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SETTING NEW HIGH RECORDS

GRACE BAILEY '28

Houghton University's Cross Country and Track Team has done exceptionally well this year. Three runners for the team went as far as the national championships. In the fall, Noelle Linenfelser '26 went to Indiana, and for indoor track Victoria Brewster '27 and Alexa Belanger '28 made it to the national championships at Nazareth University.

Throughout the indoor track season, Belanger competed in the 4x200 meter relay, 4x400 meter and high jump, making it to nationals for high jump and setting a new school record, jumping 1.68 meters (5.51 feet). Brewster also competed in sprinting events, running the 200 meter, 4x200, 4x400, occasionally long-jump and headed to nationals for the 60 meter dash. She also set records for the 60 meter, running 7.49 seconds, and for the 200 meter with a



Victoria Brewster and Alexa Belanger

COURTESY OF VICTORIA BREWSTER

time of 25.6 seconds. Not only did she set these records, but she also continuously broke and reset her own records within the school's all-time records.

Leading up to regionals, Brewster and Belanger knew the expectations for their performance were set very high. Both competitors agreed that it was more stressful going into the Em-

pire 8 Championships and Regionals than it was when they went to Nationals.

Belanger said, "Even though I was nervous it was also really exciting. I got a chance to fight harder for first."

Both competitors were nervous, but they also said that it was a very fun and exciting experience. They knew they had to work

hard because they knew what their goals were, along with what their coaches' goals were.

The most stressful part of the whole process was finding out if they had made nationals or not. As far as Belanger was concerned, there was a lot of waiting. Head Cross Country and Track & Field Coach Patrick Hager, said

that after Belanger's last height, he had a pretty good idea that she had made it. When results came in, everyone who had been rooting for them celebrated. Belanger's favorite part of finding out she had made it to nationals was being able to celebrate with her older brother Avery.

When talking to Brewster about her reaction to making it to nationals, she said that she didn't process the news for about a week. She was just very thankful that God had provided such an amazing opportunity. Placing second at nationals was very exciting for Brewster, but she didn't really know how to react.

"I knew I wanted to just ... point it all back to God," she said.

Hager was thrilled not only to have two national qualifiers but also to have one of them be a runner up. Both of the athletes' favorite part about going to nationals was being able to

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One Day Giving Challenge 2025

CALEB CHOATE

I've been thinking a lot about creek stone lately.

You can't have Houghton without creek stone. It's a symbol firmly established in our campus zeitgeist: Houghton's history is (quite literally) made of the stuff. For our community, it's a symbol of God's providence during times of both great need and growth. It also symbolizes what can happen when Christ-centered people rally together in work and prayer around a shared mission. Like creek stone in a wall, when we all come together and contribute, even in a small way, we create something greater than the sum of mere parts.



Giving Day Challenge '24

COURTESY OF MARCOM

Houghton's Annual One Day Giving Challenge is kind of like building with creek stone—when we come together and offer what we have, we create a greater and stronger Houghton for years to come.

One Day Giving Challenge is Houghton's biggest fundraising event of the year. On last year's

One Day Giving Challenge, Houghton University raised \$1,840,435 in gifts and pledges from 2,125 supporters to support student scholarships, capital projects, and student-centered initiatives.

During the day, on Friday, April 11, students are encouraged to visit the Campus Center with friends and make a gift.

Vice President for Advancement and External Engagement Karl Sisson shared that each student's gift has a multiplying impact due to the lead matching and challenge gifts of generous donors.

Every gift given to the Student Scholarship Fund will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$360,000, and when the threshold of 1,883 donors is crossed,

an additional \$775,000 will be given to Houghton on the day. Not only this, but for every gift a student, their parent, or their grandparent makes, President Lewis will contribute an additional \$19 to the student scholarship fund. If all three generations give, then an additional \$19 will be given on top of that.

Sisson emphasized the importance of every gift, no matter the amount, saying, "Not only is a gift to the Student Scholarship Fund doubled—it generates an additional \$19 gift through the President's Challenge. Students can also play a significant role as ambassadors by encouraging family and friends to support this place which has such a tremendous impact on all of our lives."

Given the math, if a student, parent, and grandparent all contribute

See **GIVING** page #2

In Defense of Student Council

AIDAN FISH '25

Members of Houghton University's (HU) Student Council have become increasingly aware of the student body's confusion regarding the organization's role.

