McBride Honors Program Newsletter 2018

My fellow McBriders:

I write to you today to say that the state of our program is stronger than ever. I make this political allusion in homage to Dr. Ken Osgood, who stepped down as McBride Director in 2017 to become a full-time Historian again, and almost immediately was granted a sabbatical at Harvard’s Kennedy School. He’ll spend the year researching the CIA, the Advertising Industry, and American Domestic Politics in the Cold War, and being involved in a Wednesday night faculty seminar, which he excitedly told me will be “just like a McBride class!” This means it’ll be easy for him to get back in the groove of teaching his McBride sophomore course when he returns to Mines in Fall of 2019.

Ken’s impressive academic work, dedication to his community, and inspiring leadership is a model for all McBriders, past and present. Immediately after taking over the helm from him, I realized that I would have very big shoes to fill.

Other exciting developments have arisen in my first year of McDirectorship: Fall 2017 saw the creation of “University Honors and Scholars Programs (UHSP)”, a new cross-cutting university unit directed by longtime McBride Faculty Toni Lefton. After a university reorganization in summer 2018, McBride now finds its home in UHSP as the flagship program in interdisciplinary university honors, while retaining its close relationship with the Division of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. One of Mines’s strategic initiatives aims to develop and expand new honors and scholars opportunities for Mines students, and bring those opportunities into a larger cohesive community with existing programs. Currently, UHSP includes McBride, the Thorson First Year Honors Program, Undergraduate Research Scholars, the Grand Challenge Scholars...
Program, and Teach@Mines. We have been working all year on ways to develop links between McBride and these programs, as well as with Reuleaux, the new Undergraduate Research Journal, the Mines Undergraduate Research Fellowship, University Ethics Fellows, Humanitarian Engineering, and University Innovation Fellows.

Spring 2018 will mark the third consecutive year that we have admitted twice the number of McSophomores as were admitted when Ken first came on board in 2011. This means the program size has now doubled, bringing the advantages of the McBride experience to 150 highly qualified and passionate students at a time.

Along with this increase in numbers, Professor Rachel Osgood has substantially grown McBride student participation in study abroad and internship experience abroad in her capacity as Practicum Advisor: 23 McBriders took advantage of both short- and long-term global study in 2017-2018. Additionally, Rachel has worked closely with Golden-based organization Hike For Help to create a signature honors experience in Nepal that integrates service learning, engineering, design and education projects with and for Nepalese communities, with cultural learning and exchange.

McBride alumni are also key to our ability to develop and grow opportunities like this. Not only are more of you financially supporting McBride through initiatives like #idigmines, which saw a doubling of McBride gifts in 2018 from 2017, but you also give with your time and talents. Chase Li (2017) was instrumental in developing the Nepal program, Khanh Vu (1993) taught a McBride course this spring on Vietnam that integrated the class and a trip to Ho Chi Minh City with the Mines music department, and Kyle Flanagan (2016) co-facilitated a short term study abroad experience in Barcelona this past winter for a cohort of Thorson First Year Honors Program students.

Thorson, which began under my direction in Fall 2016 as a way to bring an honors experience into the freshman year, has flourished: we’ve brought the McBride ethos of fostering analysis and reflection of ourselves, each other, our communities, and the world to open-ended design questions and real-world engineering problems situated in Golden. Over the past two years, about a third of Thorsonites moved
into McBride. In the application, we ask them what they can bring to McBride, and what they believe McBride can do for them. Madison Berry, who took part in the Thorson Barcelona trip this past winter, wrote this in her McBride application about the value of integrating the arts and sciences: “The world is made of two parts. The arts and the sciences are the gears that keep our world turning. They change little, and through that stability they support the world upon which we stand. But the world is only half complete with science, and only half alive. It is the arts that let the world breathe. The arts are a part of everything. They are light and fulfillment, depth and excitement. The arts interact with the world the way a feather brushes the back of a hand or the way a bell echoes into silence. The arts are the why to the how of science. Both questions are necessary. Neither is more important than the other. And that is why I want to be a McBride student. By being a part of McBride, I will take the first steps on the journey to a life made whole by both the arts and the sciences.”

