

Honoring the Seniors of Alpha Kappa Alpha



The women of Alpha Kappa Alpha welcome new members to the ever growing and ever persistent Sigma Zeta chapter. Alpha Kappa Alpha also celebrates their four graduating seniors who will be leaving behind their legacy reinstating the Sigma Zeta chapter. (Photo Illustration by Savannah Waddick).

Kenna Childress
Staff Writer

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sigma Zeta chapter was chartered on Albion College’s campus on April 8, 2001. After being inactive for around two years, five women, four of whom are now seniors, set ahead to reinstate their chapter and leave behind a legacy for generations of Albion students to come.

Alpha Kappa Alpha is known for its extensive philanthropic work that targets five different areas within local

and international communities. It is for this reason that these women found it important to reinstate their chapter. The five women who reinstated the Sigma Zeta chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority have left a mark on their fellow sisters and have done impressive work to get the chapter back up and running. The four graduating seniors reminisce on the reasons they joined Alpha Kappa Alpha, as well as the challenges they were presented with when reinstating their chapter. “I have always wanted to be a part

of this wonderful organization, and once there was a chance to be a part of the chapter on campus, I jumped at the opportunity” said LaRhonda Richardson, senior from Lathrup Village, “COVID-19 made the process very difficult because it sent everyone home and into a lockdown before we could complete the process.” Chapter President Lucretia Woods, a senior from Chicago, shared this sentiment in an introductory statement on the chapter’s website. Woods also mentioned how resilient this chapter has been when it comes to members’ service projects. “While COVID-19 has halted many plans, Sigma Zeta [has had] a virtual Skee-Week highlighting the five targets in the International Program,” said Woods, “The International Program of Exemplifying Excellence Through Sustainable Service, designed by International President Glenda Glover, places emphasis on HBCU for Life: A Call to Action, Women’s Healthcare and Wellness, Building Your Economic Legacy, The Arts, and Global Impact.” Despite the many challenges these women faced, many said that the rewards have far outweighed the costs. “The most rewarding part was gaining four new sisters and to be a part of the community service that our chapter has done this far,” said Richardson.

Woods also shared that despite the challenges, the women of the sorority have still pushed through to spread their mission on campus. “In 2021, the Sigma Zeta chapter will continue to provide support and service to our community and within our sisterhood while celebrating the 20th anniversary of our chapters chartering,” said Woods. Aubrey Speers, senior from Chicago, also talked about the impact the seniors of Alpha Kappa Alpha has had on the general Black student population on campus. “I have known many of the seniors since Freshman year. Both individually and together as AKAs. They have shown tremendously how to be who they are,” said Speers. “How to support one another. How to show out. That inspires me because that shows me that no matter what season that I may be going at the time. That I can lean on to my brothers and sisters for support. That I can be who I am and don’t worry what others are thinking.” These seniors have done the work to cement a new legacy for all those that follow them. Many of them said that they wish to see continued growth and recognition for the Sigma Zeta chapter on Albion’s campus in the coming years. “I hope that the Sigma Zeta chapter can continue to be involved in the community and provide service to both the campus and the community,” said Richardson.

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Opinion: Seniors Gain Resilience Due to COVID-19

Taylor Dietz
News Editor

On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic. It has been over a year since Albion College students, and students all over the nation, were abruptly sent home in line with social isolation efforts to help flatten the curve. The world was at a standstill and many people, including myself, believed that the curve would be flattened and life would go back to normal in time for summer. As summer was ending and the COVID-19 pandemic was still alive and present, there was anxiety surrounding the return to Albion, especially for seniors. When the Together Safely guidelines were introduced, many Albion students were anything but excited to return. After a long period of isolation at home, students were informed that they would still be isolated, but in a different way. News sources, including MLive and The Detroit News, wrote articles about how Albion students were being tracked and forbidden to go off campus. According to the Department of Psychiatry at Michigan University, college students are especially prone to feelings of loneliness. They also experience

higher rates of anxiety and depression in comparison to the general population. Together Safely and the consequences of breaking the rules, a new administration, the module system and a different registration process are just some abrupt changes that didn’t help the feelings of loneliness, anxiety or depression. At the end of last semester, there was tension around campus. COVID-19 cases were rising in Michigan and on campus, the election was in full swing and the weather was getting colder. During one of my classes near the end of the semester, we talked. We didn’t talk about the subject we were learning or about the book we had to read for that day. Instead, we talked about our feelings—for two hours. There were only six of us in that class, and around half were seniors. Our professor made a point to tell us that she was proud of us. I didn’t understand why she was proud—until now. As seniors, we expected normalcy because we watched previous classes go through special events like senior nights with a packed gym and commencement with more than two family members. We didn’t get to experience a last Briton Bash or normal Euphonics concert. There are no bowling nights, and some seniors



Hannah Erickson, a senior from Birmingham, and Angela McCauley, a senior from Sky-essville, Md., pose for their graduation picture. Albion College seniors, like Erickson and McCauley, had to accomodate to COVID-19 (Photo Illustration by Savannah Waddick).

