

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

HONORS COLLEGE NEWS

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by Helen Yousaf, Honors Intern



HONORS: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

A Message from Dean Andrew



Dr. Barbara Andrew

This edition of the WP University Honors College Newsletter stresses the importance of civic engagement, clubs, co-curricular workshops and other events. Civic engagement is one of the hallmarks of William Paterson University and of the Honors College. While all Honors students are required to participate in some civic engagement, many of our students excel in finding opportunities, all the while developing leadership and project management skills and networking. While Honors cares deeply about what happens inside the classroom, we also know that education doesn't stop there! Even the goal of this newsletter is to bring student achievements out of the classroom and into the community.



Editor's Note

*"During my time here at the William Paterson Honors College, I have been witness to the countless hours and efforts that go into cultivating an Honors experience for students that extends beyond the classroom. I have gotten a better sense of what an Honors education **does** achieve and what it **should** achieve. I'm proud to say that at WP they are one and the same. In my last newsletter as an Honors intern, I hope to have shed light on a fraction of the ways WP Honors positions its students and alumni within the local, national, and international community, and with respect to their peers and neighbors. Students' achievements, progress, and contributions transcend the four walls of the classroom and the spines of textbooks."*

- Helen Yousaf, '24

Helping Students Launch Their Professional Careers

Northeast Regional Honors Conference



Five WP Honors students along with Honors **Associate Director, Jan Pinkston**, and **Honors Global Public Health Track Director, Dr. Marianne Sullivan**, attended the **Northeast Regional Honors Conference** in Albany, NY in April. The students presenting research at the conference included **Isabel Nemeth, Jason Peralta, Alexandra Quintero**, and **Didar Yahia** from the **Honors Global Public Health Track**, and **Andy Takagi Rojas** from the **Honors Music Track** under the direction of **Dr. Tim Newman**.

During the conference, the William Paterson University Honors College was awarded first place in the Northeast Regional Honors Council annual publication contest in the Newsletter Category for 2024. The newsletter is written and edited by Dean Barbara Andrew, Associate Director Jan Pinkston, and Honors Student Intern, Helen Yousaf. In addition, Jason Peralta was awarded a **Minority Student Scholarship** by the NRHC and received an honorable mention for the **Student of the Year Award**.



Pictured left to right: Dr. Barbara Andrew, Helen Yousaf, and Jan Pinkston

WP Honors was recognized at the 2023 NRCH Conference. Pictured: (top left) WP Honors attendees at the NRCH Conference, (top right) **Andy Takagi Rojas**, (middle left) **Alexandra Quintero**, (middle right) **Didar Yahia**, (bottom left) **Jason Peralta**, and (bottom right) **Isabel Nemeth**.

In April, eleven students in the **Cognitive Science track**, including one recent alum, presented their projects at the **Eastern Psychological Association (EPA)** conference in Philadelphia. The Track Director, **Dr. Amy Learmonth**, has been accompanying students to this conference for over ten years. The EPA is one of five regional associations of the **American Psychological Association** and is a place for psychologists and their students in the northeast to present and hear about the newest research in human behavior. Dr. Learmonth encourages her students to take advantage of this opportunity that introduces them to professional development, activities outside of the classroom in academia and research, and gives them a chance to network with professionals in the field.

Eastern Psychological Association Conference



Students attending the 2024 EPA conference (top from left): **Hailey Krajewski, '24, Bryan Barbaran, '24, Viki Delaney, '24, Justina Saad, '24, Kourtney Scipio, '24, Anna Segelken, '24, Jessica Momanyi '24, Christian Ortiz, '23, Laurel Oviye, '25, Nicole Kahwaty, '24, Callista Long, '24 and Skylar Wazinski '24.**

Lycoming College Humanities Conference



Julia Sklow

Julia Sklow, '24 presented at the **Lycoming College Undergraduate Humanities Research Conference** in April. Her work, "Something Wicked This Way Comes: The Rise and Fall of Harry Potter," was part of the Film, Fantasy, and Humanism panel. This conference, held on the Lycoming College campus in Williamsport, PA, is intended to give undergraduate researchers and students across the region an opportunity to share their work in the social science and humanities disciplines. At the conference, Sklow shared her thesis as part of the **Humanities Honors Track**, directed by **Professor Molly K. O'Donnell**, which she presented at the annual **Honors Research Day** in Fall 2023.