Madison’s words capture the vision and values of McBride, and make clear that it’s impossible for any of the things I’ve mentioned to have happened without the inspiring and dedicated McBride students, and their relentless pursuit of excellence in work and life. I could write a book-length treatise about how their perspectives, attitudes, work ethic, and passion for life, learning, and making a difference inspire me and all the faculty and staff involved with the program. It’s not hyperbole to say that we wake up each and every day humbled and thrilled to be able to work with you. We all learn and grow so much from each other, and I can’t wait to see what we’ll continue to create together.

McHugs,
Sarah
Thoughts on Division and Unity
Parker Bolstad, Class of 2019

A version of this article was given as an address to the McBride community at our Fall 2017 banquet.

This year I have seen our nation’s democratic experiment come under attack — not by money from interest groups or lobbyist nor by the Electoral College — from all of us. We have become ever more self-righteous, resentful, and closed-minded. We fail to recognize this in ourselves: we think we are in the right, that we are innocent bystanders watching the “other” group act this way. And I think I know what you are thinking, what better way to lose your audience than to insult them? Normally you are right, but at this moment things are not normal. Pluralism is fleeing as we retreat into our smaller and smaller groups. We need serious introspection to reverse this trend, to thwart our predilection for the comfort of groupthink and ideological echo chambers. And rather than go on and on to sound preachy, I
What is McBride if not an exercise in intellectual challenge and self-discovery?

This is not to say that we all need to change our viewpoints and adopt a particular ideological agenda. If anything, I am advocating the exact opposite. Many of our beliefs may not change, but by challenging them, we open ourselves and our beliefs to adaptation and compromise. To be a more understanding society, to be a voter-base that is able to compromise, and to be a more accepting country, we all need to make genuine efforts to challenge our beliefs, accept new information, and defend our ideological perspectives.

There are many ways to do this, but McBride and Mines are good places to start.

Parker spent summer 2018 interning at the Congressional Research Service, the non-partisan think-tank for Congress, in Washington D.C. He is conducting research on domestic environmental policy and international nuclear weapons proliferation.
The Language Beyond
Katrina San Nicolas, Class of 2018

Before my McBride practicum, I never imagined myself saying the word “torschlusspanik” in serious conversation, trying to interpret a German menu and explain what a burrito is, or acting as the sole representative of “typical American behavior.” However, the McBride program challenged me to do all of these things (and a lot more!) last summer. For my capstone experience, I traveled to Karlsho- schule International University in southern Germany and took an International Relations course with students from 22 different countries. The adventure taught me a tremendous amount about language and cultural variation, but connecting with the other participants in meaningful ways remains my favorite takeaway from the experience. While I expected to be shunned for my American ways, the other participants’ eyes often lit up when I told them I represented the US. In my International Relations course, we talked about America’s role as a world power and influence in a number of world conflicts. I had known before that America was powerful, but seeing the country’s place from a worldwide perspective was incredible. I was also the only native English speaker (in a program conducted in English), which I feel guilty about to this day. The world speaks my language, yet all of the other participants had words in two, three, or even four different languages. My practicum thus inspired me to enroll in a Spanish course and plan a trip to Costa Rica to practice further conversation. Language defines thought, and I seek to restructure my world with new words. Ultimately, through my practicum I learned to connect with others in new and unexpected ways. I talked about world politics with the German students, marveled at the pastries my Tunisian friend brought from home, and discussed fashion with some girls from China who had very limited English skills. Contrary to my expectations, a true connection does not even require words but begins with a smile, a shared interest, or an open heart.

