’s birthplace: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We kicked off our visit with a necessary peek at Independence Hall and the iconic Liberty Bell. There were superb replicas of the hall’s 18th century courtroom and the room in which the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Our next stop was N 12th street for the Reading Terminal Market. Instantly I was bombarded with a plethora of autumn-themed activities going on outside the market. Nostalgic hayrides passed by the road every so often and a variety of knick knacks were available for sale. There’s something strangely enticing about unbranded street food, and they had all the classics from burgers to corn on the cob to mac and cheese. Inside the market, local businesses sold other food. The market was filled to the brim with diverse offerings, yet you could just grab a slice of pizza if you wanted. The folks here were kind and created a cozy atmosphere for the Scholars family. Despite the name, this was not the terminal stop on our trip!

Soon thereafter, we had the pleasure of visiting the Franklin Institute. Somehow this children’s science museum was even more thrilling to visit as a (mostly) grown up. Giant, walk through heart? Check. Wickedly long pendulum? Check. A sky bike that was suspended a couple of stories? Check. An exhibit dedicated entirely to Genghis Khan? Odd... but yes! Check. The number of exhibits was impressive. An earthquake exhibit tested the integrity of your structure by tearing it to the ground. There was also a train exhibit where I picked up some railroad related factoids. Maybe we weren’t the target demographic, but it’s never too late to learn something new even if it involves literally shocking all your friends in the electricity exhibit or performing a comically impromptu weather broadcast.

Later, some of us got an opportunity to visit the one and only Magic Gardens! For those who don’t know, it’s a mosaic of assorted materials that look like a giant collage. We scouted out some wonderful pieces of art. Some Scholars posed for photographs with risqué sculptures.

And to have a complete, authentic trip to Philadelphia we couldn’t go home without chowing down on some famous Philly cheesesteaks. The Scholars quickly scarfed these Philadelphia classics down. I had a great first experience in Philadelphia and I can’t wait to see where we go next year!
Meet The Scholars: Student Council

Kaitlin Biagotti, President
Junior, Biology and Music
Hometown: Saint James, NY (Long Island)
Campus Involvement: Tour Guide, Behavioral Neuroscience Research Lab, Women’s Choir, Admissions FRI Student Assistant, BU Science Club
Fun Fact: “I hiked on a glacier in Alaska once!”

Tatiana Requijo, Vice President
Junior, Cell and Molecular Biology
Hometown: Fresh Meadows, Queens, NY
Campus Involvement: Undergraduate researcher in Dr. Musselman’s genetics lab, Campus Tour Guide, BU Pre-Medical Association, Ballroom Dance Club
Fun Fact: “I love doing yoga and Zumba, so feel free to join me at the gym!”

Dan Bostrom, Sophomore Representative
Sophomore, Math
Hometown: Floral Park, NY
Campus Involvement: Running club, tutoring for University Tutoring Services
Fun Fact: “Thank you all for coming to our events so far! It has been fun getting to know you!”

Dana Mirro, Junior Representative
Junior, Financial Economics
Hometown: Fresh Meadows, Queens, NY
Campus Involvement: Partners In Health, Student Culinary Council
Fun Fact: “The Scholars program has been the most rewarding part of my college experience and I’m looking forward to another great year!”

Sophie Gamer, Senior Representative
Senior, Cell and Molecular Biology
Hometown: Pound Ridge, NY
Campus Involvement: Student Athletics Tutor, Women’s Student Union, Peace Action
Fun Fact: “I’ve been dancing my whole life, and I love all the dance classes on campus! Let me know if you’re curious!”
Abby Giles, Secretary
Junior, Cell and Molecular Biology
Hometown: Vestal, NY
Campus Involvement: Women’s Club Soccer and Office Assistant in the Office of Creative Services
Fun Fact: “It has been so much fun getting to know all of the new Scholars!”

Nick Doran, Treasurer
Junior, Economics
Hometown: Cicero, NY
Campus Involvement: Vote Everywhere Ambassador for the Center for Civic Engagement and Treasurer of Peace Action BU
Fun Fact: “I met Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor at my high school graduation.”

Ciara Hanlon, Academic Chair
Sophomore, Psychology and Human Development
Hometown: Pomfret, CT
Campus Involvement: Secretary for Peace Action, Metadata and Digitization Student Assistant, Research Assistant for the Geothermal Radiant Heating Project
Fun Fact: “I have citizenship in both Ireland and the United States and I’ve been to Ireland eight times!”