Nursing Alumni Panel

In March, Honors hosted a **Class of '23** alumni Nursing panel, including **Emily Baldarrago**, **Ruth Basto**, and **Paula Havlin**. All three graduated with their bachelor's degree in Nursing and completed the Nursing Track. The panel was moderated by **Dr. Jill Nocella**, **Professor of Nursing** and **Director of the Nursing Honors Research Track**. The panel members, are working in their field, and all discussed their current professions and strategies for student success. Baldarrago, Basto, and Havlin shared their experiences working in clinical settings and the transition from learning in a classroom to applying it in a hospital setting. The alumni also reflected on their experience at WP and in Honors, more specifically, highlighting study tips that worked for them. Student attendees benefitted from the recent nursing graduates' experiences about what to expect when they transition from school to working. The panelists were able to share relevant and current anecdotes that the future nurses could relate to. The goal of the panel was for current nursing students to hear the perspective of alumni who were in their shoes only 365 days ago!



Dr. Jill Nocella moderating the Nursing Alumni Panel



Pictured from left: **Dr. Jill Nocella**, **Emily Baldarrago, '23**, **Ruth Basto, '23**, **Paula Havlin, '23**, and **Dr. Barbara Andrew**

Young Alumni Panel



Young Alumni panelists from left: **Kyle Labouseur**, **Dr. Tim Casa-Malone**, **Lily Fritsch**, **Dr. Erica Ureta**, and **Mackenzie Donnelly** with **Associate Director of Honors, Jan Pinkston** and **Dean Barbara Andrew (center)**.

Honors hosted a **Young Alumni panel** in April to welcome back recent alumni of the William Paterson **Honors College**. The panelists, **Dr. Tim Casa-Malone**; **Kyle Labouseur**; **Mackenzie Donnelly**; **Lily Fritsch**; and **Dr. Erika Ureta**, shared their Honors College experiences with current students. They also provided some insight about their journey after transitioning from William Paterson to other universities for graduate and professional studies or entering their professional careers. As fairly recent graduates, current students were able to connect with them because of the relevant and timely perspectives they had. Staying in touch with our alumni remains an important goal of Honors at William Paterson because we believe in the value of fostering connections between current and former students. Having been through similar experiences and finished, our alums offer valuable opinions about how to ensure academic success, network, and be prepared for the next steps after graduation!

All in The Family

Congratulations to second-generation Honors College student, **Todd Pettet**, who graduated in May with a **B.A. in Communication (Public Relations)** and a **minor in Digital Music Creation and Arranging**. He also completed the **Honors Performing and Literary Arts Track**, directed by **Dr. Martha Witt**. His thesis, entitled *Moments in Sound*, integrated sounds encountered on a daily basis into a composition of music. In the future, Todd hopes to continue experimenting with this style as a music editor. The Pettet family has a wonderful legacy at William Paterson. Todd's mom, Ashley Pettet, was an Honors College student who graduated in 2007 with a **BM in Jazz Studies**, and also completed the Honors Performing and Literary Arts Track. She returned to WP and earned her **MBA in Music Management** in 2010. Todd's aunt, Kristen Pettet Rickards was also an Honors College student. She graduated in 2012 with a **BA in Communication (Broadcast Journalism)** and a **minor in Political Science**. She also completed the Performing and Literary Arts Honors Track. In addition, Todd's grandmother, Denise, was enrolled in graduate courses in speech pathology.



The Pettet Family at the 2024 Honors College Reception with Associate Director Jan Pinkston.

Slices of Service

During February and March, the Honors College hosted **"Slices of Service,"** a series of sandwich and card making events geared toward helping people who are struggling in the city of Paterson. Honors hosted four sessions where groups of 8-12 students made individual small packets that included a sandwich and a small card with words of encouragement. Following each session, volunteers from the **Paterson Cares** organization delivered the packets directly to people in need on the streets of Paterson. In total, Honors students made nearly 300 packets for Slices of Service.



