Honors College Fireside Chats
Fall 2018

A unique opportunity for Honors College first-years to connect with faculty in an informal setting and meet other students with similar interests.

Important Notes for Students
- Be sure that you are available to attend on the posted date and time before registering for a specific chat.
- Each student may attend one chat. We ask for your top 3 preferences in case all of the available spaces for your first choice have been filled.
- Exact locations will be communicated to participants via email. If the location is off-campus, an on-campus meeting place will be designated and participants will travel together to the chat site. That is, transportation will be either in a college vehicle, the host's vehicle, by bus, or by foot, depending on proximity. To request any additional accommodation to reach these venues, please contact Jackie Heymann at heymannj@msu.edu.

Working in Financial Markets During Turbulent Times: Talking Economics, Markets and Careers
Friday, September 28th, 3-5pm
Hosted by Directors Helen Dashney and Stephen Schiestel

A wide ranging conversation about current economic, market, political and business issues that are facing the capital markets – stocks, bonds, cash and currencies. The ability to sift through the noise to identify true signals to market changes helps investors understand the long term implications of market movements. Finance offers a number of challenging career options that students can consider.

Helen Dashney is the Director of Financial Market Institute. Stephen Schiestel, Department of Finance, Director of Financial Planning and Wealth Management Program.

What “Happy” Honors College Students Know?
Sunday, September 30, 4-6pm
Hosted by Drs. Mark Lee and Matt Helm

Did you know that happier people are healthier, more productive, more loving, and more successful in their educational pursuits and in life? Join Dr. Lee and Dr. Helm for a discussion about strategies to foster happiness in high achieving college students. The discussion will focus
on the importance of happiness to overall life success which also leads to a more integrated sense of self. From there, the discussion hosts will share perspectives from published work and personal experiences. Attendees will leave this chat with tips for success (plan your well-being, happiness in college, work life intelligence) through activities that build success (exercise, social connections, meditation, time and value management).

Dr. Mark Lee is a Visiting Assistant Dean of the Graduate School from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia and a scholar in the biochemistry of virus-host interactions. Dr. Matt Helm is the Director of Graduate Student Life and Wellness.

To Bro or Not to Bro: Men’s Lives in College
Sunday, September 30, 4-6:30pm
Hosted by Dr. James Lucas

Although men still have the advantage in many aspects of society, when it comes to college, they are not doing so well. Men are less likely to attend college, participate in specialized college programming (like the Honors College), and graduate; they are also more likely to be a victim of a violent crime, skip class, not do their homework, consume too much alcohol, and face academic and/or disciplinary probation. Researchers attribute these social and academic issues to gender role conflict: the concept that young men live in a world with changing social norms, yet they are still taught and held to very traditional norms. This discrepancy creates conflict between how men are socialized to act and the skills required for success. This chat will discuss the concept of male engagement and leadership in college, giving first-year students the opportunity to talk over dinner about some of the questions and challenges they face and get advice about being an effective student, leader, and change agent.

Dr. James Lucas is the Assistant Dean of Global Education and Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Education in the Provost’s Office and works with the First Year Seminar Abroad program.

Are Entrepreneurs Born or Made?
Can you teach someone to be an entrepreneur?
Monday, October 1, 2018 from 6-8pm
Hosted by Director Neil Kane

What does it mean to be an entrepreneur and what are the characteristics of a good entrepreneur? Do you need to be born with certain skills/traits, or can they be taught? Many people associate the term “entrepreneur” with someone who builds a business and is profit motivated. But what about people who start non-profits? Academics? Entertainers? People in public service—are they entrepreneurs too? Are they entrepreneurial? What traits of good entrepreneurs must they also exhibit to be successful in their endeavors—even if their success is not measured financially.

Professor Neil Kane is the Director of Undergraduate Entrepreneurship.
"What the Land [Grant] Remembers": MSU as Palimpsest Grounds
Sunday, October 7 or 28, 2-4pm
Hosted by Drs. Tamara Butler and Cara Cilano

The title of our chat references the work of author Camille Dungy, whose edited collection of poetry (Black Nature) centralizes Black writers' memories of and engagements with land. The grassy expanse that makes up the interior of West Circle and houses Linton Hall, Beaumont Tower, the College of Music, and Cowles House is the territorial spot where MSU, then called Michigan Agricultural College, was founded. These locations serve as the headwaters of the mythology surrounding MSU as the pioneer land grant institution. What is required in the making of a "pioneer land grant institution"? Does what the land remembers align with what the university remembers or calls us to remember? Through artistic engagements around the West Circle, we will explore these and other questions in this storied place. In order to hear and re-ground effaced stories, we will sort through how the university supplanted communities and narratives, constructed an official narrative, and literally grounds its mythology.

