

Students explore new identity



Photo Courtesy of Facebook

Students Cass Lowry, HCIX, and Stacey Snyder, HCIX, in Belgium. During their time in Europe the two witnessed different forms of European architecture while learning about European identity.

By **Miranda Gipe**
HCIX

Though **Stacey Snyder**, HCIX, is no stranger to international travel, her first emotions upon stepping off the plane in Belgium were still nothing but ecstatic.

"I couldn't believe I was actually in Europe," she recalls. "I felt that I was in for the trip of a lifetime."

Last May Snyder, along with **Cass Lowry**, HCIX, were selected from a pool of applicants to participate in the annual Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Summer Honors Program, a state-sponsored educational odyssey in which members spend their first week in America studying and familiarizing themselves with several topics before setting off to put their newly gained knowledge into real-life context.

Hosted this year by Shippensburg University, Snyder and Lowry joined 28 other students from other Pennsylvania state schools in studying this year's theme

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of "Constructing European Identity" before boarding a plane and embarking upon a two-week long journey to Belgium and France.

The two had much to learn, however, before they could ever set their sights on the dazzling Eiffel Tower.

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Letter from the President: *Stacey Snyder*

Hello HSA,

For those of you I haven't met yet, my name is Stacey Snyder. I am a third year secondary English education major.

It is hard to believe that the 2009-2010 school year is underway. For some, this will mark the beginning of a new chapter of life—a chapter that is filled with exciting, unique, and new opportunities. For others, it will be a chance to continue to explore all that West Chester, and the Honors Student Association, has to offer.

As your HSA President, I look forward to working with you to ensure that this year is a success.

To the first year students: HSA is a wonderful way to get involved on campus, and one of my biggest hopes is that you will feel right at home with us. Since we are a multi-faceted organization, I am sure that you will find an area that interests you.

I encourage you to get involved so that you can make the most of both your Honors and WCU experiences. As with anything, you will probably find that you will get out of HSA what you choose to put in to it. HSA can be the outlet to provide you with new friends who will not only ease your transition to college but also last a lifetime.

The Honors College at West Chester is truly a one-of-a-kind organization, and HSA, as the student run branch of the Honors College, will hopefully fulfill your desire to serve your community and bond with your fellow Honors students in and out of the classroom.

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New Beginnings *Easing the transition into college*

By RJ Wasylyk
HCX

Let's face it. The transition into college is frightening. You leave your comfort zone and head into new, unexplored territory. Often, home is miles away, which makes it hard to maintain relationships with family and friends.

It makes us all nervous, but there are ways to ease the transition to college that will help even the shyest student feel right at home.

Getting involved in an organization on campus is a great way to get out of your room and meet new people. From community service to a *cappella* singing, campus organizations appeal to a wide variety of interests.

"If you immediately put down roots in some organization, you'll probably feel more at home and relaxed...For two years I was really involved in Student Government Association, and even though I am not any more, I still keep in touch with many of the friends I made there," **Alyssa Conaway**, HC VII, says.

HSA is another great way to get involved. Community service events, such as Adopt-a-Block and Chamber Day, are great resume builders, but also introduce you to new people, and are, most importantly, fun.

Social outings also give you a chance to get off campus, not spend a lot of money and have a great time. With so much exposure to other students in HSA, it's hard not to form relationships.

"...My closest friends are in Honors. I feel like we're a family—a somewhat dysfunctional family, but we're always there for each other," Conaway goes on to say.

However, for the over-zealous first years, be careful not to spread yourself too thin. Too much involvement may be overwhelming, especially as you learn to juggle school work, extra-curriculars and a social life.

"College is not like high school," Second Vice President **Cass Lowry**, HC IX, warns. "When I got to college, I joined so many organizations that I found that I didn't

Words of Wisdom Veteran students offer additional advice

"An easy way to feel more comfortable is to talk to people. Just by stopping and introducing yourself to the people you see in the hallway, you make yourself more at ease living in the dorm. Before you know it, you've made friends with the people around you and you've made your transition into college!"

HSA Secretary Christina Durbin, HCX



"To the daring freshmen: Try to resolve any "unfinished" business you may have at home. Make that phone call you have been putting off to a friend, sibling, ex-girlfriend/boyfriend. Now is the time to do it."

Nicole Fortuna, HC VII



"For the first month or so my roommate and I kept the door open to kind of encourage other friends to come on in. It definitely helped to get to know new people!"

Kara Baxter, HC VI

have time and wasn't emotionally committed to any of them because I had spread myself too thin."

For those students who have some reservations about joining organizations, meeting new people can be as easy as leaving the door to your room open. You never know who might drop by!

Creating new relationships is important, but keeping in touch with those that you left at home can really help ease the transition as well. The folks back home already support you and want the best for you. Some words of encouragement can really send you in the right direction.

"By maintaining solid relationships with

my parents, my sisters, and a few close friends at school, I was able to understand what exactly my academic and personal goals were," **Nicole Fortuna**, HC VII, states.

And don't forget, your transition into college is also your family's transition. Keep in contact with them and let them know that you are doing alright.

No matter what, it is vital to keep a positive attitude. Your experiences at West Chester will be what you make of them. Stay positive, embrace new challenges, and you will not only survive, you will thrive.

HCXI

A new adventure begins

Photos Courtesy of Alyssa Conaway
Incoming Honors students participate in various activities at orientation which foster teamwork. Students will use the skills they developed and many of the concepts they learned in HON 100, Self Awareness and Development throughout the fall semester.



Snyder

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To the upperclassman: I encourage you to stay active in HSA and to help plan and attend our events. I hope that you will still feel passionate about HSA and help us make this year even better than the previous ones. HSA could not run without your energy and willingness to lend a hand, so I hope that this year we will continue to see you at meetings, events, and other related functions.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a safe, productive, happy and healthy upcoming school year. On behalf of the other members of the executive board and the committee chairs, I cannot wait to get this year started. I look forward to seeing you at our monthly meetings and at our many social, fundraising, and community service events.

