

The Pinnacle

Destination Known

Vol. 28 | October 2022

I cannot express how excited I am to be a new member of the PTK Officer Team and to take over work as editor-in-chief of The Pinnacle. This officer team includes my friends and classmates, and I think they truly represent what OTC, Alpha Psi Tau, and Phi Theta Kappa as a whole stand for. We have lots of amazing projects that our members are working diligently on, some of which you can read about in this issue, and I promise that in my time as editor, my work here will be no different.

This issue is entirely composed of articles written by our officer team and representatives, as a special "get-to-know-you" edition of The Pinnacle. Many of them were personal for the authors, and many of them were related to the important roles they play on the officer team. Either way, our hope with this issue is to make you feel as though you know our officer team and what we do a little better. If you would like to contribute to the next, student-focused issue of The Pinnacle, which will be released in late November, please contact me via email at wilsonda@otc.edu, contact the Honors Office at ptk@otc.edu, or visit the Honors Office in person in ICE 354 on Springfield Campus. Without further ado, please enjoy PTK's very first issue of The Pinnacle.

Thank you,
Darla A. Wilson

**OZARKS TECHNICAL
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

HONORS PROGRAM

PHI THETA KAPPA



ALPHA PSI TAU

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Word Search

B R T P W I P H V E L J T M D Y U T U W S Q V J W
P E U M M A Q B D Z L H A O Z U R B C L W E T R Z
C R D C S V C V D Y F X L I O R K A A E C U K P M
S U P R E S I D E N T D S E O A I X T A J S O Z N
C S I M J W Y F I D I L B O L Q X G M E N O K G F
H A B F Q B O I B X E Z Y M L K Z P H Z R B R D V
O E G E L L O C V M P K M C G N U A O P N C R P M
F R R P Y U R L Z L S D A N P S H Q N E P M E F Q
K T E J H A Z N B Q N D P I S Z M V O N D N G S D
S N O I T O M O R P I I H C S E O A R K Z H V T J
M C Y V Z Y X A U U H S R U M R R L S R L A X A L
M G S I V A U Y Q S R P Y E O V E V I B U I H O A
Y S H R A V S Q R E B H C L G S L C I Z V I A O X
M C B T O G U A D W W S P B C I A X X C I A X Y U
U C I U R F L A L N B D D O G C O K Y W E E N Z R
Y X Q A Y O E U F Z H Q C X L V G N U K A P B R A
N H Y L H L L H F E L L O W S H I P A C O K V X S
H X F C J L F A P G E T E R C I Q N T L H A L C R
L O S X A J J P M E F T H T O F S I G R Z I D P N
H P O U Z B O O H I V Q F Y N E O O V U A Y Q U A
Q A B G O I L R N E E Z S M L N G U M X O J S M I
Q S D G M T X Y V Y Z H P Q K Z I K L M B L L L Z
A G U C Q E N X X N K T H D M X I E D L O F M T D
L F P K E Q O H P E O Y J Q Y Q O O C G E B M D W
H B W N E O D K C M J H F F Z C Y M X O F P H S U

Action Campus College Fellowship Honors Leadership President Project
Promotions Regional Scholarship Secretary Service Treasurer Virtual



College Project

Paul Young

Have you been thinking about how you can get more involved with your Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter? Are you interested in being a part of something that can make a difference? If you are a member of PTK and the answer to either of these questions was yes, look no further!

We are seeking out volunteers to get involved with the College Project this year, which is part of both maintaining our 5-star chapter status and working with the college faculty and students to make a difference on campus. I am heading up the project, along with several other members of the officer team.

The topic for the College Project this year is sleep deprivation. We are bringing awareness to its effects on college students and strategies to help combat this problem. We will be building a webpage, making posters for bulletin boards, and making flyers to hand out at events.

If you would like to get involved with this project or have any questions, you can email me at youngp@otc.edu, email the Honors Office at ptk@otc.edu, or attend one of our College Project meetings in ICE 354 on Springfield Campus or via Zoom at 2:30 PM on Mondays. We would love to have you as a member of our team working together to further the mission of OTC and PTK to help make a difference on campus and in the community.