Student volunteers with Helen Yousaf, '24 and Jan Pinkston (center)

At the end of March, the students who participated in Slices of Service met together with a group of faculty members and other interested individuals in the library auditorium for a workshop, **"From Classroom to Community: The Role of Classroom Discussions and Out-Of Classroom Experiences in fostering Sustainable Communities."** The panel was moderated by **Honors Intern** and **Peer Leader, Helen Yousaf,** and included three professors: **Dr. Ana Siqueira, Professor of Marketing and Professional Sales;** **Dr. Lilian Milanes, Professor of Community and Social Justice Studies;** and **Dr. Marianne Sullivan, Professor of Public Health and Director of the Global Public Health Honors Track.**

The faculty members shared their experiences about the role of community service projects in contributing to sustainable development goals. The insights from the professors illuminated the nuanced and multi-faced impacts of food insecurity on the individual lives of residents and the community as a whole, and the students benefitted from the professors' ideas about how to address food insecurity from their respective disciplines.

How it all started...

This initiative was an extension of the Honors College's fall 2023 collaboration with a local non-profit, **Paterson Cares,** led by former **WP employee, Roger Grier** who retired from the University last year. Grier serves as president of Paterson Cares which is a collective group of volunteers who demonstrate an interest and willingness to donate time, effort, and resources to address, and eradicate common concerns or societal issues and improve the quality of life for Patersonians who are in need. Back in November and December, Honors students gathered



Workshop panelists (from left): Dr. Ana Siqueira, Dr. Lilian Milanes, and Dr. Marianne Sullivan.

on two Saturday afternoons and made over 200 sandwiches, which were immediately distributed to people living on the streets by Grier and his team. The students who made the sandwiches were excited that they were able to make such an immediate impact in the community, and were enthusiastic about participating in similar activities in the future.

This feedback prompted Pinkston and Yousaf to begin planning a large scale event for the spring with the WP core value of civic engagement in mind, and the goal of helping students become critically engaged citizens. *Slices of Service* not only gave students the opportunity to do a good deed, but encouraged them to begin thinking about problem solving, helped them learn about different ways of approaching issues of concern, and gave them the opportunity to meet with others and reflect upon the entire experience.

Yousaf, a student in the Global Public Health Honors Track, did a lot of the legwork from scheduling the groups of students, to helping determine what supplies were needed, to contacting the faculty members, and even drafting the questions that would be addressed by the panel. She helped plan the event down to the last detail, including suggesting that all of the sandwiches be made from peanut butter and jelly to give them a longer shelf life.

The workshop was a great success, attended by nearly 70 people, and even made the University news: <https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-04-23/honors-college-project-focuses-on-value-of-civic-engagement>. Check out some more photos from our event. Thank you to all of the student and faculty volunteers who participated!



Student volunteers in the February and March sandwich making sessions

Saturday Service at Father English

Honors continued hosting **Saturday Service** opportunities at the **Father English Community Center** in Paterson on Saturday mornings during the spring semester. Run by **Associate Director, Jan Pinkston**, the event gives students the chance to volunteer at the food pantry by packing bags, sorting deliveries, and stocking shelves. Each week a small group of volunteers attend which allows students to make meaningful connections with their peers and friends, while making a meaningful contribution to a local non-profit organization.

We were excited that **Provost Josh Powers** stopped by this semester to see Honors students in action and jumped right in to help serve our neighbors in Paterson.



WP Honors volunteers working hard at the Father English Community Center in Paterson.

Making Goodie Bags for Preschoolers

In early April the **Honors College** and **Honors Club** hosted a civic engagement event that involved making “goodie bags” for preschool children. There was a great turn-out with over 60 Honors students volunteering to make bags to donate to the **Children’s Day Preschool and Family Center in Passaic (CDP)**. Each homemade bag included a coloring book, crayons, small toys, and a handwritten note of encouragement. The **Student Government Association** provided support for this event by funding food and supplies. Additional Goodie Bags from the event were donated to Paterson Cares for distribution to children in the city of Paterson.