Glenn Avisado, Community Service Chair
Sophomore, Business Administration, Economics, and Political Science
Hometown: Penfield, NY
Campus Involvement: Newing College Council, Model United Nations, and Ballroom Dancing Club
Fun Fact: “I am a professional ballroom dancer. In fact I have been on Dancing with the Stars!”

Rachel Kiesling, Social Chair
Junior, Math and Chemistry
Hometown: Waltham, MA
Campus Involvement: Peace Action, Undergraduate Chemical Society
Fun Fact: “I love the show Gossip Girl and I actually met Penn Badgley last summer.”

Andrew Genussa, Public Relations Coordinator
Sophomore, Physics and Math
Hometown: Brewster, NY
Campus Involvement: Newing College Council, Orientation Advisor, Bartle Library Circulation Desk, BU Science
Fun Fact: “I have been doing Taekwondo for twelve years.”
Taking a Scholars 280 course is a privilege in itself. Many Scholars tend to forget that, however, as they think of it as a requirement that needs to be completed, rather than an exclusive opportunity. The Binghamton University Scholars Program offers many classes that expand upon subjects not taught within the mainstream university. This fall semester, I had the great enjoyment of taking Ghosts in American Culture, one of the more . . . unusual classes that the Scholars Program has to offer.

The classroom itself fits the subject as students must venture into the depths of the Library underground. Navigating the corridors and dark hallways beneath the earth, we eventually come upon a single classroom, off to the side of a main hallway, far from the masses of other students wandering around lost in that labyrinth. During our classes, we can frequently hear the groan of doors, and the faint, disembodied voices of students through the walls. Needless to say, the atmosphere is perfect.

Our professor, Libby Tucker, brings with her an air of both enthusiasm and mystique the minute she enters. With a Ph.D. in American Folklore, she is brimming with different tales to tell to our class. From debating the very definition of a ghost, we explore the different ways that ghosts impact our daily lives. Whether we take ghosts as a literal being, or a metaphorical concept, there is always something to be said about the prevalence of the supernatural in today’s culture.

We’ve watched Steven King’s Christine, as well as M. Night Shyamalan’s The Sixth Sense. We have talked about the emergence of Slenderman as a new ghostly figure, and even shared different college ghost stories, both from the Binghamton University Campus and from other college campuses. Our class has never been boring, and we have high expectations for the end of the semester. With Professor Tucker taking us ghost hunting around the Binghamton Campus soon, as well as our own ghost hunting trips to look forward to for our final project, I can easily say that Ghosts in American Culture is a course that almost anyone can enjoy. I would highly recommend it, and encourage even those who scare easily to try it out. Once you experience your first class, you’ll be dying for more.
Interview With Professional Mentor, Associate Vice President, and Dean of Students
April Thompson

By Zachary Halpern, Computer Science, Class of 2019

Hello to all! In this edition, we were lucky enough to have the opportunity to interview the Dean of Students herself, April Thompson. Dean Thompson started working at Binghamton University in August 2012 and recently started teaching within the Scholars Program.

Scholars Newsletter: What do you feel was, or is, your biggest impact on the university as a whole?

April Thompson: I really wanted to make the Dean of Students office more visible and accessible to students. I think I have helped build an office that is supportive of student success.

SN: What do you feel is or was your biggest impact on the Scholars Program?

AT: I became involved with the Scholars program because I really believe in what the program is doing to enhance the experience of students. I am a strong believer that the community experiences build on what students learn in the classroom. The Scholars program really demonstrates that.

SN: What is it like teaching a Scholars course?

AT: Scholars are smart students who bring a tremendous amount of knowledge and diverse experience to the classroom. The Leonardo Da Vinci theme allows us to bring together math, science, psychology, art, engineering, and literature to create a class that applies systems thinking. The students are engaged and seem happy to be involved in the program.

SN: What do you think of the Scholars program?

AT: I think the Scholars program is a strong program that benefits Binghamton University and the students involved. The program challenges students academically and creates opportunities to push the boundaries of our thinking. The program builds on the strength of the curriculum and gives students a home at school where they can be supported.

SN: Are there any changes you would like to see implemented in the Scholars program in the near future?

AT: I would like to see the program continue to grow with the input of the student Scholars. Now that we have several years of Scholars, I am hoping to see the students develop new ideas and take more leadership in the program.
Meet The Scholars: Student Mentors

Jonathan Aranov
Sophomore, Business Administration and Environmental Science
Hometown: Penfield, NY
Campus Involvement: Tour Guide Program, VP of Spanish Club, PwC Scholars Program Committee Head, Chabad
Personal Note: “I hope that you all continue to take advantage of everything Binghamton has to offer and that you enjoy the college experience to the max.”