OneSolePurpose Charity Run

Stephanie Cruz

Starting off the new semester, Phi Theta Kappa's first community service event for the Fall of 2022 was a rush!

On the morning of Saturday, September 17th, OneSolePurpose hosted its 12th annual charity run. A great community service opportunity, OTC students were encouraged to come out and support the cause. Students wore OTC attire and ran with each other, and the day turned out to be a fun and successful event.

We had our own OTC students Stephanie Cruz, Autumn Seely, Darla Wilson, and Amelia Lai come out and participate in the run, with Amelia getting 68th place in the 5K race!

OneSolePurpose is a local non-profit organization that partners with individuals, churches, and businesses to provide new shoes to children in need. The proceeds of this event go towards helping to buy new shoes for children here in Springfield. Since 2010, OneSolePurpose has given away approximately 30,000 pairs of shoes to students in the Springfield area.

Whether you showed up to race in the 5k/10k or just to have fun in the 1 Mile Walk, your efforts are appreciated! For each person that ran, a local student received a new pair of shoes. Stay tuned and be sure to join us for many more service events to come!



Social Mindfulness

Nick Crider

Have you ever been in class, at an intradepartmental work meeting, or a social event full of new or non-acquaintances, and found yourself in a sort of mental battleground? You are hyper-aware of how you are sitting, the words you are saying (or not saying), and the way others might be perceiving you. Inevitably in these situations, you might find yourself unable to perform at your best. Your voice shakes a little, you reach for words you know but aren't able to find, your speech flounders, and you are unable to express your opinions fluently. Your ability to intake and analyze information slows. Or maybe you are sitting there with great ideas but find yourself staying quiet. Simply put, you are not at your best. Social situations can have this effect on us. This is something most of us experience daily.

A few years ago, I was in an employment situation where I was working two very different jobs. One job was thankless and commonplace, the other was public and fairly glamorous. I worked the thankless job in the morning and the other at night. I noticed I could feel my sense of who I was changing as I transitioned from one job to the next. In the latter half of the day I was more confident, affable, and effective than in the former half of the day. In reflecting as to why this might be, I realized that so much of how I thought about myself was dependent upon how others saw me (or how I thought they saw me). When I felt that people valued and respected me, I was free from feelings of judgment and self-concern that hindered me in being my “best self.” This self-concern is a function of consciousness that can make social situations difficult. So many of our interactions with other people can be less than satisfying. Generally what makes them this way is the degree to which we are hampered by self-concern. When you are in these situations, those around you are having a very similar experience to your own. They may respond to these pressures differently. Maybe instead of talking too little, they talk too much. Maybe they become combative or defensive, or they resort to incessant joking around. Yet all of these behaviors arise from the same tangle of insecurities as yours.

Something I have learned from practicing meditation is how different something can look relative to your proximity to it. If you have ever been swimming in the ocean, you know that if you are at the place where the tide is breaking, it can be quite chaotic and overwhelming, but if you swim out just a bit further, those same waves which are hammering swimmers near the shore are just washing right under you. This same principle can be applied to your emotions. If you are feeling overwhelmed, instead of letting your emotions hammer you with insecurities, take a second, identify what you're feeling, move away from it, and observe it at a distance. You

will likely still feel that emotion, but it will hit differently. You will have the latitude to choose your next move. Feel the wave moving through without being in that chaotic place where it crashes down.

Take care that this practice does not become another form of self-consciousness. When you're with others, this practice should not make you more aware of yourself. It should not cause you to recoil even further inward. Ideally, this should free you to attend to whomever you're talking to as you become less stifled by any negative mind state produced by your self concern. However, it will not free you from having these negative states of mind. Approach your next social situations knowing for sure that you will feel anxiety, annoyance, and self-doubt. You will feel these emotions. So feel them and release them. Don't act on them. Don't carve them into life by doing or saying something unproductive. Let these states of mind wash under you. If you can't manage that, just focus on one. Just try to take an interest in noticing one negative emotion and doing nothing with it. At very minimum, just attempt to become interested in your changes of state. Why is it that you feel differently around different people? How is it that others have that much power over your state of mind? You will find these changes fascinating, but remember, none of them represent who you really are. There are patterns, of course, and proclivities. You can often predict how certain people are going to make you feel. But you are not forced to conform to these patterns. You don't have to respond the same way twice. Your proclivities don't have to condemn you to repeating the same situation over and over.