During dinner, students heard from **Ms. Susan Dannemiller, Executive Director** of the Children’s Day Preschool and Family Center, who gave a presentation on the 125-year history of the school, and discussed its mission and the important role that the school serves in the community. Ms. Dannemiller extended her heartfelt thanks to the WP Honors College for making bags for all of the children at the school. “The personal touch each WP student added to the bags really made them shine and brought a lot of smiles to our preschool students,” she stated.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, many Honors students had the opportunity to visit the school, which is designated as a model state-funded pre-k of the very highest quality, certified by **Grow NJ Kids (GNJK) as a 4-Star Rated** program. Honors students of all majors enjoyed reading to the preschool kids and touring the facility, and we’re looking forward to working with Ms. Dannemiller and her team on future endeavors.



Over 60 students attended the Goodie Bag making event in early April



More than 200 Goodie Bags were made containing a coloring book, toys, and a handwritten note from WP Honors students.



Roger Grier, President of Paterson Cares and former WP employee, picking up the bags to be distributed in Paterson with the help of **WP University Police Officer, Donald Jackson**.



Jan Pinkston and Honors Club President, Anna Selgelken, '24 delivered the goodie bags to the Children’s Day Preschool and Family Center in Passaic.

Because I wanted to ...

Highlighting students who go above and beyond to serve their school and local community

The goal of an Honors education is to promote an intersection of environments; one that is academically challenging, thought provoking but also service-oriented. Service-oriented curriculums teach students about the importance of serving society beyond their academic and professional means. At William Paterson, civic engagement is a pillar of our student's identity and their personal and professional development. However, many times participation in civic engagement can feel like a requirement that students *must* do, rather than something they *want* to do. Below we highlight some of the many students who choose to engage in service beyond the required number of hours. We hope that these examples inspire not just students but also staff to immerse themselves in service work that isn't about 'checking off the checklist'. Our message to Honors students is: "engage in at least one act of kindness as an undergrad that you want to do, not that you have to do."

"I enjoy civic engagement events because not only is it fun to go with friends and peers, but being unified to give back to our community is amazing and great to be a part of. It's also a great feeling knowing that you're helping out and potentially making someone's day whether it be putting together sandwiches, crafting cards, or lending a helping hand at Father English. During my future career, I hope to engage in service with non profit and community based organizations, focusing on environmental issues. Participating in civic engagement is an act I will continue to do even after my time here is done, because I will always have a passion for helping others."



Jason Peralta, '25



Carissa Ostoloza, '27

"Participating in civic engagement events has provided me the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone to meet multiple different people and personalities. It's given me the ability to serve others in some of the simplest of ways, while reminding me to be mindful about the small blessings that we overlook within our lives. As I go on to pursue my degree in Sports Medicine, I hope to continually apply this gift of serving others within the healthcare field and beyond."

"I enjoy doing civic engagement because of the people I'm serving. To know that just spending an hour or two of your time to help another person is the best feeling. My career aspiration is to be a teacher, so I hope to continue my love of civic engagement and pass it onto future generations! "



Madison Knueppel, '26



Janah Marie Divingracia, '26

"I love participating in civic engagement events because they are fulfilling. I like helping people out. The people I meet are great, and the activities themselves are enjoyable. I hope to make a positive impact in a more subtle way in my future career."

"Civic engagement experiences offer me the opportunity for personal growth, to see what our support can accomplish in our community, and in some way change the outlook on life for someone who truly needs it. In particular, I connect civic engagement with my career in anthropology, as it is the study of humanity and its dimensions. This helps me to understand that there can be more just social conditions with the support of us as a student community."



Ashley Marquez, '27

The Sweet Road Less Traveled: From NJ to Brazil to Capture the Path of Chocolate

Dr. Martha Witt, Director of the Performing and Literary Arts track has always loved writing. Her work is interdisciplinary and represents literature that transcends the limitations of border and language. It is this love of other cultures and languages that took her out of her classroom and into the small community of Ilheus, Brazil, last year, in hopes of capturing the story of chocolate. Her endeavors, supported by a Fulbright Fellowship, allowed her the opportunity to draft a part-autobiographical story based in Ilheus, a coastline in the south of Brazil, famous for its cocoa, and at one point the greatest producer of chocolate. Witt immersed herself fully within both the community and the classroom, by interviewing local cocoa farmers and working with a professor at **Universidade Estadual de Santa Cruz (UESC)** to develop workshops for creative writing courses offered at UESC's Department of English.

