



# Talk It Out

News & Notes  
Spring 2023

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## Theme & Cover Explanation

One of the most quintessential qualities of the Honors College experience is the depth and abundance of meaningful conversations passed between students and faculty. In the Honors House, DeHority, and anywhere else an Honors student may be, there is likely to be some sort of chat, debate, or dialogue going on. To honor this phenomenon, our theme “Talk It Out” showcases how and why Honors students are engaging in these discourses. The bright and bold colors of the thought bubbles are representative of speaking loudly and proudly, as the Honors College is a place to learn, question, and experiment with ideas. *Cover design by: Kennedy Court*

# Letter from the Editor

**M**y very first Honors class was in the garage classroom with Dr. Jackson Bartlett for HONR 199. We talked about redlining, environmental justice issues, and discussed the novel *The Color of Law*. I never had experience with these topics in high school, so as a first-semester freshman, this course gave me an opportunity to engage with information that was new to me.

Moving from freshman year to sophomore year, I began the humanities sequence with Dr. Jason Powell. This set of three courses dramatically introduced me to the socratic teaching method and made me realize that my Honors peers really were interested in what each other had to say.

As a junior, I took HONR 189 with Dr. Abdelaadim Bidaoui in which we discussed the Arab World. This course shaped my worldview, opened up my perspective, and effectively allowed me to study my own areas of interest within the context of the course.

Finally, as a senior, I completed my Honors Thesis Project with Dr. Mary Annette Rose and successfully drove my own narrative on content that mattered to me. I conducted interviews, wrote stories, and created a publication—giving opportunity for my own work to spark scholarly communication.

When thinking back on all the experiences I've had as a Ball State Honors student over the last four years, conversing with my professors, with my advisors, and with my friends is what sticks out to me. By chatting with my peers at the biannual Whiting Scholar banquets, catching up with my freshman-year Dehority neighbors when I see them on campus, and leading



biweekly *News & Notes* meetings, the Ball State Honors community has given me the opportunity to both uplift my own voice and better listen to other voices.

I wanted my final edition as the editor of *News & Notes* to speak to what I value most about my time as an Honors student—hence, “Talk It Out.” I can’t say enough about how much my time as the editor over the last two years and as a student over the last four years has been formative and inspiring for me. I hope this edition provokes discussions and encourages continued conversations within the Honors community.

**Talk to you later,  
Karisa Candreva**



# Strides Toward Equity

## Conversations on disability pride within the Honors College and Ball State communities spark positive change

Story by: Emma Walker

The Honors College is working to promote healthy campus-changing conversations, including the conversation on disability pride. Ball State University has been one of the leading universities in accessibility since 1970 (in.gov). The University continues to adapt its campus to its students by heeding the input of its faculty.

To make strides toward the goal of equity and inclusion, the Honors College Diversity Project (HCDP) hosted a disability pride event on January 31 in the Letterman Building. Dr. Evie Simmons-Reed and Dr. Courtney Jarrett led a panel discussion on what disability pride means to them personally and what it means to Ball State University as a whole. Dr. Simmons-Reed is an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the Department of Applied Behavior Analysis, and she is legally blind. She is currently the director and founder of the CAPS2 Program, which focuses on “cultivating the academic, personal, and social success of students on the autism spectrum.”

During the panel discussion, Dr. Simmons-Reed stressed the importance of self-advocating as well as advocating for others—because that is how the conversation gets started. By advocating for university-wide changes, improvements and conversations, people with disabilities, and allies alike, can ignite a spark that leads to action. This advocacy is what keeps Ball State continuously improving its accessibility. The University supports students with resources from the Office of Disability Services, clubs such as HCDP where students can work together for change, and multiple online sources.

According to the accessibility web page, “Ball State University strives to strengthen our Inclusive Excellence by working to eliminate barriers for our current and prospective employees, students, and visitors.” Congruent with the Ball State mission statement, Dr.

Simmons-Reed claims that “if we create spaces

“if we create spaces where people can be their authentic selves, we can reduce some of the issues we have with anxiety, mental health, and all the other things that go along with the already stressful environment of taking classes.”

where people can be their authentic selves, we can reduce some of the issues we have with anxiety, mental health, and all the other things that go along with the already stressful environment of taking classes.”

