Honors Program Salutes Honors Program Students

Congratulations to all students, family, parents, and friends.

Dear UCCS Honors Program's Faculty, Mentors and Community:

In our 20th year, our spotlight today is on our three Fall 2026 graduates: **Ally Anderson, Jessica Chappelle, and Zoe Warren**. In 2007, UCCS Honors Program was established with Dr. Hackman as our first Director. UCCS Honors Program (HP) started intentional conversation around Gray Matters that things are not just binary; life, society, interactions, and many other situations and places have the non-binary qualities – they are essentially gray matters, and our mantra has been that *Gray Matters*!

Honors Program launched an AMP Ambassador *pilot* program last year (cohort 2026 document). This year three students have been selected as designated AMP-Ambassadors. They will be advised by Dr. deVries who is our UCCS-HP AMP program Advisor.

AMP Pathways are also available towards graduate studies in Gray Matters framed as Complex Systems. As described in recently approved cohort 2027 document posted on our website graduate studies in Complex Systems is part of MSCS-GMI's AMP program.

We are proud of our most recent honors program students who completed our curriculum: We are proud of their achievements! Thank you for all your hardwork.

Congratulations to Ally Anderson, Jessica Chappelle, and Zoe Warren

UCCS Honors Program Director on behalf of UCCS Honors Program Faculty, Staff, Portfolio Mentors.

Ally Anderson-- Honors Program Spotlight 11.03.26

I was born in Montana but spent a good portion of my upbringing moving around. I also lived in Utah, Texas, and Wyoming a couple of times. I moved to Colorado in 2020 and I love it! My family gave me the opportunity to live in new places so young, and that is truly what made me who I am today. I believe my early exposure to different perspectives is what gave me a passion and ability to work with people. At UCCS I majored in Exercise Science with a pre-physical therapy pathway. I grew up dancing, as well as teaching dance for a few years. I still enjoy taking a class from time to time. I also play guitar, enjoy baking, cooking, hiking, and camping. I adopted a kitten a few months ago as well and she is perfect! My most exciting recent accomplishment was being accepted into physical therapy school!

What fascinates **Student-Name** about the Honors Program

The honors program appealed to me because I wanted to be surrounding by a group of likeminded individuals that I knew would push me and keep me accountable. I also loved the mentorship aspect from the professors. I have learned so much from other people in the program that I otherwise would have never. I also loved that the program touched on grey matters and complex topics as I am particularly interested in complex neurological issues in physical therapy.

Student-Name's Future Plans

I will be starting physical therapy school next year to earn my doctorate in physical therapy. So far, I have been accepted into University of Utah in Salt Lake City and am waiting to hear back from a couple other schools to make my final decision.

Acknowledgements by **Student-Name**

There are so many people that helped me get through college, and I am so grateful for them. My parents are wonderful and have always been supportive in my life and especially of my goal to go to PT school. I am grateful for the physical therapists I work with and the ones I had the opportunity to shadow. They were all so kind and gave me great advice. One of my favorite professors Dr. Paige Whitney gave me the opportunity to work with a Parkinson's Exercise class for a semester and wrote me a letter of recommendation. The honors professors and Ms. Pina have been a constant source of support and encouragement. I am grateful for the grace they have given me, and the opportunity to be in this program and be pushed out of my comfort zone in the best way as a person and student.

Congratulations on being UCCS Honors Program's spot-light feature!



Jessica Chappelle -- Honors Program Spotlight Fall, 2026

I've always had a passion for art and creativity, which inspired me to pursue UX Design and find ways to combine creativity with problem-solving. On campus, I was involved in the UCCS Swim Club, after being a competitive swimmer for 10 years, and had the unique experience of being the UCCS Mascot, Clyde the Mountain Lion! I studied abroad in Prague and loved exploring new cultures and stepping outside my comfort zone. When I'm not creating something, you can probably find me at a concert! I love music, traveling, and saying yes to new experiences that help me grow both personally and creatively.