It might help to remember that everyone you meet is swimming in that same ocean of self-consciousness. If you observe them, you will see or hear clear manifestations of self-doubt and concern about what others think of them. Take a step back and out of yourself for a moment. Release yourself from feeling implicated by whatever is happening around you. You will likely see you are standing in a jungle of human ego and frailty. Therefore, you may find recourse to compassion and charity. We are all experiencing this together, and the whole of our lives are webs of continual social interactions. You cannot escape them, so you owe it to yourself to figure out how to make them work for you, or at least not against you. So be charitable with other people, make allowances for their struggle, and be merciful to yourself by putting your struggle into perspective and understanding it. Whatever circumstances you find yourself in, however difficult or awkward, these moments, each one, make up the only life you have. You might as well enjoy it.

R.T.'s Project Suitcase: A

Non-Profit

Robert-Thomas Gumersell

As a Phi Theta Kappa member, I'm encouraged to serve my college, my PTK chapter, and my local area in any way I can. The way I choose to do this is through my non-profit, R.T.'s Project Suitcase. The mission of R.T.'s Project Suitcase is to collect as many new or gently used suitcases as I can, as well as other day-to-day items to fill them with, such as combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, and other essential items. Once I've collected enough suitcases and filled them with everyday goods, I plan to donate them to children and young adults aging out of the foster care system. By doing this, I hope to better equip those aging out for going out into the world all by themselves.



I started my non-profit in 2020 after my mom and I were driving by a facility for orphans and foster kids on our way home. It was after that experience that I realized just how lucky I was to have loving parents and a good home. Soon after that, I learned that once somebody in the foster care system ages out when they turn 18, they are simply handed a garbage bag full of their belongings, told "good luck," and sent out into the world. I knew right then and right there I wanted to make a difference for these kids in any way I could, and from there, the idea for "R.T.'s Project Suitcase" was born.

I knew that just sitting on the sidelines and praying for something to change would be easier, but the only real way for me to make a difference was to act on it. As of right now, R.T.'s Project Suitcase has gotten overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community and is getting more and more donations from people. At the rate R.T.'s Project Suitcase is growing, I know that we'll be able to make a difference for many orphans and foster kids, one suitcase at a time.

OTC's NEW Jazz Band

Autumn Seely

OTC's new jazz band is swinging on into the classroom! A group of pianists, saxophonists, trumpeters, and other musicians are coming together for this fun and creative class. You can catch them playing at our Winter Concert and Spring Dance if you missed them at our Fall Picnic. The class was established by instructor Phil Forrester, who was able to fund it by winning one of OTC's Game Changer Grants. The band offers exciting new opportunities that OTC students have not yet had access to. "Anyone who remembers playing an instrument fondly, we're now able to give them that avenue to continue doing it in a low pressure situation," says Forrester. The class has no auditions, no additional costs beyond the base tuition fees, and you can freely rent out instruments to practice at home. Learn some music skills, broaden your jazz repertoire, and engage in team building activities. Students are given the chance to meaningfully express themselves in this fun and relaxed outlet that's not just another lecture class. If you have a love for jazz, consider enrolling this Spring to MUS-140 to join the music scene!

(Feel free to email forrestp@otc.edu with any questions you may have, or stop by Springfield's campus in ICE 123C Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30-5:20 PM to check out rehearsals!)



Hallmark Awards

Five Sheridan

The Hallmark Awards Program is a program that runs through PTK to recognize excellence. The Phi Theta Kappa organization is guided by the “hallmarks” of leadership, fellowship, scholarship, and service. There are four main categories of awards: individual, chapter, regional, and alumni. Those awarded a Hallmark Award are then recognized at the PTK Catalyst event, an annual convention for transfer students across the nation, giving them national recognition.