But, no matter how much the University works toward equity, the small part of identity that does come from a disability is still stigmatized by our ableist world. The strongest force against these affronts is discussion on disability pride which promotes humanity and calls for inclusive efforts to be made. To be effective, conversations must be open-minded and intentional. Dr. Jarrett, Director of Ball State University’s Office of Disability Services, brings up a common roadblock in the disability pride conversation: the stereotypes associated with the word “disability” itself. She asserts that “disability is not a bad word,” and the belief that it is so is a stigma that can only be dissolved by effective conversation.

Dr. Jarrett recognizes that even though conversation is the way to change, it can be hard to engage with a topic so multi-dimensional. For



those who would like to get involved in the disability pride conversation but do not know where to start, Dr. Jarrett recommends the movie *Lives Worth Living* to give a good overview of the history behind the disability rights movement. She also encourages the viewing of “Crip Camp,” a show she believes depicts life with a disability through a fairly accurate lens. However, to recognize people who identify as disabled, students can begin by appreciating their peers and engaging in respectful conversations to better understand others’ experiences.

Last fall, Disability Services worked with 3,200 students on campus. Dr. Jarrett boasts that Ball State has more chair users than all the other universities in Indiana combined. With so many people with such diverse needs, Ball State gives its best effort to make success reachable to all students. The Office for Disability Services has

many accommodations they provide in the realm of housing, academics, student organizations, and dining. They even provide sign language interpreters, captioners, braille embossers, and more.

Dr. Jarrett ends the panel discussion by answering the question of how to be a good ally to those with disabilities. She says “it’s better to ask and not assume,” encouraging allies to offer help, participate in the conversation, listen, and call problems out to the campus and greater community. Dr. Simmons-Reed praises the flier for the event, created by HCDP, in which there is a statement offering students any accommodations they need to participate. By hosting the event with inclusivity in mind, the Honors College encouraged disability pride and established itself as a leader within a campus changing for the better.



Infographic by: Megan Pax

# Saying Farewell To Dean Emert

Dr. John Emert is retiring in May 2023 after holding his position as Dean of the Honors College since 2017

*Photo Story by: Emilie Allen, Photos submitted by: Dr. John Emert*



Dr. Emert has been serving as the Dean of the Honors College since 2017, and he has been a part of the Honors College faculty since 1989. As he plans to retire this year, students will miss the Dean's positivity and encouragement. Throughout his time teaching Honors students, Dr. Emert has emphasized the willingness to challenge a statement. He encourages that "it's okay to challenge something you may think is wrong, and I want students to keep going, keep challenging, even if they don't quite get it right the first time."



One day, Dr. Emert might be giving a speech to welcome the Honors freshmen; the next, he might be in his office, listening to a student share a recent accomplishment. While the Dean's job has varied, a few things remain constant: he enjoys being accessible to students and bringing together different majors. "That's what the Honors College is all about," Dr. Emert says, "fostering a sense of discussion and openness to talk to professors and faculty."





Dr. Emert braved the cold in February of 2019 while shoveling snow outside the Honors House. While shoveling isn't included in the Dean's list of daily duties, it needed to be done. Seeing Dr. Emert around campus, and especially around the Honors House, is a common occurrence; this year, he attended the Homecoming parade and participated in the Deans' halftime event at a basketball game. The campus, not just the Honors College, will miss Dr. Emert in his retirement. But don't worry—he will be around campus during the new Dean's transition.

Dr. Emert welcomed the first donation for the expansion of the Honors House in December of 2019. He recalled the opening, renovation, and expansion of the Honors House, and he recognized the differences in the classes held inside. Dr. Emert said that the Honors House provides a more thoughtful atmosphere for discussion and conversation within Honors classes. It also contains the Dean's office, where students are always welcome to say hello.



Dr. Emert volunteered at the 2022 Ball State Day of Service at East Washington Academy. He painted the purple pawprints on the ground for EWA's mascot, the wildcat. Dr. Emert has always led by example, volunteering to improve the community, as well as Ball State.





# If These Walls Could Talk

## A History of the Honors House, Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball, and the Honors College Program

*Story by: Kennedy Court*

**T**he Ball State Honors House, donated by Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball, holds a rich history of educational prestige. After 88 years of standing tall, the house watches another generation of Honors students pass through the halls on the road to graduation. The house itself has had many distinct eras. From its completion date in 1935 as a functioning household to eventually becoming home to the Ball State University Honors College, these walls hold a tangible history. If these walls could talk, what would they say?

