

---

# HSA HAPPENINGS

December 2018



Photo Credit: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

## Leadership. Service. Academia.

### HSA Happening is...

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

---

## Table of Contents

Page 4 .....	WCU's Relationship with Norway By: Michael Moriarty and Matt Leinhauser
Page 5 .....	What to Look Forward to with the Honors College By: Jacqueline Griffith
Page 6 .....	A Win for the HSA Dance Team By: Dorothy Looby
Page 7 .....	2018 Swope Scholarship By: An Interview with Dr. Dean by Alex Kuhn
Page 8 .....	Why Choose Honors? By: Julie Ball and William Parkes
Page 9 .....	Back to my High School By: Erica Belovich
Page 10 .....	A Message from the Second VP By: Elise Klingaman
Page 11 .....	The Beauty of Honors By: Ian Duffy

---

Page 12 .....	Thanksgiving: HSA Style By: Erica Belovich
Page 13 .....	Reflecting on my First Year of Honors By: Hunter Trzeciak
Page 14 .....	HSA Soccer for the Win! By: Ben Naroden
Page 15 .....	First-Hand Experience at the Summer Symposium of 2018 By: Ben Naroden
Page 16 .....	This is Halloween By: Allison Moyer
Page 17 .....	What Will You Create...? By: Andrew T. McLaughlin

---

## WCU's Relationship with Norway

### Michael Moriarty and Matt Leinhauser

Graduate Assistant and President of HSA

The Honors College has developed a wonderful relationship with the Nobel Peace Institute over the last few years. This relationship includes collaborating on programs that help to enrich students' leadership skills as exemplified by Nobel Peace laureates. Dr. Henrik Syse, Vice Chair of the Nobel Peace Committee, has visited our campus twice as of September 2018 where, each time, he is impressed by the responses from students in regards to learning about and doing their part for the peace cause.

HON 355: *Norway's Nobel Idea for Promoting Peace and Developing Leaders* is a course designed to explore Nobel laureates and ways of better understanding leadership. The students in the class during the fall of 2017 stumbled upon an opportunity: the chance to partner with the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement and create a leadership series around this *Nobel Idea*. The series involved students from various majors and disciplines, and those enrolled in the course presented upon a Nobel laureate and lessons learned from their life working towards peace. The series concluded with having students submit names of individuals who deserved to be awarded the peace prize. The students in HON 355 then deliberated about the top three candidates, mimicked the Nobel Peace Committee selection process, and unanimously proposed a name. The candidate

WCU Honors chose to submit that year was Umra Omar of Kenya.

Honors students became aware they can recommend a name for consideration for the Nobel Peace Prize. Professor of history Dr. Charles Hardy III has taught in Honors before and was a lead faculty member on the PASSHE Honors trip to Norway in 2015. Dr. Hardy is also the one who formally writes the letter on behalf of the Honors students at West Chester University.

The student-orchestrated leadership series is now in its second year. At the recent conclusion of the leadership series, a total of twelve student leaders presented on Nobel laureates. The series participants also submitted names to the student panel for consideration. The WCU Honors candidate for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize is Raif Badawi of Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Henrik Syse has since invited Dr. Dean and five students to represent WCU in Norway this December. This opportunity allows Ollie DeSarno, Mark Gutierrez, Hannah Laboski, Matthew Leinhauser, and Michael Moriarty to travel to Oslo and represent Honors during the awarding of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. The experience involves a panel discussion on climate change led by 2007 Laureate Al Gore as well as an opportunity to sit in on a live interview with 2018 prize winners Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege. ☒

---

# What to Look Forward to with the Honors College

Jacqueline Griffith

First-Year Student

The fall semester is coming to an end, and that means our first ever semester of college is wrapping up for all of us first year students! Now that we've all gotten to know one another well, between our summer symposium, the rotating Honors 100 modules, and the well-loved HON 352 class, we'll have new students to welcome into the community. Personally, I'm very excited to meet new students, as they'll bring new ideas and perspectives to class discussions. The bridge program is wonderful, because it allows students who didn't initially know about The Honors College to apply and join in their first year. These students get to know two classes of students, thus "bridging" them together.

I asked some of my fellow first year Honors students what there is to look forward to when joining The Honors College:

Emily Balestrini said, "The sense of community in Honors makes the program beyond worth it. Having other Honors students in my classes has given me both friends to study with, and many familiar faces around campus. A simple wave really brightens my day!"