"The purpose of Student Council is to bridge the administration and the Student body," stated Thomas McGlynn '26, the current Academic Representative and incoming Student Body President.

"They work together with Houghton's Board of Trustees, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and friends of the University to create a Christian higher-education environment that reflects Houghton's institutional mission," he said.

McGlynn discussed how, in order to connect with students, the Student Council makes themselves available through services on campus such as Donut Mondays. These services give the student body an opportunity to discuss concerns or suggestions with council members.

Jana Newberry, among many of her campus roles, serves as a facilitator of the Student Council. She gave insight into how the council works with the HU's administration.

Newberry said that each Student Council member sits as the student representative on at least one

committee of staff and faculty. These committees include the Academic council, Diversity committee, Senior Class committee and more. Each member also meets with the representative of an area (Athletics, Residence Life, Spiritual Life, etc.) on a monthly basis. During this time, they can ask questions or bring up concerns directly with the VP or Director of that area.

Senior Lilian Turner, the current Student Body President, talked about ways in which the council has been active this year. She expressed that although they are not like the Campus Activity Board (CAB) who plans campus events, they are still active in the community. Turner mentioned that the council put on a chocolate dipping event this year. She described the event as "a way of creating an outlet for students to meet us and talk to us on a personal level."

The council also hosted an event during the Superbowl in the Campus Center basement, and "Cookies and Concerns" during Valentine's Day.

Turner expressed that the council has conversations on behalf of the student body. They have engaged with Safety and Security about campus safety, and the tech team about wifi issues in Gillette and the music building.

This 2024-2025 school year, the Student Council

has started sending out monthly surveys. Turner explained that the point of these surveys is to collect "tangible data" that they can then bring to the administration. The Student Council can not make claims about the number of online classes, chapel scanning, wifi issues, safety, open hours and homecoming without showing the administration data, she said.

Turner added that the Student Council provides a connection between the student body and the administration. The council "shows we can have conversations with President Lewis and administration," she said.

While giving praise to the work Turner has done this year, McGlynn looks forward to building upon her accomplishments.

"For [the] next [school] year, we want to improve the connection amongst student leadership groups, including CAB, Clubs, Emmanuel Scholars, Highlander, RDs and RAs, Student Council, Transitions, and more. The emphasis will be on hearing the concerns of the growing Houghton student population," he said.

Although the Student Council is not perfect and a lot of their work is done behind the scenes, the hope is that they can earn the student body's trust. ★

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\$1 each, the total gift to Houghton will become \$82 and will put us three donors closer to meeting our 1883 Challenge.

Houghton Senior Esther Tse '25 acknowledged that the funds raised during One Day Giving Challenge are vital for supporting the Christ-centered education that Houghton provides. "At Houghton, we challenge each other to be better, we have conversations about justice and equality, and we show up with love and intention for each other. Supporting Houghton through the One Day Giving Challenge means we are keeping that spirit alive for future students."

Sisson acknowledged the incredible financial impact of the One Day Giving Challenge but suggested that an even greater point to celebrate

is how Houghton's community unites in the day through gratitude and generosity.

Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano, Houghton's Director of Advancement Communications and Editor of the Houghton Magazine, echoes this claim. She shared, "One Day Giving Challenge reminds me that the Houghton vision belongs to everybody who knows and loves Houghton. I'm reminded that our community is so much bigger than just these buildings sitting around the Quad." She continued, "I want students to walk away from the day with the knowledge that there are so many people you've never met who care about you. They love you enough to make sacrificial gifts so that you can be here." ★

Question of the Week

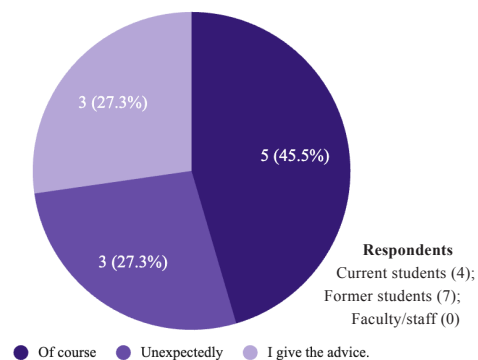
Wearing socks with flip flops?



Also on the STAR website & HUB

Weekly questions open to anyone affiliated with Houghton University.

Have you ever had a friend give you a life-changing piece of advice?