OTC’s Alpha Psi Tau chapter will be applying for these hallmark awards in 2023:

- Distinguished Member
- Distinguished Chapter Officer
- Distinguished Chapter Officer Team
- Paragon Award for New Advisors
- Distinguished Chapter Advisor Team
- Shirley B. Gordon Awards of Distinction
- Distinguished College Administrator
- Most Distinguished Chapter
- Most Distinguished Chapter Finalist
- Top 100 Chapter
- Distinguished Chapter
- Distinguished Honors in Action Theme
- Distinguished Honors in Action Project
- Distinguished College Project
- Five Star Chapter Recognition
- Distinguished Regional Officer
- Distinguished Regional Officer Team
- Alumni Hall of Honor

There are five due dates for different categories of awards: December 7th, 2022, and January 11th, 18th, 23rd, and 30th, 2023.

More information about the individual hallmark awards can be found at hallmarkawards.ptk.org.

Being A Non-Traditional Student in PTK

Trish Chastain

It's easy to feel isolated when you are a non-traditional student. Believe me, I spent my entire first year back at OTC feeling disconnected from my classmates.

That first year was strange. Post-COVID mask requirements, no group projects, social distancing, and quiet halls created in me a feeling of disconnectedness. So much had changed since I first attended OTC in 2013.

It took a full semester, maybe longer for me to start opening up. Apprehension continued to plague me, but I pushed forward. I remember receiving an invitation to PTK and I accepted because it was free to join. Thank you OTC!

I didn't plan on getting involved initially, but couldn't quash my curiosity, so I attended a chapter meeting. It felt a little awkward because I didn't know anyone, but that didn't stop other members from striking up a conversation with me.

This was the first time I felt camaraderie with other students. Starting that day, I was determined to get involved. If I knew then what I know now, I would have taken that leap a long time ago.

Being involved with PTK gives me a sense of belonging and purpose that I didn't realize was missing before. But it goes deeper than that. I feel accepted, and have an important role. This past spring, I was even asked to be a PTK representative, which is a pretty cool gig!

Getting out of my comfort zone and being active in PTK has given me so much happiness (and free T-shirts!). PTK has given me the opportunity to grow, collaborate, create, and socialize; not to mention we have a chill lounge located in ICE 354 on the Springfield campus where I can drink free coffee, study, relax, and connect with other students.

PSA ahead: If you accepted the PTK invitation, start getting more out of your time at OTC. It sounds silly, but I promise finding a way to be involved with PTK will ignite a spark within you that you didn't know you had!

Springfield Fall Picnic 2022

Sammi Smith

This year's OTC Fall Picnic at Springfield campus went off with a bang with lots of booths ranging from OTC's Fine Arts Department (where OTC's Jazz Band performed), OTC's Politically Active, student ambassadors from different colleges (Missouri State University, Evangel, and Southwest Baptist University), OTC's Disability Support Services, to our very own Phi Theta Kappa chapter, Alpha Psi Tau, and the OTC Honors Program. The picnic started at 10 AM and went till 1 PM with hundreds of students enjoying the free food, music, and all the booths. Some had prizes, others had free goods, but all the booths had valuable information for all our students here at OTC. If you are bummed out that you missed this fun event, worry not! You will have another chance to enjoy all the fun at the 2023 Spring Picnic.





Life, The Universe, and Midterms

Dee Lancaster

It seemed like a normal, boring week. Then, suddenly, out of the depths of space came the announcement: “It’s midterms! What do you mean you didn’t know about midterms? The plans have been in the syllabus since January.” Sounds of students groaning filled the air. Hold on fellow students, it’s time to grab our towels and head into the depths of the second-most dreaded week of the semester. Have midterms snuck up on you? Here is some advice straight from the Encyclopedia Academia to get you started!

