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For immediate release

Ouachita's Carl Goodson Honors Program awards grant recipients, inducts new members

By Ashly Stracener

March 11, 2020

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University's Carl Goodson Honors Program and Alpha Tau honors society hosted the annual Black and White Reception on Thursday, Feb. 20, awarding five student research travel grants and inducting approximately 120 new members. More than 35 honors students also were presented with badges in recognition of their successful thesis proposals.

Five students in the Honors Program were recognized and awarded travel grants to further their individual research and studies; the grants assist students with research abroad or in the U.S. for their honors theses. The recipients of this year's grants include Tray Armstrong, Honors Council Scholar; Kayla Churchwell, Carl Goodson Scholar; Sara Patterson, Garrett Ham Scholar; Hannah Perkins, Honors Council Scholar; and Joao Rodrigues, Ben Elrod Scholar.

Tray Armstrong is a junior English and psychology double major from Rockwall, Texas. He will be studying comic books, discovering why superheroes matter so much to individuals and society, and will travel to the Billy Ireland Comics Library and Museum at Ohio State University, which is the world's largest comics library.

"I was in Cleveland, Miss., swimming for our OBU Tigersharks swim team, at the time I was notified that I had won the grant," Armstrong said. "The grant itself will allow me to complete the research I've been working on since summer of 2019 and extend it beyond what I thought possible by allowing me to travel to pursue my interests."

Kayla Churchwell, a junior biology, chemistry and Spanish triple major from Searcy, Ark., will travel overseas to further study and research Costa Rica's healthcare system to understand how it operates at a national level and how it benefits or hurts its recipients. Churchwell's thesis is comprised of research conducted on cost-effective, synthetic wound healing devices.

"I wanted to be able to tie in my Spanish major with my thesis," Churchwell said. "Since the wound healing device is cost-effective, the idea is that it would be beneficial in third world countries.."

For Sara Patterson, a junior English major from Wylie, Texas, receiving the travel grant will allow her to continue writing a theological guidebook to *The Screwtape Letters* by C. S. Lewis. She will travel to England during the summer to visit Oxford, Cambridge University and C.S. Lewis' house to gain more insight into Lewis' life

"I have grown so much in my confidence of God's calling on my life this year, and I knew that my thesis work was a part of that," Patterson said. "I am very excited for my trip to England this summer. I had an inkling that God would bless me in this pursuit, and hearing my name called was not only exciting but also reassuring of God's faithfulness."

Hannah Perkins, a junior graphic design major from Southeast Asia, will use her grant to travel to a Southeast Asian country and work with field International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries to develop digital media campaigns both to share the Gospel and engage believers in the U.S. to pray for the work being done.

"I'm very excited to have received this grant and humbled that the faculty council considered my thesis worthwhile," said Perkins. "Without this grant, it would be very difficult to do all that I want with my honors thesis."

Joao Rodrigues, a junior finance major from Ribeirao Preto, Brazil, will study the unified healthcare system in Brazil, specifically with a focus on the bureaucratic processes and policies that shape the financial aspects of supplemental health coverage.

"I could not describe in words how honored I feel to receive this grant," Rodrigues said. "It certainly brings a booster of motivation to start this paper. It is so extraordinary that the ambitions and goals with your thesis project are about to be realized. I feel like receiving this grant is sort of a golden ticket to begin my thesis study with all the tools needed."

The Carl Goodson Honors Program, which encourages intellectual growth and academic excellence for high-achieving students, is composed of more than 400 current Ouachita students. Students in the program take 16 honors hours while maintaining a minimum of a 3.5 grade average. The Honors Program was established over 55 years ago to encourage and challenge students academically and offer them the opportunity to explore subjects not offered through Ouachita's regular curriculum and conduct research under a professor for a directed study and thesis.

Alpha Tau is the student-led honors society for Honors Program students that coordinates community service opportunities, monthly colloquia, social events and other activities.

Speakers at the reception included Dr. Barbara Pemberton, professor of Christian missions and director of the Honors Program, Dr. Ben Sells, Ouachita's president, and Alan and Amber Bagley, 2001 honors graduates.

For more information about the Carl Goodson Honors Program, visit www.obu.edu/honors or contact Dr. Barbara Pemberton at pembertonb@obu.edu or (870) 245-5541.