Witt reflected on her experience and how she hopes to utilize her new perspective to improve learning outcomes of her students here. "I've built many alliances from my time there. Really that's the mission of the Fulbright program." She notes how she now has a broader appreciation for different learning styles. Dr. Witt is no stranger to cross-cultural work, having received grants and residencies in Rome, Italy by **Centro Per Il Libro E La Lettura (Cepell)**. In fact, apart from teaching and doing research, Dr. Witt has spent a fruitful professional career translating books and other literary works. She enthusiastically shares, "It's so fascinating to see how students choose their words so differently. It really opens up your own understanding of your culture." She is able to utilize

this multi-faceted perspective of crafting literary and creative works to encourage her own students to take different approaches in their work. She encourages her students to become autonomous and leaders. She sees her role as track director as dichotomous. She will reinforce the importance of having a strong background in writing as a framework and as a discipline. She encourages her students to use the track as an opportunity to identify their interests, their values, and foster a path for the kind of artist they want to become.

She comments on the role of developing such independent projects. "Students should be integrating knowledge and technique. I always tell my students to continue reading, writing, and workshopping. It excites me that I am able to witness how these students use different workshop models."

Dr. Witt recommends students take full advantage of the opportunity the track offers. "Their thesis is similar to an artist's statement. It is a deep way for them to foresee their artistic trajectory." Witt notes that employers today want people who think outside of the box. "They need people who see beyond the rhetoric of time. And this track gets students to that place," she says excitedly. She hopes to continue guiding them to develop an overlapping nexus of knowledge and identity.



Dr. Martha Witt

Writing as a Medium: Teaching *and* Learning as a Lecturer at Cornell

To put it in her own words, "I have always been writing," says **Mackenzie Schubert Polonyi Donnelly**, a 2019 **William Paterson** graduate of the **Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature** program. "I have always been hungry to read." In an effort to expand her writing world within a community of writers and allow herself the opportunity to fully embody writing as a creative process, she pursued poetry at **Cornell University**, graduating with a **Master in Fine Arts in 2022**. Today, she is continuing her journey at Cornell as lecturer, teaching creative writing courses. Commenting on the role of poetry in society she commends the field for doing everything in community, promoting self-exploration, and fostering a global network of people working through visceral feelings and experiences that can be shared with other writers and readers. She hopes the field gains the appreciation and time it deserves by writers and consumers of poetry alike. She adds, "Poetry is so powerful."

While she had an inherent attraction to creative writing as a young child, she credits **William Paterson and Honors** for encouraging this passion of hers. Support from **Dr. Timothy Liu**, Emeritus Professor English and **Dr. Christopher Salerno**, Professor of English, always made her feel seen and heard and uplifted her voice. She also recalls her time in the **Honors Performing and Literary Arts Track** under the mentorship of **Dr. Martha Witt, Director** of the track and Professor of English, valuable. Today she is in a unique position in her career where she allows herself to contribute to the field just as much as the field contributes to her life. "As a lecturer I get to inspire future writers and *be inspired* by student writers." She goes on to say,

"The workshops I have hosted for students included the most brave and experimental writing I have ever been exposed to." Through these workshops that extend beyond the critical and technical writing skills students learn inside the classroom, she herself feels more confident with her writing and is experimenting with analytical poetry. She is able to pull from her experiences working with students to strengthen her own creative identity.

She considers writing, in particular poetry, to be very subjective and to be personal pieces of self-exploration. Her taste is not limited to one style or genre. "I don't want to determine what kind of writing I read, I prefer to see where it leads me. I appeal to writing that bends literature. In short, I enjoy any crafting of beautiful work."