The house, as it is known today, operates as an academic building for advisors and classes. But this function of the building is relatively new. The house has adapted to the times and the culture of Ball State University as a whole. In 2009, when the building was renovated and expanded, the house of Edmund and Virginia Ball became the home of the Honors College program. The Honors program has held residence in many buildings across campus. From offices in Whiting Business Building and the Burkhardt Building in the 1980s, to Carmichael Hall in the 1990s, to finally coming home to the Ball House at the turn of the twenty-first century. Since this christening, the Honors College program has remained unified through the walls of the Ball House.

Donated by Edmund and Virginia Ball, the house is full of Ball family history. Born in 1905, Edmund was a son of the Ball family, from which the University derives its name. From serving in the Air Force to managing the Ball Brothers glass manufacturing site, Edmund shared his time with the business world. He grew up a witness to his parent's philanthropy and desired to emulate their generosity. His wife, Virginia was also an avid philanthropist whilst breaking traditions and becoming the first woman to serve on the

National Wildlife Foundation's Board. After graduating from Baylor University, she later adopted Ball State as her home university—and became one of the most generous benefactors the school has ever seen. The Honors program was spearheaded by Edmund and Virginia's donations.

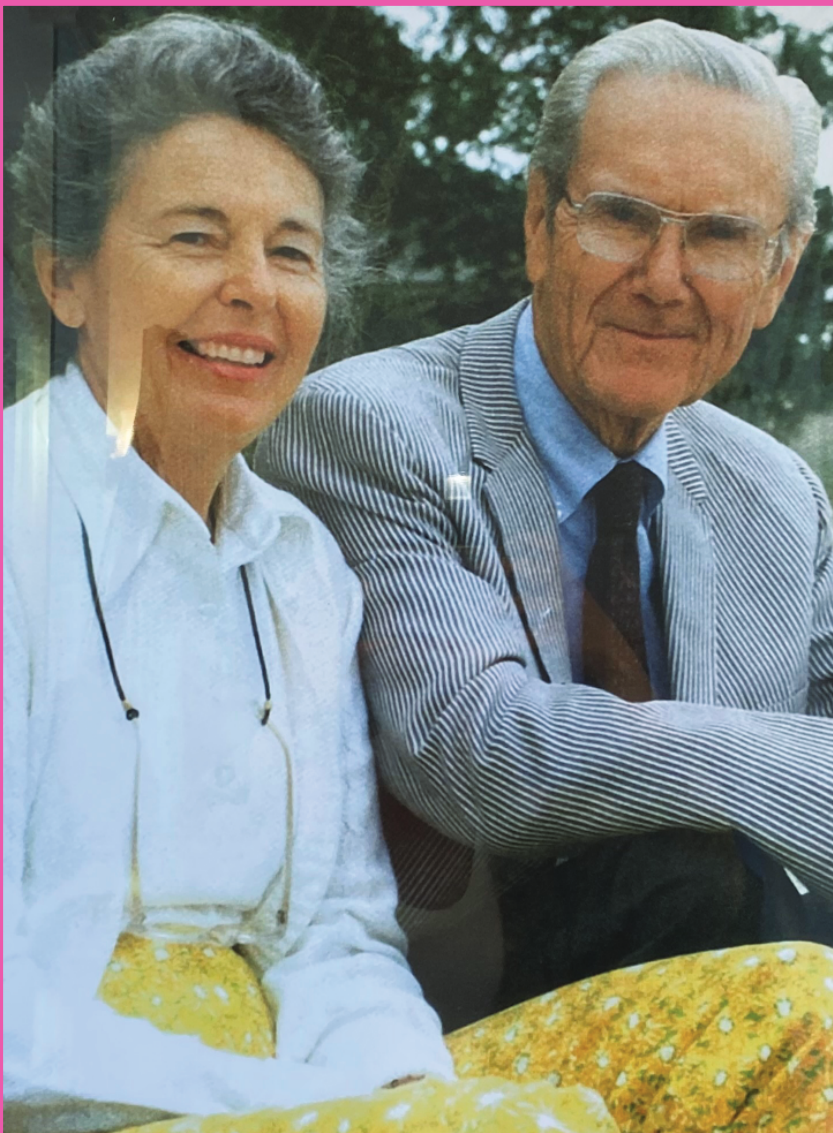
From  
residential to  
educational,  
this little white  
house holds a  
legacy

More than just students earning degrees, the Ball House is home to the most comprehensive Honors College program in Indiana, and one of the best in the nation on top of that. Ranking high in academics and diversity, equity, and inclusion makes the Ball State Honors College program, and the Ball Honors House as the program's unofficial emblem, stand out amongst the crowd.