probably even miss sitting in Baldwin for hours with their friends. For the seniors who stayed on campus, they created their own normal. They learned how to relieve stress and hangout with their friends in a pandemic-safe way. Student leaders created ways to host events outside or virtually. Greek Life found a way to hold recruitment and Albion sports continued to play with very minimal cancellations due to positive cases. All seniors found their way through a new extended registration process and made it through the module system when we were used to full semesters and the one day registration process. We didn’t get normal, but we are more resilient because of it. In the Columbia University study

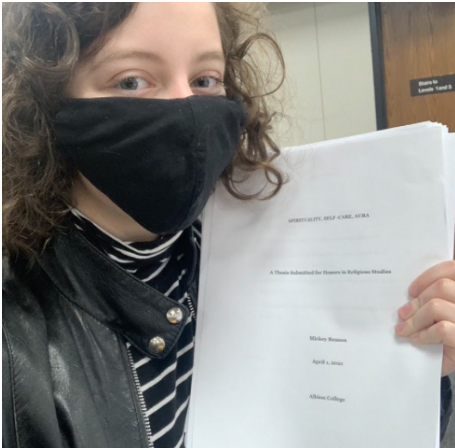
about college students and the impact of COVID-19, Christina Hoven, a professor of epidemiology and psychiatry, says that the pandemic has caught college students in the most pivotal moment in their personal, interpersonal, educational and pre professional development.

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A look into the Seniors Presenting at Elkin Isaac



Mickey Benson, a senior from Portland, Ore. poses with her thesis titled *Pastel Spirituality: Finding Religion in the On-line Spiritual Marketplace* (Photo Courtesy of Mickey Benson).

Catherine Silvestri
Staff Writer

The 31st Annual Elkin R. Isaac Student Research Symposium was held virtually on Thursday, April 22. Each year, the symposium gives students a chance to present their FURSCA projects to the student body, staff and faculty.

Last year, the symposium was canceled due to COVID-19. This year, however, 91 students will be presenting. The symposium is the final opportunity, at Albion, for seniors to present their thesis projects. Five of the seniors who presented at Elkin Isaac offered some insight into their theses and presentations.

Meet the Seniors: Anthony Avouris

Anthony Avouris is a senior from Kent, Ohio. Majoring in history, Avouris hopes to pursue a career as a professor of byzantine history after completing graduate studies in medieval history.

The title of Avouris’ thesis presentation is Exploring Cultural Continuity between

Ancient Greece and the Byzantine Empire.

His historical research examined moments in Byzantine literature where there was an ancient Greek reference or attribution. Avouris said that in preparation for his thesis, he spent time reading about eight Byzantine books and about five Ancient Greek books.

One of the biggest issues that Avouris ran into while conducting his research was a lack of modern citation in the Byzantine literature.

“Sometimes you would get, ‘the poet says,’ and then a quote. Then you’d have to try to figure out who the poet was,” said Avouris.

Avouris was most excited to share the comedic moments that he found. Though, because his presentation is limited on time, he won’t be able to share his favorite moment.

His favorite discovery in the histories was of an upper level Byzantine bureaucrat who had a very high opinion of himself. When the bureaucrat gave a speech, he said that he winged the entire speech, and everyone would have been in awe if they hadn’t been distracted by loud noises.

Abigail Amat

Abigail Amat is a senior from Niles and is a double major in English, with creative writing concentration, and French. After graduation, Amat plans to take a year off to travel and work before returning to graduate school to earn a masters and Ph.D. in English.

The title of Amat’s thesis presentation is Translations of Paroles d’honneur Écrits de Créoles de couleur néo-orléanais.

Her thesis is a translation of a collection of short stories written in French by Creole writers of color, and research on the background of the writers. She explained she was interested in bringing the writings to the forefront because they were written by some of the first Black writers in the U.S.

“Translating is hard, to put it simply.

It took a lot of reading the original stories,” said Amat. “I translated very literally from French to English, and then I had to go back and make it sound more like Modern English.”

Amat said that the translations were entirely up to her on how she wanted to present them. She had to decide whether to keep to the 18th century voice or put the stories into a 21st century voice.

“I kind of settled for something more in between,” said Amat.

Amat was most excited to present the fact that these are some of the first Black authors in the U.S. This excitement stems from her desire to teach minority literature after graduate school.

Mickey Benson

Mickey Benson, a senior from Portland, Ore., is a religious studies major and history minor with a concentration in public policy. After graduation, Benson plans to get a job helping people.

The title of Benson’s thesis is Pastel Spirituality: Finding Religion in the Online Spiritual Marketplace.

“What my thesis covers is looking at people, specifically in the online format, who are help-seeking and looking for fulfilling what’s called spiritual but not religious identity,” said Benson.

Benson said that their research goes into people who purchase items that are linked to a specific religion or spirituality but don’t specifically belong to it.