Donnelly received many awards including the **Helen and Phillip Manno Award and the College of Arts and Humanities Dean's Award** from William Paterson in 2019; the **2021 Robert Chasen Memorial Poetry Prize winner**. She was also a **Pushcart -Prize** nominee, and a **Public Space 2023 Writing Fellowship finalist**. Her piece *Post Volcanic Folk Tales* won the **2023 National Poetry Series**. Her work can also be found in *Barrelhouse Magazine*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Palette Poetry*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Tupelo Press*, and *Quarterly West*.

On a final note of reflection Donnelly shared her very first exposure to writing. In true writer spirit that reflects her diverse and sophisticated style and pure love for her work, she said "Folklore, Edgar Allen Poe, and lots of books with horses!"



Mackenzie Schubert Polonyi Donnelly

Honors Research Week and Reception

During Honors Research week, held April 15th—18th, over 100 Honors students presented their research and creative projects. Students represented all 11 of the Honors tracks, all 4 colleges, and over 56 different majors and minors. This continued the annual Spring tradition, in which the Honors College showcases the work of students who are completing one of the Honors College tracks. Their presentation was a culmination of the time they spent in the track and of the support they received from faculty and staff members.

For many students, their thesis projects gave them the opportunity to present at national, regional, and local research conferences. Others used their time in the track to enhance their understanding and interest in specific topics they wish to explore in graduate and professional schools.

A few weeks later, presenters were celebrated at the annual **Honors College Reception**. The Reception was held on Wednesday, May 1 in the UC Ballrooms and attended by **President Helldobler**, **Provost Powers**, **Honors Dean Barbara Andrew**, and the **Honors Track Directors**, and **staff**. Students who completed one of the Honors College Tracks during the 2023-2024 academic year were recognized. The students were awarded Honors medallions that they wore at graduation. It was wonderful to celebrate the students' accomplishments with them and their families.

The events at a glance





Once a Leader, Always a Leader



Jenna Vitale, '23 at the NYSCAL Awards Banquet

WP Honors College graduate, **Jenna Vitale, '23**, recently accepted the **"Group Volunteer of the Year Award"** on behalf of the **Mahopac High School Chapter of GlamourGals**. The award was presented by the **New York State Health Facilities Association (NYSHFA)** and the **New York State Center for Assisted Living (NYSCAL)** at their annual **Chairperson's Reception and Awards Banquet** in Rochester, New York.

Jenna, a former long-serving **Honors Peer Leader** and active student in the William Paterson community, established a GlamourGirls chapter in her hometown of Mahopac back when she was in high school. GlamourGals is a national organization that gives young people an opportunity to show that they care for senior citizens by visiting senior centers and providing companionship, conversation, and the Glamour Gals signature makeovers. "Leading a Glamour Gals chapter and running makeover sessions taught me the importance of patience, compassion, and listening," said Jenna, who credits GlamourGals for her success throughout college and in her career. "This experience taught me how to work as part of a team, helped give me an understanding of diverse experiences, and allowed me

to gain skills in compassion and communication."

After graduating from high school, Jenna continued to be active in the Glamour Gals organization. During her junior year of college when visiting was restricted in Nursing Homes due to COVID, Jenna enlisted the help of her roommate, former Honors student, **Brianna Belar, '23**, and the pair partnered with the **Honors Club** to organize a virtual **#MYDEARFRIEND Campaign**. Nearly 100 students worked together on Zoom and made hundreds of homemade greeting cards for seniors in local nursing homes. The #MyDearFriend Campaign was named the **Best Virtual Civic Engagement Event** for the 2020-2021 Academic Year by the **WP Student Government Association**. The Honors College and the Honors Club have subsequently sponsored other card writing campaigns due to the success of the 2021 event which increased awareness about the loneliness that senior citizens face, and how something as small as a homemade greeting card can brighten someone's life.

Jenna graduated from William Paterson University, **Magna Cum Laude** with a **Bachelor of Music in Music and Entertainment Industries**, and completed the **Honors Music Track**. Her experience in the music industry includes internships in Marketing, Social Media, Artist & Fan Experiences, and Digital Accounts Management. She is currently employed as an Executive Assistant at **Crowd Surf** in NYC. She also serves as a founding member of the **GlamourGals Alumni Council**.