1. Make sure that you have your correct course books. While “1001 Ways to Torture Your Sibling” might be interesting to read, it won’t help you pass College Algebra.
2. Properly prepare your study materials. Color-coding your study notes works considerably better than color-coding your movie collection.
3. Printing and using study guides can be very helpful. Making origami cranes out of them, on the other hand, is not quite as effective a use of the information.
4. Stay hydrated. Water and judicious amounts of caffeine can be useful. For certain students (and the occasional professor), five gallons of coffee may be a bit of overkill.
5. Study while listening to soft, relaxing music. Studying with the volume turned up enough to set off earthquake monitors two states over is slightly counterproductive.
6. Make sure to eat healthy that week. A balanced diet is fantastic. Binge-eating chocolate sundaes while studying isn’t the best idea—whipped cream and computer screens aren’t a good combination. (We won’t talk about what chocolate sauce does to your touch pad.)
7. Organizing a study group is a fantastic idea. Holding a toga party, not so much.
8. Finding the right spot to study for midterms is essential. Aruba is probably not the ideal place.
9. Use your study time productively. Believe it or not, watching re-runs of *The Big Bang Theory* won’t measurably enhance your Physics grade.
10. Get plenty of rest. However, hibernating until Spring is discouraged.
11. Taking breaks for a while when you study is a good idea. Breaking things while you study gets you funny looks from your parents and/or roommates.
12. DON’T PANIC! (Okay, maybe this one is a bit too advanced for undergraduate advice.)

It’s time to buckle up, hold on tight, and engage the “Improbability Testing Drive.” Midterms are almost here!

Back to School Bash

Mike Schaefer

“I enjoy the process of upending my life with the pressure and difficulty of starting a new semester at college.” With few exceptions, hearing this statement would likely cause most students to look at you with raised eyebrows, because if there is a single sentiment that the entire student body can agree on, it is the fact that the start of a new semester is challenging and stressful in the most unenjoyable sense of each word. (If you do happen find a student who strongly agrees with this statement, please let me know—for science.) Since a significant proportion of the stress and fatigue felt at the start of the new semester comes from being overwhelmed (both mentally and physically), students are often in need of a break—a quick reprieve, a chance to catch their breath. This is where Phi Theta Kappa comes to the rescue (trumpet fanfare, please).

PTK’s Back to School Bash, hosted in our very own Honors Lounge (ICE 354), was a helping hand which our Alpha Psi Tau Chapter Officer Team graciously extended to our hard-working Honors Students. To help keep our students steady (and sturdy) during this difficult and stressful period, our PTK Officer Team purchased pizzas and cookies to feed our busy students (so many of whom too often forget to nourish themselves) and refuel their tired minds. Combined with the coffee, tea, and hot cocoa already offered in the Lounge (courtesy of the Honors Office), the Perfect College Student Meal was provided to revitalize our Honors students and get them through their busy schedules!

While many students stopped by only briefly to grab a bite and run, many more stayed to relax, chat, and laugh with their peers. Many spent this much-needed brain-break engaging in comical conversation, while others took the time to talk about various other points of interest, ranging from discussion of personal life to the exchange of preferred habits for studying and time-management.

PTK’s Back to School Bash was an overwhelmingly positive event in which students got to rest up, eat up, and talk each other’s ears off. There’s no better way to kick off the Fall semester than the definitively successful turnout of the Honors Student community at OTC for the invaluable opportunity to socialize, rest, and digest, all at the same time!



PTK Awareness Week

Jessica Schneeweis

During the week of September 12th through 16th, our chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society, Alpha Psi Tau, hosted an awareness week across OTC campuses to engage our officer team while working on our chapter's visibility and recruitment skills.

The week popped off with a Chapter meeting on September 12th. Many subjects were discussed during the Chapter meeting, from Honors in Action to College Project to voting agendas.

For the following two days, PTK encouraged PTK members, faculty, and staff to wear PTK t-shirts to spread awareness.

PTK officers Paul Young, Mike Schaefer, and Dee Lancaster also set up awareness/recruitment tables across several OTC campuses throughout the week. Mike Schaefer said, "One of the most important goals of PTK Awareness Week was reaching out to all the students at OTC who have diligently prioritized their future and displayed their commitment to their academic success."