Thousands of Honors students walk these halls. The history is palpable in these walls. From residential to educational, this little white house holds a legacy: all of the students, staff, and professors call the house their home away from home. The house has had its phases and renovations, but it will always be home to a lasting prestige. And, oh if these walls could talk!



The historic Ball Honors House before it was home to the Honors Program. *Photo sourced from Minnetrista Museum & Gardens*



A portrait of Edmund and Virginia Ball hangs in the Honors House today. *Photo by: Karisa Candreva*

*Information found in the story sourced from The Ball State University Honors College Oral History Project: Lessons & Reflections by Margo Morton & "It's home sweet new home for Ball State's Honors College and its students" by Gail Werner*



# Talk the Talk: Thesis Edition

See what three Honors seniors decided to talk about for their thesis project...

Infographic by: Annika Sharlow

“My thesis, titled “Coastal Erosion in the Indiana Dunes Region: Promoting Sustainable Solutions,” takes a more creative approach to an issue which is otherwise viewed from a scientific perspective. I conducted both an interview and [a] literature review to produce a final paper and a brochure which discuss conserving the Indiana Dunes ecosystem by promoting native plant growth, relocating buildings, dredging, and using break walls when necessary. The final paper and brochure were crafted to be comprehensible to a general audience so that local residents and visitors can use this resource to become more educated on protecting this biodiverse environment.”

- Jillian Burton,  
*Natural Resources &  
Environmental Management*



Photos submitted by: Jillian Burton, Sydney Sparks,  
and Makayla Booth



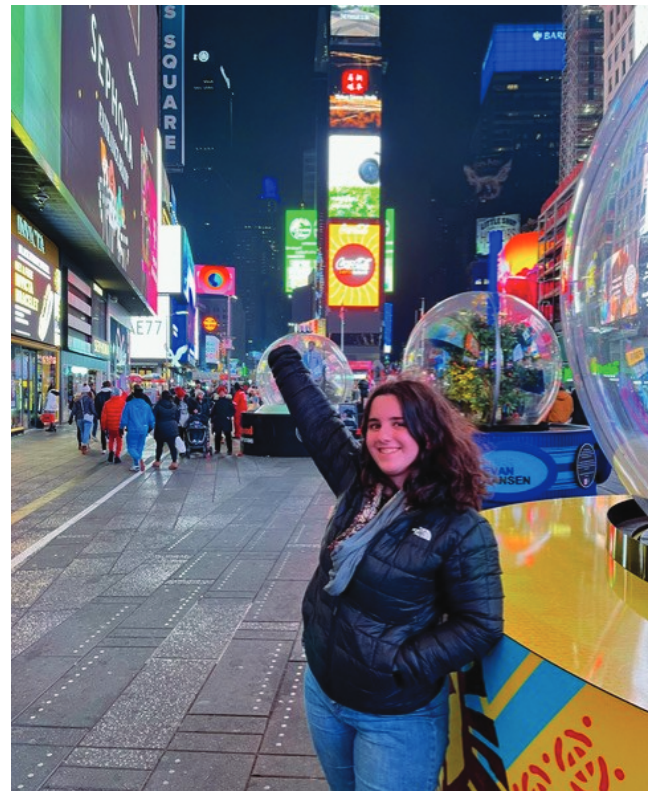


“My Honors thesis identifies why it is important to incorporate African/African American artists into the curriculum within classrooms today—specifically, by identifying racial issues taking place and discussing how African/African American artists address these racial issues through their artwork. I also discuss how African/African American artists provide opportunities for students to learn about race and different artistic styles [in] media and how they connect to their personal lives today.”

- Makayla Booth,  
*Art Education*

“My thesis was about how social media has changed the pro-choice movement throughout history and made it more accessible and intersectional. I wrote about the history of the movement and how it has changed over time, and particularly focused on the changes that happened between the 1970s and 1980s and the late 2010s.”