HIGH RECORDS from page

attend it together. They loved being able to compete at three different big meets together, and felt their bond grow closer over the few weeks it took to get there. Both Brewster and Belanger credit their successes to each others' presence.

Brewster helped Belanger keep her nerves in check, which helped her perform better. The best experience for Brewster was attending with Belanger and seeing the whole team come out and support them. She wouldn't have had as much fun if she had been there without the support.

Both competitors are feeling eager to move into the outdoor track season with the team.

Brewster, Belanger and the coaches all have their

own expectations for this current season. Belanger would really like to either tie or break the outdoor high jump record. As a freshman, she still has plenty of time to break the record and set many more, so she is looking forward to that. However, she doesn't want to put too much pressure on herself because if she does she won't have as much fun as she'd like to. The most important thing to her for this season is to grow closer with the team, and have a very fun and memorable first season at Houghton.

Brewster agreed that she doesn't want to set too many expectations for herself. She would like to take the season "one step at a time and go with the flow."

Hager has set goals for the team as a whole. He would like to get a bigger

number of qualifiers to regionals. He would also like to see anywhere from six to eight or more school records or even new top ten records. One of his more specific goals would be to beat Utica and make the top five at the Empire 8 Championships. Hager believes that "it's go-time" and "We need to find and get into that rhythm again."

Overall, all of the coaches and athletes are looking forward to the outdoor track season, and everyone is very eager to do their best at each meet. It's very exciting to see the intensity and determination of each teammate as the season progresses. ★

Are You TikToking Your Life Away?



HANNAH FARLEY '27

Hi! If you're reading this, I have a challenge for you!

It was the summer going into my freshman year of college that I started realizing my Instagram account wasn't a representation of who I was, but rather who I wanted people to think I was. Not only was I consumed by how others perceived me, but my FOMO (fear of missing out) grew, I became discontent in my own life and more so became envious of others' lives. I didn't realize it then, but Instagram and other social media platforms were preventing me from living a life fully for Christ.

I wasn't living out the Truth, but rather the truth of what the world says. Insta-

gram was causing many insecurities in my life. I had to get more likes than my friends, more comments on my photos, and more views on my videos. Not only is this way of living exhausting, it's unfulfilling. It will never satisfy you. As much as it may seem rewarding, letting the world define you will only leave you more empty and broken. Jesus was talking to his disciples when he said, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Matt. 6:26) Don't let this world define you, let the one who created you define you. "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalms 37:4)

Deleting social media

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matt. 6:33)"

kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matt. 6:33) When you start seeking God in everything, you'll start seeing God is in everything and everywhere.

Recently, I've been reading 2 Chronicles. In chapter 20, the Moabites and Ammonites start to

them the Lord will have wrath on those who do not fear His name. Jehoshaphat was alarmed by the war that was inflicted upon him, but he first called on the Lord. He had the people of Judah seek help from the Lord, he told the people of Judah to seek the Lord. Maybe when conflict strikes or something goes wrong, you seek first distraction. You pick up your phone and scroll through TikTok and eventually forget what the problem was until it arises again, but this time gets worse.

Maybe you live vicariously through the girl who's always at the beach on Instagram wishing you were there. In reality you could be exploring the beautiful landscape of our campus, seeing the Lord's handiwork in the hills and change in seasons. Or maybe you simply finish your night scrolling on Facebook instead of using that time to seek His kingdom and His righteousness. I'm telling you all of this because that girl finding distraction, beach days and late night scrolling on her phone was me. I lost that time seeking worldly dissatisfaction. I'm writing this article in hopes that this will encourage you to not seek the world, but rather Godly satisfaction.

So back to my challenge.

Social media might not have this effect or impact on your life like it did mine, but maybe it does. Maybe you're spending too much time on it, or are missing out on relationships here on campus, or maybe you want a fresh start. If any of this applies to you, I challenge you to delete all social media from your phone for a week. Get rid of TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Who knows, maybe you'll delete it and never look back!

Maybe you'll spend more time with your Bible, or go on a hike, or make a new friend. Maybe you'll reflect and realize you too weren't fully living for Christ because you were letting the amount of followers on your Instagram account define you.