To wrap up the week, on Friday, September 19th, PTK hosted two virtual Q&A sessions to allow people to ask the PTK officers questions. Cassidy Turner, OTC's Honors Coordinator and one of the chapter advisors for Alpha Psi Tau, had this to say about the Q&A sessions:

Several officers and representatives joined us via Zoom and in-person. Students zoomed in with us, and all the officers and representatives answered questions students had. Overall, it was a good team building exercise, and I think knowing we were welcoming was what potential PTK members were looking for the most.

Recordings of the Zoom sessions are available on the PTK Canvas page, and any members or prospective members with questions are encouraged to watch them!

Lots of PTK pride was shown this week. If you are staff/faculty or a PTK member and want to continue showing PTK pride, pick up a t-shirt in ICE 354 Springfield Campus.

Meet OTC's Plaster Center for Advanced Manufacturing

Zachary Leavitt

If you've walked around the campus this semester, you may have noticed we have a sleek new building. You may not have had a chance to look around unless you have a class there. It's beautiful inside and fully equipped with the best technology on campus, so check it out yourself!

This high-tech training titan is equipped with hands on learning classrooms, simulation training centers, both long and short-term training opportunities, and industry partner space sprawled over 120,000 sq. ft. Funding was derived from over 100 donors who believe in and support OTC's commitment to our community, whose names you can find prominently displayed on the donor wall in the foyer. According to OTC's news page, the PMC is the largest building project in OTC's history, and it will aid in training the next generation of skilled workers in critical industries.

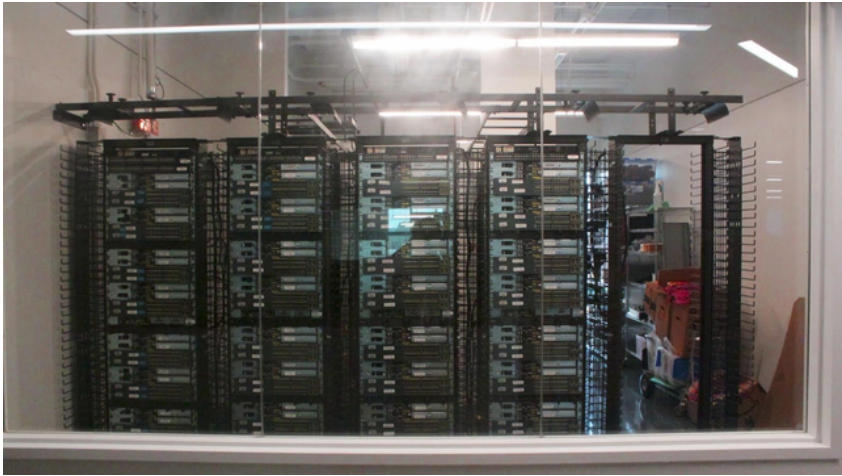
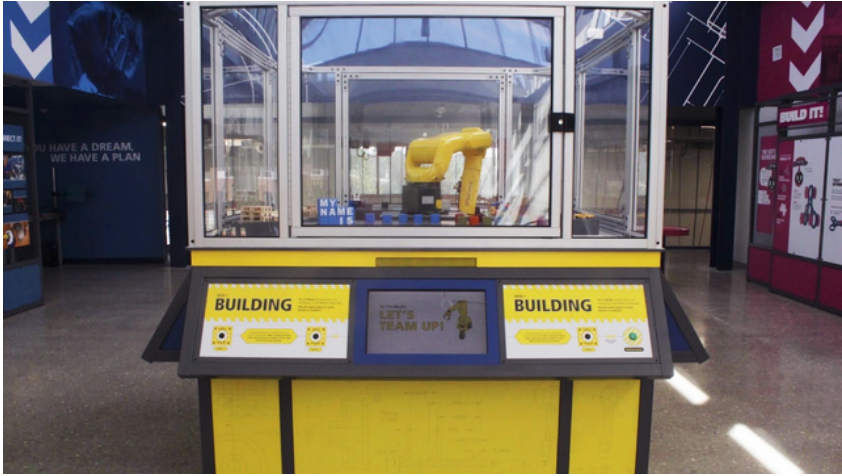
The PMC hosts some very impressive programs on campus, including (among others):