Leaders on Campus

Many Honors students were recognized at the Student Government Association annual awards ceremony on Thursday, April 17 in the UC Ballrooms. Highlights of the evening included the **Honors College Club** being named **"Club of the Year,"** and **Anna Segelken, President of the Honors Club** being named **"Club President of the Year."** The Honors Club is open to all WP students. Jan Pinkston serves as the club advisor. During the 2023-2024 semester, the club participated in several events, including partnering with the Honors College on several civic engagement events. Thanks to the following students who served as members of the Honors Club Executive Board for the **2023-2024** academic year:



Anna Segelken, '24

President: Anna Segelken
Vice President: Isabel Mujia
Secretary: Justina Saad
Treasurer: Carmine Coscia

Public Relations Officer: Justina Saad & Kourtney Scipio
Events Officer: Kourtney Scipio
Club Council Rep: Anna Segelken

Senior Class Rep: Tyler Sanchez
Junior Class Rep: Cami Vasquez
Sophomore Class Rep: Angie Marcucilli
Freshman Class Rep: Danielle Cariaga & Kelly Cammarata

Student Government Association (SGA) elections were held in April. Congratulations to the following students who were elected to the Honors Club Executive Board for the **2024-2025** academic year:

President: Angie Marcucilli
Vice President: Daniel Cariaga
Secretary: Brandi Dziekonski
Treasurer: Carmine Coscia

Public Relations Chairs: Danielle Cariaga & On'Yae Barker
Community Service Chairs: Imelda Omoyi & Alauna Cockett
Senior Representative: Jason Peralta
Junior Representative: Ah'Jahnae Barker

In addition to being named Club President of the Year, Anna Segelken received the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Scholar Leader Award, and was inducted into the LEADS Honor Society. A number of Honors College students also received recognition: **Zahraa Fardos, Kimberly Galvez, Melanie Hernandez, Madison Knueppel, Sowmya Kovvuri, Brianna Martinez, Isabel Mujia, Isabel Nemeth, Jason Peralta, Alexandra Quintero, Angelina Reyes, Gisele Rodriguez, Misty Skupienski, and Camila Vasquez**

Congratulations, Honors students for being leaders on campus!

One Last WP Hoorah!

Honors College student, **Helen Yousaf**, was presented with the **2024 Outstanding Senior Award** on Friday, May 17th at the **Senior Send-Off Celebration**, hosted by the **Alumni Association**. Helen was selected out of a large pool of students who were nominated for the award based on the following criteria: **Strong Involvement in extracurricular activities, Demonstrated Leadership, Service to the University and Community, and High academic standing.**

As a first-generation college student, Helen made the most of her undergraduate career by taking advantage of many opportunities at the university. She was one of the first students to be enrolled in the **Medicinal Biochemistry major** and earned a Bachelors of Science May. She minored in **Public Health** and completed the **Honors Global Public Health Track**. She presented her Honors thesis, *Closed Captioning: Culturally Competent and Linguistically Competent Healthcare*, to the campus community in mid-April. Despite being enrolled in extremely challenging coursework required for her major, minor, and Honors Track, Helen maintained a high GPA and was named to the **Dean's list** during each semester of her college career. An Honors College scholarship recipient, Helen was also awarded the **Community Service Scholar** award from the **William Paterson Alumni Association** in 2022 and 2023, and the **John J. Hanigan Award from the National Collegiate Honors Council** in 2023, which is a national award presented annually to a student who demonstrates a record of community service.

Yousaf was a true anchor in the Honors Office, serving as both an **Honors Peer Leader** and as a **student intern**. In these roles, she served as an ally, friend, and source of information to other Honors students. In addition, she played a key role in organizing Honors social events and community engagement activities. In addition to her work in Honors, Helen has served in many other capacities at the University including working as a tutor, serving as the student representative on the **Mission Statement Working Group**, and collaborating on projects with the **Center for Diversity and Inclusion**. She has also worked as a student assistant for the **Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center** and completed a student assistantship for the **Department of Chemistry**, under the guidance of **Dr. Jay Foley, former Professor of Chemistry**, on a **National Science Foundation** funded grant. Due to her extensive

involvement at William Paterson, Helen was also given opportunities to serve as an undergraduate research assistant for several departments, working with **Dr. Corey Basch, Chair of the Department Public Health and Professor** and **Dr. Lilian Milanes, Professor in the Department of Community and Social Justice Studies.**

While Yousaf is moving on to her next adventure in graduate school, she will always be a proud graduate of William Paterson. Her words of advice to future students, "I hope that that everyone finds something they are passionate about and uses their time in college to develop these interests. Never do something merely for the sake of doing it. Your passion will be your greatest strength!"