- Sydney Sparks,  
*Political Science*



# Why You Should Ruin Your Life

Sarah Olsen, Honors College sophomore, shares her experience with studying abroad in Chambéry, France

Story & Photos submitted by: Sarah Olsen

I've spent my entire life in Indiana. I was born at the big St. Vincent hospital on 86th street in Indianapolis. I went to the same school system for kindergarten through twelfth grade. Without fail, every annual family reunion I attended had a multi-bracket cornhole tournament, complete with a huge shiny trophy to be given to that year's winner. Of course, I never won the award myself since I had the hand-eye coordination of a toddler playing tee-ball, but as the youngest of all the cousins I was happy enough just to be given the chance to throw the dusty old bean bags with the older kids. Overall, life was safe, though predictable, from my corn-filled corner of the world, which is probably why I chose to leave it for five months to study abroad in Chambéry, France this spring semester.

Don't get me wrong, it wasn't that I was unhappy in Indiana—my family is still there, as are my friends, and for that reason I'll always associate the state with home. The reality was life in Indiana looked a lot like a country road: long, flat, unbroken, and predictable. I've never had much patience for stagnation—growing up my dad had to frequently remind me that time wouldn't pass any faster whether I stared down the clock or not—and so I saw study abroad as my one-way entry ramp to life on the highway.

Fast-forward to months of planning (plus a one day round-trip drive to Chicago to register for my student visa), I finally departed Indianapolis for Chambéry on January eighth of this year and arrived the next day three planes, two trains, and thirty-six hours later.

In hindsight, studying abroad was in a lot of ways everything I thought it would be: intricate gothic architecture, daily walks to pick out a fresh baguette from the boulangerie (that's "bakery" in French), and weekends consumed by day trips to nearby countries. I've found I'm particularly fond



Trevi Fountain, Rome, Italy

of Italy. **Although I could fill an entire novel with what went exactly as I imagined, I think I could also write another two with everything that was unexpected.**

For one thing, mountains are tall. Of course, this is something I knew before arriving in France, but having come from the tenth flattest state in the US, according to World Population Review, it's safe to say that I was unprepared to tackle the steep 35-minute walk to the local university in the foothills of the nearby mountains from my residence in Chambéry's city center. As a result, I showed up to class out of breath, red in the face, and exhausted more times than I care to admit. Add in temperatures that hovered right around freezing for the first month and a half I was there (the town was in the French Alps, after all), and you can see why the walk to school quickly became something I dreaded.

To add insult to injury, the university itself wasn't easy to navigate either. Classes were held for an hour and a half each, and about a third of my classes were doubles, making them a total of three hours. This was made worse by the



organization of the class schedules. Two weeks at the end of the semester were reserved for finals testing; however, not all classes were held for the duration of the semester. That meant that some courses were only in session for eight weeks but you were still tested on their material at the end of the year—even after the class had ended two and a half months ago. Confused? Me too.

The idea is that this system will allow students to take as many courses as possible, which is necessary because, as dictated by the French Ministry of Education, France requires students to obtain 180 credits to graduate with a license (the US equivalent of a bachelor's degree), and it is to be done in a period of three years—for comparison, the US allows four years for students to complete 120 credits.

The unfortunate result of these strenuous requirements is that students are frequently overloaded and unprepared for their exams.

Elizabeth Rice, also an international student from America studying at the University of New Mexico, experienced this scheduling conundrum first hand.

“Last week, I took my first ever intensive course called Strategic Pricing in Hospitality. Our professor was an expert in revenue optimization with over twenty years of leadership experience in the field. He works full-time in Paris and only traveled to Chambéry for two days to teach this class,” Rice said. “This meant we had to fit an entire semester’s worth of education into two days... [so] out of 48 consecutive hours, I spent 15 in this class.”

While the French education system has some unattractive qualities, it isn’t wholly bad. Lots of time in class means lots of time surrounded by other people. I personally had a lot of classes with other exchange students, which means I had the privilege to meet and speak to students from countries like Italy, Romania, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Morocco, Russia, Peru, and New Zealand. This was by far the best and most unexpected part about the study abroad experience.

Yes, the sights, food, and trips I took while abroad were all incredible. **But the people that I**

**met were among the most kind, thoughtful, and determined individuals I’ve ever spoken to, and the conversations I had with them gave me the feeling of putting on glasses for the first time; I didn’t know the world I saw was blurry until I spoke to them.** To

hear first-hand of the intimate details of lives and experiences I didn’t know existed gave me a taste of the enormous scope of our world, and it made me a more empathetic person as a result.

Now, when I think about what comes next, I feel more than a little frustrated. I had a plan for when I came home and I knew what I wanted: to finish my undergraduate degree at Ball State, apply to graduate school, move out west, find a job, fall in love, etc. Studying abroad ruined my plan for life, though.