“It’s something I’m really excited about because the consumer has so much power and I don’t think we talk about religious practitioners as having an empowered stance,” said Benson.

Benson discussed that anyone can become spiritually seeking and pick up the rituals without joining churches.

The biggest struggle for Benson was limiting their thesis to the most important information. Benson said they had a

two-and-a-half page document dedicated to “links and tangents” that they couldn’t include in their thesis.

Benson was excited to see the amount of people who care and are interested in their thesis. They said they would describe their thesis as a “love letter to my Albion experience.”

Troy MacCallumMhor

Troy MacCallumMhor is a senior from Macomb, double majoring in history and international studies with a minor in German. After graduation, MacCallumMhor plans to attend graduate school and study archival science with the hopes of finding a career in archiving.

The title of MacCallumMhor’s thesis is Triumphalism on the Big Screen: The Division of East and West Germany after Reunification.

MacCallumMhor’s thesis examines three German films and one German TV series while analyzing the representation of east german’s and east german identity in them. His thesis argues that the glorification of East German’s after the reunification “fails to accurately portray east german identity and fails to take into account the perspective.”

MacCallumMhor explained that he was introduced to the films during a film class in his freshman year, and again while he studied abroad in Berlin.

“They believe these to be culturally relevant,” said MacCallumMhor.

One of the hardest things for him during the process was the analysis of the movies. He mentioned that the professor he would have reached out to for assistance wasn’t available to help, but he was able to get his analyses to where he wanted them.

MacCallumMhor’s favorite aspect of his thesis was his finding that national identity influenced the outcome of how the films turned out. He argues that the films are a reflection of West German identity.

Hannah Gracin

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Note from the Editor: The Last One

Jordan Revenaugh
Editor-in-Chief

After my first year as editor-in-chief, I was lucky enough to get away without having to write a farewell, as all Pleiad editor-in-chiefs do when their time has come to a close. Last year at this time, I still had another year ahead of me. Unfortunately for me, this second time around isn’t quite the same. This time around warrants, not a goodbye, but a see ya later, as I pass the baton onto the next person to lead the publication.

Next year’s editor-in-chief might very well have to rip the baton out of my hands, because there are few things I love in this world more than *The Pleiad*. And I want to tell you why.

Despite concise being nice, it’s never been my strong suit, and considering the copious memories I have of this publication from the past four years, this might very well be the longest article I’ve ever written. Regardless, bear with me. I promise I have a point.

My first memory of Albion is when I was in fourth grade. My mom, Karen Revenaugh (‘87) had her twenty-year reunion, and my family hopped in the car and travelled to Albion to celebrate. I remember starting out the window, asking “Are we there yet?” every five minutes, because back then, the two hour drive from Rochester to Albion felt never-ending.

When I was eight years old on that first drive to Albion, I didn’t know how

many times I would end up making that trip in my lifetime, and I didn’t know the road to Albion would feel immensely shorter each time I traversed the familiar path.

I remember standing outside of the Stockwell-Mudd library fourteen years ago, a copy of *The Pleiad* in my small hands, looking at my mom and saying, “I’m going to go here someday, just like you.” I didn’t know a lot of things when I was eight years old, but I knew Albion felt like home.

The next time I came to Albion, I was seventeen years old. Nine years later, the amount of time I’d been on this earth had doubled alongside my desire to attend the college. By this time, I was being recruited by the cross country and track coach, and I was trying to explore what other passions I could fulfill here at Albion outside of my love for running.

It was on this second visit to Albion when I stumbled across *The Pleiad* again. I remember, once again, holding a copy of the print edition in my hands, wondering what it would look like if my name was one day printed alongside the others on the staff list.

My third visit to Albion was SOAR, and former editor-in-chief (but future editor-in-chief at that point in time) Beau Brockett (‘19) was working a table in Upper Baldwin for incoming students to learn about the publication. I b-lined directly toward the table, probably moving at a PR pace had it been a race on the track. I asked Beau as many questions as I could possibly think

of, and each answer left me wanting to know more about the publication and the people who comprised it.

A year later, at Briton Bash my freshman year, I made the same b-line to *The Pleiad* table to sign up for an interview to be on staff. I again saw Beau, this time working alongside the editor-in-chief at the time, Steve Marowski (‘18). I felt the enthusiasm of my eight-year-old self bubbling out of me as I spoke to them.

I felt a strange but wonderful feeling talking to Beau and Steve. Looking back, I think it was a sense of belonging, which is something I never felt in high school. For as much as running had drawn me to the college through the recruitment process, *The Pleiad* was the reason I stayed.

Throughout my time at Albion, namely my freshman and sophomore years, I’ve faced copious challenges with my mental and physical health, some of which led me to almost leave. As we all have, I’ve faced moments where I’ve wanted to quit. Give up. Run away. But *The Pleiad* and the staff who makes the publication what it is have shown me my own resiliency year after year. When I felt as though I had nothing, I had my own words and the words of my fellow staffers to share. Even more than that, I had an entire student body who heard those words.

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