

Jersey grad, Trailblazer becomes Lewis & Clark's first Honors College student

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GODFREY – Madelynn Clevenger, 18, of Piasa, Illinois, is the first ever student to enroll in the new L&C Honors College program.

A true Trailblazer, Clevenger decided to enroll in the Honors College in its inaugural year to help shape the program and challenge herself academically on her way to becoming a pediatric geneticist.

“I always strive to push myself to the limits academically, and I didn’t want my college experience to be any different,” she said. “My drive is knowing that someday, I could be the monumental change that saves a child’s life – and just one life makes all the work ahead of me worth it.”

Clevenger plans to study nursing at L&C before transferring to Iowa State University to earn a bachelor’s degree in genetics and complete her pre-med courses.

“I decided to attend Lewis and Clark because of the closeness to home and the great programs available,” she said. “Merely 20 minutes from home, I have the opportunity to attend classes taught by some of the best professors in the country – not to mention I will be participating in one of the top-rated Nursing programs in the area.”

The L&C Honors College enhances students’ college experience through service and social opportunities and a culminating research symposium. It includes a field work component each semester in a course of the student’s choosing, for honors credit.

Clevenger’s project this semester involves Professor Elizabeth Grant’s Speech course.

“Working with Maddie has been rewarding for me as well,” Grant said. “We were able to find audiences outside of class for Maddie to address using her speech about how the Honors College has been useful to her. She has gained valuable experience in tailoring her remarks to different groups, including high school students, high school counselors and Phi Theta Kappa honors society inductees.”

Honors students move through the program on their own academic paths, but share one humanities course per term with the members of their cohort and Program Coordinator Jen Cline.

“We were very excited to have Maddie as our first Honors College student,” Cline said. “Her intelligence, leadership and humility are striking. She sets the bar exceptionally high for our program, all while making sure those around her can reach their own goals.”

To Clevenger, the humanities are about more than studying human culture.

“Humanities studies allow us to truly find ourselves, and to choose to become the person we want to be,” she said. “Humanities help us understand our impact on others as well

as ourselves, an incredibly important reason to sustain and involve them as much as possible within our own lives.”

Clevenger has earned many awards and accolades over the years and is a 2017 L&C Foundation Distinguished Scholar. This fall, she was the recipient of the St. Louis Regional Chamber’s Gateway Game Changer Award.

As a student at Jersey Community High School, Clevenger excelled both academically and in a variety of extracurricular activities from theater and music performance to Student Council, National Honor Society, and many others. She also participated in Girl Scouts all through high school.

Last spring, Clevenger was chosen from her classmates to speak at the JCHS Class of 2017’s Commencement.

Her biggest fans and supporters are her family members.

“My parents and sister are incredibly supportive of me, and I couldn’t ask for a better team,” she said.

Clevenger has volunteered with Toys for Tots for the last three years, and in her free time enjoys photography as a way to manage stress. She also enjoys using makeup as a way to express her creativity utilizing faces as her canvas.

Learn more about the L&C Honors College, which is affiliated with the Lewis and Clark Mannie Jackson Center for the Humanities, visit www.lc.edu/honorscollege.