Dr. Tamara Butler is an Assistant Professor of Critical Literacies in the Department of English. Dr. Cara Cilano is Professor and Chair of the Department of English.

Being a Woman of Color in the Humanities: Looking Beyond the Undergraduate Degree
Thursday, October 11, 3-5pm
Hosted by Dr. Tamar Boyadjian

Join Dr. Tamar M. Boyadjian for a discussion about what it means to be a women of color in the humanities, and how students consider their gender and race as they move forward into graduate and professional degrees. While the focus of the discussion will be on the arts and the humanities, students in all areas of study are welcome. The critical objective of this discussion is to create a comfortable space to talk about experiences of being a woman of color in the humanities, to address key issues that might be affecting choices in moving forward with a graduate or professional degree in the arts and humanities, and in what ways one can identify opportunities which maximize their potential strengths and career objectives. Over dinner, we will also have a positive discussion about the types of challenges women of color could face moving forward in their career, and strategize on how these realizations could aid in their success not only as they complete their undegrad, but also as they move forward towards their professional careers.

Dr. Tamar Boyadjian is an Assistant Professor of Medieval Literature in the Department of English.
Art Imitates Life
Saturday, October 13, 2:30 pm to 6 pm
Hosted by Drs. DeAndra Beck and Mark Reimers

Join Drs. DeAndra Beck and Mark Reimers at the Williamston Theater’s presentation of Silent Sky, the true story of Henrietta Leavitt, a brilliant, headstrong pioneer who struggles for recognition in the man’s world of turn-of-the-century astronomy at Harvard Observatory. We’ll convene to Biggby’s coffee shop in Williamston after the show to enjoy a beverage and discuss our impressions of the play, touching on the history of science, women’s roles in science, and what career opportunities are open to men and women who pursue STEM degrees.

Dr. DeAndra Beck is the Associate Dean for Research for the Office of International Studies and Programs and is a Co-Chair on the Council of Research Deans. Dr. Mark Reimers is an Associate Professor in Neuroscience and the head of the Reimers Lab.

Women in Science and Engineering: Strategies for a Successful Start
Sunday, October 14, 6-8pm
Hosted by Dr. Angela Wilson

Join Dr. Angela Wilson for a discussion about strategies to use while in college to work toward a career in science. While the focus of the discussion will be targeted towards women in science and engineering, the discussion is open to students in any area. The discussion will target identifying and maximizing your strengths, addressing any weaknesses, and early identification of opportunities. As well, over dinner, we will have a positive discussion about the communication style and perspective differences between women and men, and how realization of them can aid in your success, from college to your career.

Dr. Wilson is the John A. Hannah Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, and she presently serves as the Director of the Division of Chemistry at the U.S. National Science Foundation.

From Nuclei to Stars: Visit the Cyclotron Lab and Talk with Faculty and Graduate Students
Tuesday, October 16th, 5:00-7:30pm
Hosted by Drs. Artemis Spyrou, Heiko Hergert, Sean Liddick, Remco Zegers

The National Superconducting Cyclotron Lab (NSCL) is a world leading facility for Nuclear Science Research. From studying the characteristics of nuclei themselves to using their properties for understanding the magnificent lives and deaths of stars, nuclear science has a broad spectrum of research themes. Every year, hundreds of scientists from all over the world come to MSU to perform experiments and discuss with the local group at the NSCL. We are excited to have such a unique facility on the campus of Michigan State University and we would like to invite you to spend an evening with us, chat about the kind of research we are doing, meet
our faculty and graduate students, take a tour of the lab and of course have dinner in our beautiful atrium.

Dr. Artemis Spyrou is an Associate Professor in the Cyclotron Lab and is the Associate Director for Education in Experimental and Nuclear Physics. Dr. Heiko Hergert is an Assistant Professor in the Cyclotron Lab and in Theoretical Nuclear Physics. Dr. Sean Liddick is an Associate Professor of Chemistry in the Nuclear Chemistry Department. Dr. Remco Zegers is the Associate Director for Experimental Nuclear Science and a Professor in the Cyclotron Lab and of Experimental Nuclear Physics.