After this semester, I don’t know what I want or where I want to go. My once career-centric mindset has been swapped for a drive to see as much as I can, while meeting as many people as possible. And though this change may involve more risk, it also means you have the chance of meeting a version of yourself you might actually like.

So my best advice? If you have the opportunity to ruin your life too, take it and don’t look back.

*“The Venice of the Alps,” Annecy, France*





# Let's Talk About Banned Books

Cardinal Classics, a new on-campus book club, discusses the political and social significance of banning books

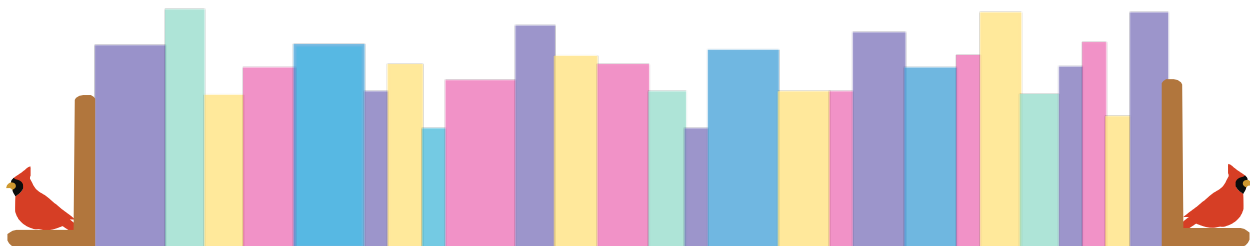
Story & Design by: Caroline Emerick

Meet Cardinal Classics: the Ball State Honors College's newest club. Founded in November of last year, the club had its first exploratory call-out meeting for prospective members in January. This club is the only literature-focused book club on campus, and it is open to all Ball State students. With different themes for each semester, the group aims to focus on covering a wide range of influential topics in literature. Kicking the semester off, Cardinal Classics took on the controversial topic of banned books, spawning great conversations for the spring semester based on the three books they read—*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* by Angela Davis, and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. Each book was banned in either schools, public libraries, or prisons for reasons including using inappropriate and graphic language, questioning religion, criticizing the prison system, or having sexually explicit material. Banned books are controversial because the nature of banning them is inherently a form of censorship. According to the Cardinal Classics website, book banning is “a means of silencing and oppressing certain topics, ideas, and themes,” so by reading banned books, the club is dissecting “why this is relevant to [them] today as individuals and members of society.”

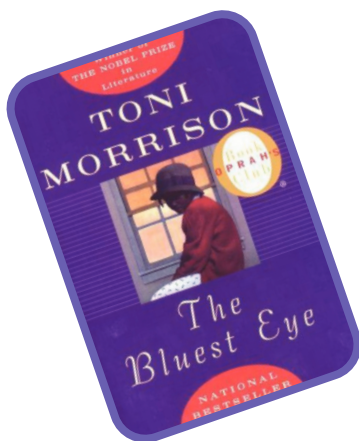
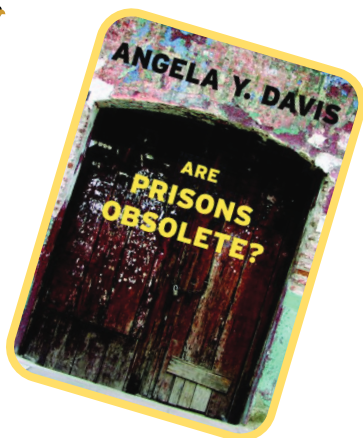


“Going into the discussion knowing that there are going to be different ideas and opinions on things, and just knowing that you’re in a safe zone of no judgment—I feel like that is my favorite thing. And getting to talk with people of different backgrounds, they all bring in their experiences, so getting to get those different perspectives from such different backgrounds was something I really enjoyed.”

- Makenna Poindexter



## To Do: Read for Cardinal Classics



## Meet the Executive Team



Makenna Poindexter  
President



Justice Reckner  
Vice-President



Sophie Richardson  
Vice-President



Emily King  
Secretary



Eleanor Witt  
Treasurer

*Photos submitted by: Cardinal Classics Executive Team*

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## Donations

If you would like to make a gift to Ball State or the Honors College, please use the QR code linked to the Ball State Foundation website. There is a drop down menu that will allow you to select the Honors College.

You can also visit the Alumni & Friends page on the Honors College website to update your contact information or get involved with the Honors College from the comfort of your community.



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