Katrina San Nicolas (middle) with friends in Costa Rica
We do not need to be asking ourselves if technology is changing our world. Instead, we need to be asking ourselves, “Who is changing technology?” The future of the modern world is in the hands of those who create it. And, if I learned anything from “Innovation and Discovery in Engineering, Arts, and Sciences,” the Thorson First-Year Honors Program course, it was that engineering is reflective of the designer. Our values, opinions, and ideas define who we are and define the things we create. Therefore, the greater the diversity of the creators, the greater the diversity of the products and services. Having variety serves a greater portion of the population and thus has the ability to impact more change. Therefore, diversity is essential to serve and to solve problems.

So when people tell me I don’t “look like a computer scientist,” I ask them what they would like the people programming their websites, apps, and devices to “look like.” Great products emerge from great service, and great service occurs when the product is reflective of its user. So instead of asking women and minorities if they’re “typical computer scientists,” we need to be asking if we want there to even be a typical to begin with. Women, people of color, and as many other minorities as possible need to be in and lead the tech industry. You can’t solve problems with the same perspective that created them. When we bring diverse backgrounds to the table, innovation happens faster. In turn our technology will be reflective of its diverse creators and reflect a wider array of values.

After all, computer values are, at heart, human values.

**You can’t solve problems with the same perspective that created them.**

In September 2017, I attended the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing, which is the world’s largest gathering of women technologists. In the “sea of men” that is the tech industry, attending this conference was a refreshing experience of professional development and encouragement. At GHC, diversity and innovation perpetuated one another. From the many things I took away from this weekend of networking, job-searching, and fun the most notable is that engineers are not only responsible for the problems we solve, but also those that we create. The lack of diversity in STEM is creating problems that are going undetected because its creators simply can’t see them. We cannot afford to ignore these issues any longer. We all need to unite in cultivating and celebrating diversity in STEM to effectively serve and solve problems. Whether it be supporting women in the workplace as an ally, mentoring young women of the next generation, or leading by example, we all can do something to diversify engineering. Together, we can redefine “typical” in tech.

*Alex studied abroad in Hungary for her McBride practicum in Spring 2018.*
The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) is an educational organization that encourages and promotes the growth and development of undergraduate honors education around the nation. Every year, NCHC hosts a conference allowing honors students, faculty, and administration alike to share their unique experiences with and approaches towards honors education. My involvement with the Thorson First-Year Honors Program and the McBride Honors Program provided me the opportunity to participate and actively contribute to the 2017 NCHC Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia this past October. My experience at the NCHC conference was nothing less than exceptional! The variety of majors and differing backgrounds of the students present challenged and encouraged my thoughts and thought process to widen, deepen, grow, develop, and change.

The conference kicked-off with the City-As-Text event, an activity where small teams investigate and explore a specific part of a larger city or place to understand the interactions between people, nature, and structures. Thorson and McBride first introduced me to this activity by having me investigate a few specific places on the Mines campus, then the city of Golden, and finally the River North District of Denver. The City-As-Text of Atlanta allowed me to apply my previous knowledge of and experience with the activity to a larger scale, while, ironically enough, exploring Midtown Atlanta with two civil engineering majors from two different universities. Even though we had taken similar courses, we viewed Midtown very differently. I noticed the integration of green space into the urban center while the other students noticed the historical buildings and the interwovenness of the transportation system. It was in the reflection portion of the activity, though, that I realized the impact McBride thinking had.

One student remarked that she was very disappointed in her experience in the Midtown district. She shared that, prior to departing, she was told it was the cultural and art district of Atlanta. Immediately, I thought of all the biases that could’ve and would’ve formed if I had known that detail. I inquired whether she thought her bias of what “cultural” meant and her idea of “art” biased how she felt about the area. Basically, how did her being told the intended purpose of the district influence her perception of it. Her response: “Well, we were told it was the cultural and art district.” She didn’t understand where I was coming from. I saw the influence of bias in the activity and in her analysis. I challenged the truth about the district. And, I attribute this to McBride’s constant promotion of unbiasing your biases, questioning what we know as true, and seeing beyond the seen to understand the unseen, the unheard, and the unspoken. Thanks to McBride, and its influence on me as a student, professional, and individual, I was able to share my unique perspective and contribute to and elevate the conversation.