James Camillieri
Sophomore, Business Administration and German
Hometown: Pearl River, NY
Campus Involvement: Running Club, Scholars Grade Representative Committee, Broome Hall Government, School of Management, PwC Scholars Program
Personal Note: “I can’t wait for the rest of this year, and I am excited to be a student mentor.”

Andrew Chellis
Sophomore, Computer Science
Hometown: Valhalla, NY
Campus Involvement: Financial Vice President of Broome Hall, Hack BU, Course Assistant for Programming Concepts and Applications
Personal Note: “I encourage you to explore campus and really get to know it. I challenge you to work to find the many shortcuts on campus as well as the best locations to relax and study.”

Michael Darmohraj
Sophomore, Mechanical Engineering
Hometown: Pleasantville, NY
Campus Involvement: Binghamton University Glee Club, Engineers Without Borders, American Society of Mechanical Engineers
Personal Note: “I’m so happy to welcome all of the freshmen to the Scholars Program family!”

Emily Faso
Sophomore, Biology
Hometown: Merrick, NY
Campus Involvement: NCC Social Vice President, BU Science
Personal Note: “I hope you are settling in and feeling comfortable. It’s been so nice getting to know all of you over the past couple of months!”
Jessica Funnell
_Sophomore, Biomedical Engineering_
**Hometown:** Poughkeepsie, NY
**Campus Involvement:** Biomedical Engineering Society, Engineers Without Borders, Society of Women Engineers, BU Symphony Orchestra
**Personal Note:** “The mentors have many more great events planned for this year, and I look forward to seeing you all there!”

Ivanna Grynyk
_Sophomore, Biology, History Minor_
**Hometown:** Cicero, NY
**Campus Involvement:** Club Volleyball, BU Science, Scholars Social Committee, Office Assistant at the Fernand Braudel Center
**Personal Note:** “I’m sure everyone has a million things to do, but I just wanted to remind you all to still make time for fun! Try something new, college isn’t all about just work and grades!”

Dana Kuster
_Sophomore, Human Development, Urban Planning Minor_
**Hometown:** Hudson Falls, NY
**Campus Involvement:** Public Affairs VP for Newing College Council, Student United Way, volunteering at a local senior living facility, Campus Mail Services
**Personal Note:** “I hope that you’re all having a great semester so far and that you’re enjoying being a part of the Scholars Program family.“

Christopher LaTourette
_Sophomore, Mechanical Engineering_
**Hometown:** Saugerties, NY
**Campus Involvement:** American Society Of Mechanical Engineers, Club Ultimate Frisbee, English Conversational Pairs, Pen Pals
**Personal Note:** “It makes me very happy to see people in the third floor lounge doing work, playing cards, or just hanging out. It’s been a great year so far and I know it’s only going to get better!”

Stephanie Solomon
_Sophomore, Math and Spanish Language and Literature_
**Hometown:** Wantagh, NY
**Campus Involvement:** Newing College Council Academic Vice President, Student United Way Volunteer Coordinator
**Personal Note:** “It has been a great year so far with the Binghamton University Scholars Program, we are very excited to have you!”
The Academic Committee

By Ciara Hanlon, Psychology and Human Development, Class of 2018

The Academic Committee started its year off strong with a “How to Get Involved On Campus” event. This session welcomed the freshmen and introduced them to upperclassmen who held different positions on campus such as executive members of clubs, tour guides, teaching assistants, and student volunteers. It was a very well-attended event that led to networking and strong connections. The Scholars Academic Committee was involved in promoting October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The Committee created fliers and door tags, and encouraged everyone to wear pink on Wednesdays.

The Academic Committee hosted ‘Stress Less Sundays’ all semester, which offered fun activities every other Sunday evening to give students a fun break from their studying. Additional events included “S’mores and Ghost Stories” with Professor Libby Tucker; Scheduling Fest, where upperclassmen assisted the freshmen with Spring 2016 course advising; an info session on research, internships, and scholarships; and next semester we are looking forward to Professionalism Week!

If you are interested in joining the Academic Committee or if you have any suggestions for future programming, contact Ciara Hanlon at chanlon1@binghamton.edu.

A Special Thanks to Our Contributors...

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  Ciara Hanlon, Psychology and Human Development, Class of 2018
  Rachel Kiesling, Math and Chemistry, Class of 2017
  Tatiana Requijo, Cell and Molecular Biology, Class of 2017
  Alexis Shore, Undecided, Class of 2019

...and to the Scholars Program Office Staff!

  Professor William Ziegler, Executive Director
  Katherine Bouman, Assistant Director
  Mary LaCourt, Administrative Assistant