From Social Democracy to Neo-Fascism: How did we get here?
Wednesday, October 17, 6-8pm
Hosted by Dr. Rubén Martinez

Join Dr. Martinez for dinner and a discussion on how America has shifted from a social democracy to one in which the free press and freedom of speech are under attack, immigrants are denied human rights and due process, overt racism is increasingly prevalent, and the balance of power among the branches of government is actively undermined. Hayek wrote about the “long road to freedom,” but he didn’t foresee that the road he proposed could also lead to tyranny, the opposite of freedom.

Dr. Rubén Martinez is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Julian Samora Research Institute.

Scaling Up Social Innovation
Thursday, October 18, 6:30-8:30pm
Hosted by Drs. Larson and Dearing

Sometimes the greatest impediment to solving problems is not a lack of innovation, but our inability to spread or scale a proven innovation. Imagine that you participate in a program sponsored by your high school. This program helps high school students better understand loans, debt and saving for college. It’s a great program – students have a much better understanding of what student debt means in the long term, they report increased savings, and some are planning on completing college in three years to reduce costs. “Wow, this is great! Everyone should enroll in this program,” you say to yourself. How do you make that happen? How do you take a program that works well in your high school and spread it to high schools in your region, across the state, across the country? Join your hosts for a discussion about how social innovations scale-up. They will discuss their research results about scale up strategies, and the challenges that innovators face. Students interested in the nonprofit sector or public policy will leave with new ideas that could influence their course of study.

Dr. Jim Dearing is the Chair of the Department of Communication and a scholar of diffusion theory. Dr. Sam Larson is an Assistant Dean in the College of Education and her research focuses on organizational strategy.
Field Research and Learning Opportunities: WK Kellogg Biological Station (KBS)
Sunday, October 21, 3-9 pm
Hosted by Dr. Jeff Connor and Colleagues

Join Director Dr. Jeff Connor and other faculty for an evening visit to the Kellogg Biological Station (KBS: http://www.kbs.msu.edu/) to learn how a summer at a field station can change your life. Located on beautiful Gull Lake in southwest Michigan, KBS provides a unique “living and learning community” for students to combine coursework, research opportunities and paid internships. Outside of class, students enjoy on-site recreational activities, including swimming, canoeing, biking, volleyball, soccer, campfires and barbecues and have the opportunity to explore SW Michigan.

KBS is not just for the ‘science student’; internships are available in communications and marketing, landscape design, environmental and science education!

The evening will include dinner at the historic Kellogg Manor House (former summer home of WK Kellogg, of cereal fame), a tour of the grounds and facilities, and an overview of the KBS programs for summer 2019. Your hosts will include several KBS faculty who conduct research at KBS and have mentored undergraduates. Transportation will be provided by MSU undergraduates who worked and studied at KBS during a previous summer. They will also share their experiences at KBS and how this experience helped them define their career goals and develop friendships and professional connections that will last a lifetime.

Dr. Jeff Conner is a Professor in Plant Biology at the Kellogg Biological Station.

Foundation for your Success: Defining your Purpose
Thursday, October 25, 5:30-7:30pm
Hosted by Drs. Denise Maybank, Terrence Frazier and Allyn Shaw

Being able to understand who you are is an essential part of your growth and development in college. By knowing what is important to you, you will discover how you define success. Join Drs. Maybank, Frazier and Shaw in a dynamic presentation and discussion on how to better understand and use your talents to explain your purpose. Discovering and refining what is imperative to you will help you strengthen friendships, work relationships and classroom success. Gaining knowledge about what is significant to you will assist your development and build a foundation from which you will make positive decisions in creating your definitions for success. Come for dinner to find out how to be the best you.

Dr. Maybank is the Vice President for Student Affairs and Services and Drs. Frazier and Shaw are the Assistant Vice Presidents for Student Affairs.
Mental Illness and Academia: How one professor coped with mental illness and went on to have a successful teaching/researching career
Sunday, November 4, 5-7pm
Hosted by Dr. Rob LaDuca

Join Professor LaDuca for an afternoon of discussion about his history with mental illness, specifically focusing on how he learned to cope with it so that he was able to have a successful teaching and research career. Additionally, this chat will include discussion about careers in science involving teaching and researching. This chat is perfect for any student who is interested in a career in science academia, or who would like to learn from someone who has had a great deal of success, despite experiencing mental illness.

Dr. Rob LaDuca is the Associate Dean for Administration and Academic Governance of Lyman Briggs College, as well as a Professor of Chemistry in Lyman Briggs.