



# Spring 2021 Newsletter

Special Edition

## A Note:

The pandemic has affected us all in many ways. We've been kept apart from our family and friends. We've had to take classes and attend concerts from our bedroom. Priorities and goals have shifted as is typical when life takes an unexpected turn.

Unfortunately, the Spring 2021 newsletter as you are used to seeing it didn't happen. However, we would still like to honor the PSP alumni that provided interviews, submitted pictures, and answered survey questions even in the midst of chaos. So, we have created a special, alumni-only edition of our PSP newsletter to replace the typical spring edition. We hope you enjoy it, and we look forward to bringing you our typical newsletter for Fall 2021.

## Alumni Spotlight

**Mitchell Ridnour, Class of 2005, BSE**

**If you could come back for an afternoon and do one thing in Iowa city, what would it be?**

I would love to come back to Iowa City on a crisp, and sunny fall afternoon to catch a tailgate and a football game at Kinnick Stadium. Iowa City is already beaming with energy but college game days are truly next level.

**Have you picked up any fun quarantine hobbies during the past year?**

Blockchain and cryptocurrency research has become a significant hobby of mine this year. I truly believe the technology will be extremely disruptive and it has been fascinating to research and invest in the larger more well-known concepts (e.g. Ethereum and Polkadot) and discovering those smaller projects that have incredible potential. I recently read about some opportunities to potentially tokenize/invest in scholars coming out of high school, helping pay for their higher education, and then being invested in their career. I think I would have laughed at this concept back when I started in 2001, but I think it may be here sooner than we think. We'll have to see how this concept evolves in the coming years and how it may impact the scholarship space.

**What advice would you like to share with PSP scholars (and other students) about their first year or two here at Iowa? Any professional or financial advice for students nearing graduation as they navigate the post-pandemic job market?**

First and foremost, enjoy your time at Iowa! It will pass by before you know it, so try to maximize your engagement both on campus and off campus, every single day. You never know how the simple conversations could spark life-long friendships, expand your network, and quite literally change the course of your life. So, step outside your comfort zone and never turn down an opportunity to meet new people.

Secondly, utilize the career services department, as much as possible. It was such a great resource back when I was preparing for interviews. Attend the career fairs and do what you can to land an internship or co-op prior to graduating. Besides the wealth of experience that you will get, it really does give you a foundation to speak to during job interviews and getting your foot in the door for that dream job you may be considering.



## Throwback Photo and Alumni Snapshot

### Lauren McCarthy, Class of 2006, BA



*When I was studying abroad in Chile during my junior year, I went downhill skiing one weekend (for the first and last time!) with other American students. One of them was fellow Presidential Scholar **Jennifer Kruse 05BA**, whose host mom found us these amazing ski outfits. Jenn very patiently helped me learn to ski and we have stayed friends all this time. I'm on the right and Jenn is on the left.*

**Major(s):** Political Science and International Studies, Spanish minor

**Graduate School:** Cambridge University, MPhil in Latin American Studies. University of Minnesota, Postbaccalaureate Certificate in Multicultural Undergraduate Teaching and Learning

**What Lauren is currently doing:**

Transfer Student Transition Advisor at Drake University. I advise incoming transfer students to support their transition to Drake, facilitating registration, retention, and integration on campus.

**A favorite Honors memory:**

The Honors Program was a huge, positive element of my time at Iowa, so I have a lot of happy memories and lifelong friendships connected to it (including being married to a fellow Presidential Scholar, **Mike Schmidt, 06BA**). One memory that stands out was at the awards ceremony my freshman year. Bob Kirby, then the associate director of the UHP, congratulated me on a successful first year at Iowa and offered me a job as a staff member at the UHP. I was surprised but happy to be invited to work for the UHP. I ended up working there for two years, until I was elected Vice President of Student Government and had to swap the brand-new Blank Honors Center for the basement of the IMU. I became good friends with several of my fellow staffers, washed a lot of mugs, and refilled the printer many, many times. The Honors Program was always welcoming to me and I'm so grateful for the opportunities and relationships that came from it.

## Spring 2021 Alumni Survey

We'd love to know what class at Iowa was the most impactful for you. Something in your major? A Gen Ed? An Elective? Answer our quick, one-minute survey to tell us. Answers will be shared in the fall 2021 newsletter.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeURs1ErDaDXYIxF8\\_qsQtjzvX-9e-3KLNDiKQriZxIoYR8A/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeURs1ErDaDXYIxF8_qsQtjzvX-9e-3KLNDiKQriZxIoYR8A/viewform)