What fascinates **Jessica** about the Honors Program

What I loved most about being part of the UCCS Honors Program was getting to meet like-minded people who were genuinely passionate about their interests and excited to learn. Carol Pina always put on such fun and engaging events that made being part of the program feel like a community. Dr. Kuzma and Dr. Semwal also made a huge impact on my experience by always encouraging students to pursue their interests while challenging us to think more deeply and find meaning in what we do. The Honors Program gave me the opportunity to explore my interests and grow both academically and personally.

Jessica's Future Plans

After graduation, I hope to pursue a career in UX design where I can continue my passion for creativity. I will also continue traveling, learning, and challenging myself every day!

Acknowledgements by **Jessica**

I would first like to say thank you to my parents, Renee and Robert, for their endless support and motivation. I am incredibly grateful to have them by my side through any endeavor I choose to do. Thank you to my brother, Jack, who never fails to humble me, but is always there for me. And thank you to my partner, Maddie, who has only ever shown me constant love, kindness, and support. Also, a big thank you to the professors in the Technical Communication and Information Design program, who have given me an amazing education and supported my growth as a student and designer. I feel excited about my future, and I wouldn't be where I am today without all these wonderful people.

Congratulations on being UCCS Honors Program's spot-light feature!



Zoë Warren -- Honors Program Spotlight Fall, 2026, October 28th

I was born in Moab, Utah and spent most of my time growing up there. I love to hike, rock climb, play D&D and board games, and spend time with my loved ones. At UCCS I majored in Sociology with a minor in pre-law. I am honored to have been selected for the Outstanding Graduate Student Award for Sociology, and I am grateful to be finishing the honors program here at UCCS.

What fascinates Zoë about the Honors Program

The honors program has been a wonderful place for me to connect with other students, especially during my first year here. Mainly I have appreciated the honors programs being a place where I can find help and support from our leadership team, Mrs. Pina, Dr. DeVries, Dr. Semwhal, and Dr. Kuzma. They have been very gracious and helpful throughout my time here. I have really enjoyed the movie discussions and especially escape room events. Finally, it has meant a lot to me to be given the opportunity to play my final project board game and share it with my peers. Thank you again, everyone, for that opportunity.

Zoë's Future Plans

My immediate plan is to take a gap year during which I will do some internships, save money for graduate school and explore the various fields of law that are of interest to me before I go into Law school. Once I decide to go to Graduate school, I plan to attend the University of Utah for their excellent law program.

Acknowledgements by Zoë

I have so many acknowledgments, so thank you to everyone I am about to list because you have been such an important part in my journey. I am grateful to Dr. Devries and Dr. Kuzma for helping me get started and expanding my interest in grey matters. Thank you to all of my sociology professors: Professor Valkyrie, who helped me fall in love with sociology and the reason I chose it as my major. Thanks, because I don't think I would have done as well in psychology. Professor Lofton, for helping me through two difficult classes that taught me so much about sociology and intersectionality. And to Professor Companion, for helping me through my capstone project, jumping on calls with me, and opening my eyes to the wide gaps in my knowledge about the Native American community.

Finally, I want to say thank you to all of my family and friends, even those not listed, because they all helped me in and outside of school. Thank you to my parents for all their love and support through everything, and especially for giving me courage when I felt like I would fail. Thank you to my grandma and grandpa for helping me buy my textbooks and telling me they are proud. Thank you to my brother for being the support I needed and always giving me a good laugh. Finally, thank you to my partner for being there during the hard times and encouraging me every step of the way.

I worked very hard to get to where I am, and I am proud of what I have done. It would have been a lot harder without the love and support of the people above, especially my family and teachers. I can honestly say that the sociology department and the honors program are my favorite things about UCCS and the whole reason I have loved my experience here.

Congratulations on being UCCS Honors Program's spotlight feature!