Sincerely,

Stacey Snyder HC IX
HSA President 2009-2010

Congratulations New Seminar Students

Joshua Bevan - *History with Teaching Certification*
Mary Cossolini - *Communication Studies*
Matthew Costa - *Cell & Molecular Biology*
Kernie Desir - *Criminal Justice*
Erin Groff - *Marketing*
Andrew Hopkins - *Criminal Justice*
Ellen Howard - *Communication Studies*
Brandon Ignacio - *History*
Dawn Kling - *Political Science: International Relations*
Evan Lieb - *Political Science: International Relations*
Diamond Lipscomb - *Accounting*
Katherine Lynde - *Philosophy: Religious Studies*
Erin Maginnis - *Spanish BA with Teaching Certification*
Shannon Marcoon - *Political Science: International Relations*
Ikedi Onyemaobim - *Political Science*
Yvonne Page - *Psychology*

Nathanael Portner - *Political Science: International Relations*
Michelle Paige - *Sociology*
Kelsi Pflueger - *English BA*
Vaishali Purohit - *Chemistry/Biology; Premedical*
Laura Putman - *Communication Studies*
Shayna Richardson - *Finance & Business Management*
Jennifer Rothman - *Marketing*
Sherie Ruppertsberger - *Anthropology*
Elizabeth Saldierna - *Political Science: International Relations*
Sarah Shin - *Nursing*
Luisiana Souto - *Management*
Sasha Stauffer - *Criminal Justice*
Kyra Thornburg - *Communication Studies*
Jody Tighe - *Psychology/Political Science: International Relations*
Kaitlin Tito - *English BA*
Hiromi Umeda - *Liberal Studies*

A reception for new seminar students will be held on September 10 at 7PM in Merion 112. The HSA meeting will follow.

HONORS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

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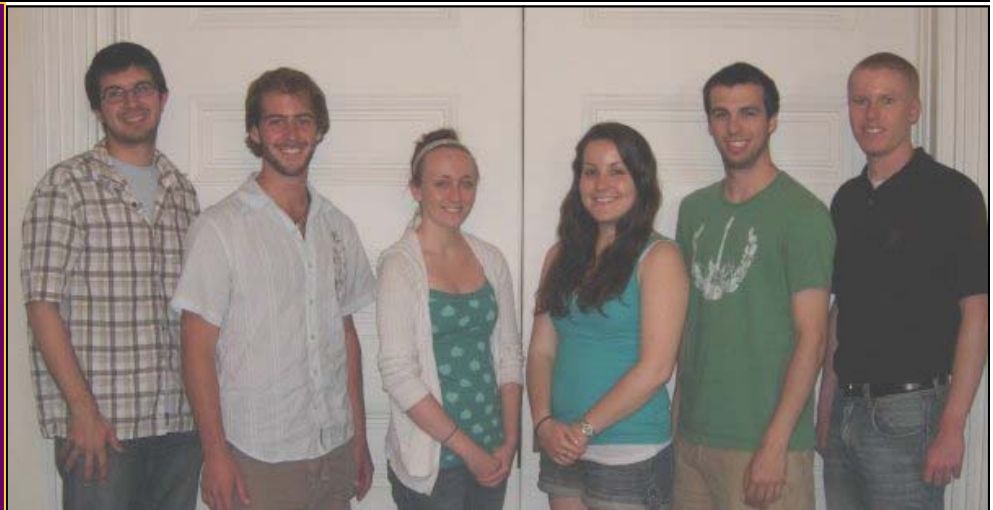


Photo Courtesy of Facebook

Congratulations to the 2009-2010 HSA Executive Board. Pictured above, (starting from the left) Immediate Past President Dan Moran, 2nd Vice President Cass Lowry, Secretary Christina Durbin, President Stacey Snyder, 1st Vice President Steve Savage and Treasurer Nathan Kutz.

PASSHE Trip

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With classes in Medieval European history and modern European politics and identity during the day and plenty of papers, presentations and group projects to prepare at night, their days were effectively filled.

“Our days were pretty hectic, to be honest,” Snyder admits.

But once they landed at their destination, the true learning began.

Lowry, who has also traveled abroad to South Africa, Argentina, and Germany, could automatically tell the difference between the ideals of America and that of Belgium and France the moment he glimpsed at the architecture.

“Many buildings were centuries old. On every street corner a Gothic or Romanesque cathedral displayed the work and wealth of several generations of medieval men and women for all to see,” Lowry states while describing the urban environment.

“Europeans respect and save their cities. When you walk there, you can feel that people have been living there for centuries, and that the culture has a community and

knowledge of its history.”

While staying with host families in Belgium, students were able to continue their studies through journaling and paper-writing while also taking time to explore a number of other destinations, including Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam.

For Lowry, the defining moment of the trip was his time at Le Mont St. Michel, an island fortress that served in its time as castle, abbey, and battlement. It was in this place of such varied history that the sum of all of his studies came together.

“This is where our culture came from. This is part of the story of how we have evolved. In searching for a European identity, I discovered more of my own,” Lowry says.

Snyder and Lowry returned home with more than an increased understanding and appreciation of the history and identity of the great nations of France and Belgium and the European continent; they returned with memories and experiences that will continue to affect them both academically and personally for a lifetime. Both are grateful for the lesson of the journey, and, as Snyder says, “for all that the world has to offer.”

HSA Happenings is a student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association Public Relations Committee. Its purpose is to supplement West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.

Don't forget! The first HSA General Assembly is Thursday, September 10 in Merion 112 at 8PM.