- Automation and Robotics
- Cybersecurity
- Drafting and Design
- Mechatronics
- Precision Machining

On the second floor, you can meet Micah, OTC's automated arm, which you and up to three other people can play a game with. Micah is real automation technology, granting a powerful and fun learning experience in the process. A little further beyond Micah, you can step out and view the wide-open factory floor space, where students will have the opportunity to hold the tools of their chosen field while they prepare to help transform the local area from within.

The Missouri state government invested a little more than \$12 million to help build the PMC, and the good this facility will do for Missouri can't be overstated. The state senator Lincoln Hough said in a statement, "There is no end to the possibilities for this community. There is no end to the educational opportunities, business opportunities, and workforce opportunities. We hear all the time that we're short on workers. This facility is how we change that."

The new building is estimated to generate more than \$400 million over a decade according to an economic impact study conducted in 2019 which can be found at <https://research.otc.edu/economicimpact/>



Photos courtesy of Kronic Tonic Media.

An Interview with Dr. Michael Howarth Darla Wilson

Dr. Michael Howarth is an author and associate professor of English at Missouri Southern State University. He is also the director of their Honors Program, so if you're looking to transfer to MSSU and curious about their Honors opportunities, he is a great person to get to know. I was lucky enough to conduct an interview with him via email, some of which is transcribed below:

DW: How are creative and academic writing similar to you?

MH: *Both types of writing require a lot of dedicated time and a lot of lengthy research. Many people don't appreciate just how much research goes into creative writing, especially when writing a historical novel. I research the etymology of words, different types of landscapes, fashion trends, and as many aspects of a given culture as I can so as to create a vibrant and realistic atmosphere that reflects the people who lived during that time period. Good research enriches every aspect of a novel, such as the story, the setting, and the characters.*

I loved doing the research for my newest novel, A Still and Awful Red. I have always wanted to visit eastern Europe, specifically Romania, so it was a treat to delve into the historical period in which this story takes place. While researching and writing the novel, I drew on my love for both classic gothic texts of the nineteenth century, as well as Hammer Studio films from the 1960s and 1970s. I gathered and read official testimonies, court documents, and letters relating to the life of Elizabeth Bathory. As I began to outline the story, I checked books out of libraries, purchased books online, and read extensive articles that discussed Elizabeth Bathory and her infamy as one of the world's most prolific serial killers.

DW: What advice do you have for young writers trying to balance writing in their free time with classes, work, or both? How do you balance life?

MH: *The frustrating thing about balance is that it's never stable. It fluctuates day by day, week by week, and month by month. There are weeks where I have the luxury of writing a few hours each morning, and then the next week I can only write for a few hours at night. As a writer, you have to be flexible. I can only write when I have a large chunk of free time. Some people succeed well at carving out thirty minutes of writing time, but I can only write when I have at least two hours to sit down and lose myself in whatever story I'm creating. Ideally, I would spend a few hours reading and writing every day, but my schedule doesn't always allow for that level of freedom.*

My advice for young writers would be to find the time of day when you are most energetic and focused. This is when your creativity shines. But also be patient; know that each day will bring

different challenges and responsibilities that affect when you can be creative. Finally, be dedicated. Many writers state their intention to write a certain number of hours each day or each week. The best way to get into a rhythm with your writing is to make sure you find the time to be creative every day. So even if your day is so busy that you can't write, at least jot down ideas for a story, make notes on characters, or outline a plot.

DW: Do you have tips or tricks for overcoming writer's block?

MH: Embrace writer's block. It doesn't mean you can't write. It doesn't mean you don't have good ideas. It just means your brain is working through those ideas, that it's still figuring out the best way to be creative. If you have writer's block, then perhaps you need to change when you write, or even what you write. For example, if you are working on a chapter for a novel, put it away and start brainstorming and outlining ideas for another writing project. Or review chapters you have already written. Sometimes it helps to reread books or rewatch movies that have inspired you, and might do so again. Most importantly, writer's block is not an invitation to sit around and brood.