Every day at Mines, I’m surrounded by individuals who are similar to myself: majoring in a STEM field, thinking and solving problems from an engineer’s
perspective. But, NCHC allowed me to connect with individuals in the humanities, political sciences, and liberal arts. I was able to discuss a wide range of subjects with both faculty, staff, and administrators from less technical universities. From artificial reality to Washington, D.C, from Shakespeare to character definition, and everything in between, the subjects of the panels, presentations, and poster sessions allowed me to hear, understand, and learn from these different-minded people. They had different takeaways from the City-As-Text activity; they had different questions and answers to a topic; they had different reasonings behind the subject of their presentation. The uniqueness in everything at NCHC culminated into one larger takeaway: a broader understanding and respect of differing perspectives.

This experience, as a whole, allowed me to reflect on how much McBride has elevated my thought process, challenged my understanding of the world around me, and benefited me beyond the boundaries of a traditional classroom. It also reinforced the importance of seeking out and understanding new and different perspectives and continues to reveal the academic and professional benefits of doing this.

Madison is co-presenting a poster at the 2018 NCHC conference about McBride students’ involvement in Hike For Help and the impact of Service Learning along with McSenior Connor Weddle. Five other McBriders will attend the conference in November 2018.
Where in the World are McBriders?

1. Kyle Flanegin ‘16, Golden CO. Works at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory providing technical assistance on energy efficiency and renewable energy policies for state and local government decision makers.

2. Claire Munsell ’20 studied abroad in Spring 2018 at the University of Otago in New Zealand.

3. Jessica Deters ’17, Blacksburg VA. is pursuing a Ph.D. in Engineering Education at Virginia Tech, focusing on understanding the undergraduate experience of engineering students who do not end up pursuing traditional engineering jobs.

4. Sam Fiorica ’20 studied abroad in Spring 2018 at Pohang University of Science and Technology in South Korea.


Tell us where you are and what you are up to by emailing honors@mines.edu. Follow McBride on Facebook at CSM McBriders Abroad and on Instagram at @mcbridemines.
That’s a Wrap!

We are proud of all our outstanding McBride students and their accomplishments this year and a special congratulations to those who have gone above and beyond with their contribution to our community. This year we recognized seven outstanding McBride students and one faculty member at the Spring Reception.

Thomas Philipose Outstanding Senior Award:
    Vy Duong

The McBride Honors Program Award for the Outstanding Senior Student:
    Matt Kowalsky

The Colorado School of Mines Honors Campus Citizenship Award:
    Samantha Beck

The McBride Honors Program Award for the Outstanding Junior Student:
    Daniela Machnik

The McBride Honors Program Award for the Outstanding Junior Student:
    Caelyn Rittenhouse

The McBride Honors Program Award for the Outstanding Sophomore Student:
    Madison Anderson

The Colorado School of Mines Honors Service Award:
    Connor Weddle

Colorado School of Mines Ange Melaragno Service Award:
    Sandy Woodson

We would also like to recognize our spring 2018 graduates.

Samantha Beck
Brooke Cawthon
Alisha Eskew
Sam Fynes
Catherine Giesenhagen
Megan Hansen
Josh Helmick
Elise Irvine
Matt Kowalsky

Kenneth Li
Martin Lozano
Noah McQueen
Mackenzie Parimuha
Katharyn Peterman
Adam Pollack
Nic Rummel
Katrina San Nicolas
Ken Sullivan
Thank you for your continued support of McBride! Stay tuned for alumni events near you, and watch for the McBride campaign during #idigmines on February 7th!