February 2016  Parent Newsletter

FACULTY FEATURE

Assistant Professor of Geosciences Isla Castaneda is an organic geochemist. Her research looks at molecules that are preserved in sediments to examine past environments on Earth. She was attracted to this discipline because it integrates physics, chemistry, and biology with geology. Read more...

COLLEGE NEWS

Commonwealth Honors College is pleased to introduce CHC Paths, a new portal for Honors students. In order to streamline the process of registering for independent studies for students and faculty, this new portal replaces printed forms and helps make the proposal process a dialogue among students, faculty sponsors, and the college. Read more...

Is your first-year student planning to study abroad? Commonwealth Honors College and the International Programs Office co-sponsor the International Scholars program, which allows qualified honors students to integrate international studies coursework and study abroad during their undergraduate career. Participants must be able to commit three consecutive years in the program, and applications are due in April. Read more...
ADVISING TIPS

First-Year Students

• Completing an Honors Independent Study can be a great way to begin obtaining research experience.
• Is your student aware of all the types of honors courses that are available?

Sophomores

• By sophomore year, students should be thinking about building connections with faculty members in their major not only for the honors thesis, but also for recommendations for internships, graduate school, or employment opportunities.

Juniors

• All juniors are expected to register for their Honors Thesis or Project in April. Review CHC's Getting Started brochure to learn about the options and expectations.
• Encourage your student to start thinking about post-graduation plans. Are they familiar with the programming and services available through the Career Services office? Have they thought about applying for a nationally-competitive scholarship, such as the Fulbright? Our Office of National Scholarship Advisement can help!

Seniors

• Students should review CHC's Finishing Up brochure to get all their questions answered about manuscript submission and Honors credentials.
• We strongly recommend that all seniors check their Academic Requirements Report (ARR) in SPIRE to make sure they are on track to complete all course requirements. If something is missing or there appears to be a problem, they should make an appointment with an advisor immediately.

SUPPORT HONORS

Take a minute and make a difference at our MinuteFund website!

More than 60 percent of UMass Amherst students qualify for need-based financial aid. UMass Amherst has significantly increased the amount of need-based aid it provides to students. The generosity of alumni, parents, and friends is a critical part of the solution to ensuring that low-to-middle-income students have access to an excellent college education.

Commonwealth Honors College is asking alumni, parents, students, faculty and staff who believe in keeping the doors of education open for as many students as possible to contribute to CHC Community Scholarships through our 30-day crowdfunding campaign, which launched on February 11. CHC Community Scholarships will:
- Provide up to four years of support to incoming Commonwealth Honors College students with demonstrated financial need,
- Preference will be given to first-generation college students and students from underrepresented groups,
- Funds from this campaign will be awarded to first year students accepted to UMass Amherst and Commonwealth Honors College entering this fall.

We have already raised over $5,000 from Commonwealth Honors College faculty and staff this fall, and ask that you join us in supporting a socially, economically, and ethnically diverse student body. Make your gift today and #OpenDoors to an honors education!