

## **Featured Initiative**

### **Honors Institute**

For the month of November, the featured initiative is one of the President's in an effort to transform and reinvent the Honors Institute.

The Honors Institute, formerly known as the BVU Honor's Program, gives BVU's most prestigious students a platform on which they can excel and showcase their academic aptitude. The Institute, now led by Dr. Thomas Bonagura, dean School of Science and Dr. Amy Barth, director of the Honors Institute, is built around small, dialog-based classes which allow students to engage with interdisciplinary topics at a heightened level. The reinvention of the Institute came after taking a deeper look at what top students desire in an esteemed academic program.

Through research, creative endeavors, and high-impact experiences ranging from domestic and international internships to customized experiential learning journeys (in destinations such as Custer State Park, the Mayo Clinic, and Washington, D.C.), Honors Institute students expand learning beyond the classroom, developing the mindset needed to cultivate lifelong success. Four students in the Honors Institute were awarded \$5,000 in Fall 2019 to follow their research, scholarship, and creative curiosity. These Innovation Fellows will use their fellowship funds in an extended learning opportunity beyond BVU during the summer of their sophomore or junior year. Four additional \$5,000 awards will be presented to BVU Innovation Fellows in spring 2020.

Students within the Honors Institute now have the opportunity to conduct research alongside a faculty advisor with \$500 for research purposes. They are also granted priority class registration, a \$2,500 stipend for travel, and will be recognized at graduation upon completion of the program. Beginning Fall 2020, Honors students will have the opportunity to live in the Honors Living-Learning Residential Community. This community's focus is on leadership development and campus engagement. Incoming first-year students qualify for the Honors Institute by scoring a 28 or higher ACT, obtaining either a 3.75 high school GPA, or being in the top 10 percent of their class. Additionally, current students can qualify for the Institute by earning at least 15 credit hours and maintaining above a 3.5 GPA while at BVU.

The Honors Institute looks to continue attracting and retaining top students, in hopes of seeing the Institute craft innovators, creators, and student ambassadors for Buena Vista University.