DW: Did your students motivate or influence your writing in any way?

*MH: I love to hear what my students are reading, and also what they are watching, because I am always looking for worthwhile books and movies to enjoy. Listening to my students talk about pop culture gives me lots of ideas for future projects, and when I speak with them, whether we are inside or outside of the classroom, I'm discovering which stories and characters they find fascinating or boring, and also why. Observing the people around you is an important part of being a writer. When I wrote my young adult novel *Fair Weather Ninjas*, I read a lot of young adult books, watched a lot of high school movies, and spent a lot of time listening to young adults talk, paying careful attention not just to the context of their conversations but also to the various rhythms and tones in which they spoke.*

I love creating classes and then choosing texts and films for those classes that I hope my students will find fascinating, such as a Gothic literature class I taught last spring or a class on silent film comedy featuring the works of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin. Having conversations about books and movies, and the reasons why we love or hate those works, is crucial for any writer because it helps to broaden our perspective.

Do you have questions for Dr. Howarth that weren't answered here? He will be giving a presentation at OTC's Springfield Campus on October 24th about his book *A Still and Awful Red!*

OTC Transfer Fair

Kaitlyn Williams

If you are interested in transferring to a four-university after your time at OTC, consider attending the College Transfer Fair!

This event will take place on Wednesday, October 19th from 10 AM- 1PM at OTC Springfield in the Jared Family Atrium. Over twenty universities from Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and other surrounding areas will be on campus.

Transferring schools can be stressful. To make you feel more prepared, each school will have representatives available for you to have one-on-one conversations with. If you already know what school you are transferring to, you could ask any questions you might have about transfer credit eligibility, major requirements, or any other concerns you may have. If you plan on transferring, but are unsure of what school you may be interested in, checking out this event could be helpful with weighing your options. Even if you don't have a transfer plan at all, meeting with these universities could change your mind!

Regardless of what your plan looks like, the College Transfer Fair is a great opportunity for anyone to connect with other people and schools! Signing up prior to the event is not required. Once you arrive, a staff member will record your OTC ID number and you can start visiting! Also, feel free to come and go as you please. Even a ten-minute walk through can be beneficial to you.

If you have any other questions regarding this event, more information can be found on OTC's event calendar.



Honors in Action

Amelia Lai

Honors in Action (HIA) is an important project for Alpha Psi Tau and any other Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter, as it is one of the requirements for becoming a Five Star Chapter, part of PTK's international rankings. HIA also provides an excellent opportunity for students to become active members of our chapter without needing to be physically present at some function.

PTK can be a great thing to put on your resumé, but it is far more valuable when you are an active member. Your membership will reflect much better on you with the references that naturally come from being involved and when you can point to activities you have taken part in your community. It can be difficult to take advantage of the opportunities that our chapter provides, but HIA is easily accessible to any student. There are two main components: honors and action.

The honors phase comes first and involves student-led research into a question about a theme provided by PTK. This year's theme is play, and we are specifically interested in the "Architecture and Design of Play." Our question is about the relationship between play and productivity both in business and at school. We are expecting a positive relationship to be present, and the next step will be to find some way to integrate play into something we can do here on our campuses or in our surrounding communities.

That will be the action phase. It is difficult to confidently speak about what our action will look like at the moment because it is supposed to naturally arise from our research, but we will begin planning our action *within the next month*. After it has been completed, we will write a report about the entire process and submit it to PTK to be graded and to hopefully win some awards.

If you are interested in shaping our action and becoming active in your chapter, the best time to get involved is now. The Honors in Action Committee holds weekly meetings open to all on Fridays at 4:30 PM to discuss our progress. These meetings are hosted in the Honors Lounge on Springfield campus in ICE 354. Regular attendance at these meetings is not mandatory to participate, but if this time does not work for you, consider meeting individually with me at your convenience.

To receive access to these meetings or for more information, email laia@otc.edu. I'm looking forward to working with you!

Word Search Answers