Congratulations to Yousaf and to the following Honors College students in this select group of students nominated for the award:

Jessica Bodei	Nicole Kahwaty	Gisele Rodriguez
Jessica David	Nicole Pike	Tyler Sanchez
Shanna Echeverry	Emily Martinez	Kourtney Scipio
Rochelle Estrada	Jessica Momanyi	Vienne Voysey
Rinesa Gerbeshi	Dave Montgomerie	Didar Yahia
Bella Jaramillo	Michaela Raguseo	



Helen Yousaf accepting the Outstanding Senior Award



Jan Pinkston, Helen Yousaf, '24, and Dean Barbara Andrew



Many Honors students attended the Senior Send-Off event on 5/17.

Off They Go...

2024 Commencement Speaker



Michaela Raguseo

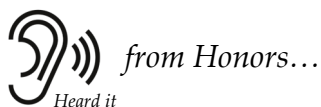
Michaela Raguseo, '24 served as the Class of 2024 Commencement Student Speaker. Raguseo, earned a **B.A. in Mathematics** and completed the **Independent Honors Track**. She will continue her education at William Paterson by working towards her **M.S. in Applied Mathematics**. Michaela was an active member on campus, playing on the **softball team** and working as a tutor in the **Mathematics Learning Center**.

Nicole Joachim, MS, BS

Nicole Joachim, '24, the Honors College **Graduate Student Assistant** from 2022 to 2024, graduated from WP with her **Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology**. Joachim earned her **Bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders** from Stockton University in 2021. We are going to miss Nicole and wish her all the best as she begins her career!



Nicole Joachim

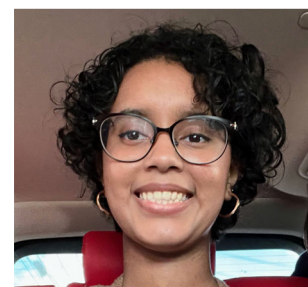


Honors is proud of all the work its students do in– and out– of the classroom. Their efforts and work have an important impact on the community and the lives of its residents. Our Honors staff and administration often hear about the wonderful achievements from other faculty, students, and members of the community. This blog will continue to highlight such students.

Aidan Herbert, '25 is a junior **nursing** major at William Paterson. To foster his skills in clinical medicine and give back to his community, he spends his breaks from school working as an EMT for the Toms River Police Department. This past winter break, his ambulance responded to two calls: an overdose turned CPR and a pedestrian struck by a vehicle, sustaining nearly non-survivable injuries. However, with the efforts of his team, both of these patients saw positive outcomes! Herbert explains that the ability to positively impact lives in such dire situations is the exact reason he loves the career he is pursuing, and is what prompted him to pursue a medical career in the first place.



Aidan Herbert, '25



Sara De La Cruz Jimenez, '24

Sara De La Cruz, '24 is one of two undergraduate education students selected to travel to South Korea and learn about their education system and the impact of educational technologies in the classroom. De La Cruz Jimenez will be travelling as a part of the **College of Education** that was granted a Fulbright Hays Group Project Abroad Grant this summer. The group will be staying at Kongju National University in June and July to observe different classrooms, as well as to further immerse themselves in the Korean language and culture. Their findings are anticipated to be presented at the Teaching Asia Conference and shared on the Fulbright Grant website. De La Cruz Jimenez is a double major in **Secondary Education** and **English Literature** and completed the **Honors Humanities Track**.

Congratulations to Sara on her next adventure!

Do you have news to share about a current Honors student or an alum? Did you do anything exciting this semester you want to share? Reach out to Honors at honors@wpunj.edu to share and be included in the next *Heard it from Honors* feature!



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