If you complete this challenge, I want to hear about it! I want to hear about how it changed your daily routine, how it changed your relationships. If you go one entire week without social media, I have a book that may encourage your faith! If you complete this challenge email me (hannah.farley27@houghton.edu), I'd love to meet with you and talk to you about your social media-less week. You got this, don't be afraid. Comfort and growth can't coexist. I promise you true fulfillment is found in Christ and in Christ alone. ★

Hannah Farley is a sophomore studying Adolescence Education with a minor in Physical Education. She is on the basketball team and enjoys cooking/baking, hiking and making friends.

Have an opinion
you want to share?

CONTACT
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SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor
should be less than 600 words

SUBMIT TO
star@houghton.edu



The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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Book Review

Sunrise on the Reaping Review

Dominic Larson '27

(NOTE: This review assumes you have read every Hunger Games book up to this point, as they contain some plot details for this book.) "Sunrise on the Reaping," the fifth book in The Hunger Games series and the second prequel, follows Haymitch Abernathy as he is reaped for the 50th Hunger Games (also known as the second quarter-quell). In "Catching Fire," author Suzanne Collins revealed what Haymitch's Hunger Games were like, including details about how he won. This begs the question: Why make an entire novel about an event we already know the outcome of? Collins needed to provide a reason for telling this story in such depth in her new book. I am thrilled to report that this question left my mind as I experienced what may be the strongest addition to the Hunger Games series.

"Sunrise" has a story structure that we've become familiar with in The Hunger Games series: a reaping, a tearful goodbye, ten or so chapters of political intrigue leading up to the games, and finally, the games. Just like its predecessors, it takes romance, action, and mystery and combines them into a compelling tale about rebellion against an unjust political system.

When "Sunrise" begins, Haymitch is a joyful, enthusiastic boy. In the Katniss trilogy, he is an unhappy, grumpy drunkard. This novel explores how he reaches that point, and it is heartbreaking. This journey is the primary factor that sets this book apart from the rest of the series. Collins masterfully writes 16-year-old Haymitch as arguably the most likable protagonist in the series thus far. His motivations are entirely understandable and good, and his morals are sound. He is a good person who has an admirable care for people, even those he hardly knows, and he deserves none of the pain he experiences. Haymitch's love for his girlfriend and family especially serves as a compelling motivation for every decision he makes. They have an undeniable presence throughout the entire story that elevates the stakes. I found myself caring about Haymitch more than I ever cared about Katniss. For this reason, when he experienced horrific sights,

unjust situations, and essentially emotional torture, it deeply affected me as a reader. I wanted to see him succeed and thrive, and it pained me to see him experience such hardship.

From the start of the novel, Haymitch hates the Capitol. He wants to make them (primarily good old President Snow) feel bad about everything they've done and break the system in any way possible. He wants justice. The Capitol makes his objective extremely difficult. As we know all too well, President Snow is a powerful individual who gets whatever he wants whenever he wants it. Haymitch is just a boy from the poorest district in Panem. The best he can do is resist the Capitol's agenda as much as possible and make small but (hopefully) effective political statements in doing so. This mindset evolves throughout the story and results in a number of satisfying moments.

The games themselves are as exciting as always. The arena is memorable and intriguing (I am very excited to see it on the big screen in the 2026 film). This time around, the games are more focused on Haymitch's ulterior motives (which I will not specify for spoiler reasons) rather than his trying to win. For this reason, it felt like there was less action than the games would usually bring. This may throw some fans off a bit, but I thought that the stakes and emotion more than made up for the smaller amount of action. I found myself equally as engaged with the story during the games with or without direct action. Without spoilers, it is also worth noting that the games are more violent than ever—so much so that I can't imagine the film adaptation being able to escape an R rating. This violence also results in heightened stakes.

CONSENSUS: 4.5/5 With "Sunrise on the Reaping," the 17-year-old Hunger Games series is as strong as ever—maybe stronger than ever. Haymitch is an extremely compelling and likable protagonist, and Collins masterfully wrote an engaging story that takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride through heavy emotion, stakes, and excitement. This is a must-read for not only fans of the Hunger Games, but any fans of the dystopian genre. ★



Artist of the Week

Aivery Shuck '26



Hello! My name is Aivery Shuck and I am a Junior studying as a BFA art major and psych minor. After Houghton, I hope to go to grad school and become an art therapist someday! I work with a lot of different mediums, but work primarily in oil paint. I have enjoyed taking many art classes and hope to keep building my skills and making beautiful work!