Hannah Atlas, Music Education major, states, "There are so many committees and activities to get involved in. Personally, I'm in both HSA choir and HSA jazz band. They're a ton of fun - obviously, I love music, and getting to make

music with other music majors, as well as those passionate enough to continue in college, is such a rewarding experience. We perform at various HSA and community activities, and it's always a great time."

According to Erica Belovich, "The Honors classes are very unique, because they're not necessarily more difficult, but a lot more thought-provoking. The classes all take an interdisciplinary approach and provide us with unique ideas."

Personally, my favorite part of HSA and the Honors College are the various ways to be involved. There are many committees and activities, in which old and new members come together with our common goal of serving the community. I'm excited to meet the new bridge class, as we all celebrate the idea that "To Be Honorable Is To Serve." ☒



Photo Credit: Jacqueline Griffith

---

## A Win For the HSA Dance Team!

**Dorothy Looby**

First-Year Student



Photo Credit: Kathleen Schultz

This year's homecoming parade was held on Saturday, November 3rd. The parade loop went around the Sykes student union building and had performance groups stop in front of Sykes to show their talents. Groups who participated in the parade included the Dance Rules Everything Around Me Dance Team, University Dance Team, groups of students in fraternity and sororities, the marching band, the color guard, and alumni color guard and band, Honors Student Association Dance Team, and other groups of students. These performance teams were judged on their dances and the banner they created.

Honors Student Association Dance Team is led by Kathleen Schultz and consists of Lauren

Durante, Taylor Gautier, Jess Miller, and Dorothy Looby. This year, the performance was a hip hop/jazz dance choreographed to Idol-BTS (featuring Nicki Minaj), Tangled Up by Caro Emerald, and Paparazzi by Lady Gaga. The dance was co-choreographed by Kathleen and Taylor, who worked hard to put the dance together and teach the choreography. The dance team came together in early September and worked on creating and clearing in preparation for the performance.

On the day of the performance, the dance team met by Eco Grounds with all the other groups performing in the parade. An hour before the parade was scheduled to start, the group went out into the cold to find their spot. The girls practiced the dance multiple times, attempting to get warm for the performance. The time came to start walking, and the group picked up the banner which Jess and Kathleen created. The group walked proudly down the street with their banner, which pictured the Red Carpet and the stars from the Walk of Fame with the dancer's names in them.

University Dance Company ranked first and the Honors Student Association Dance Team rank second in the parade. Upon the news of the win, the team was ecstatic and surprised. The second-place prize was two hundred dollars which will be added the Honors Student Association Fund. With the win under the Honors Student Association Dance Team's belt, the team continues to practice and work hard to prepare for the holiday performance for the Honors Student Association's meet. ☒

---

# 2018 Swope Scholarship

An Interview with Dr. Dean by Alex Kuhn  
Second-Year Student

## What is the Swope Foundation?

The WCU Swope Foundation honors the legacy of leadership and service provided by university president Charles Swope and his wife Edna to students of the university. A major outlet of the foundation is the Swope scholarship.

## What is the Swope Scholarship and who typically receives it?

Recognized as one of the highest academic honors awarded at the university, Swope Scholarships are presented each fall to undergraduate students beginning their third year of study and graduate students who have completed one year. The awards celebrate academics (generally recipients hold a 4.0 or very close), leadership and service. The service element for this prize is particularly innovative as one of two recommendation letters must come from a community member (someone outside of WCU) who can attest to the student's dedication to service in the larger community. The number of awards donated vary from year to year, and the Honors College is proud to boast that since 2013, 57% of these have been awarded to Honors students. Additionally, each year one or two students are granted the honor of receiving the highest recognition as the *Dr. Charles Swope Memorial Scholars*, and for the past nine years at least one of those students held membership in the Honors College.

## Congratulations to our very own 2018 winners!

In 2018 of the 10 individuals awarded with Swope scholarships, 7 belonged to the Honors College. Having noted the prestige of this academic and service based award, the Honors College would like to congratulate the following individuals:

**Aaima Amer - Cell & Molecular Biology,  
Nicholas Marcil - EGP,  
Helena McKendrick - MGP\*, Abby McMahon -  
Nutrition,  
Michael Moriarty - Graduate -  
Communication Studies, Ellie Sullum -  
Philosophy\*,  
& Maggie Willis - Business Management**

*\*Dr. Charles S. Swope Memorial Scholar*



Photo Credit: Erica Thompson

## Why Choose Honors?

### Julie Ball and William Parkes

Parents of Courtney Purdy and Mary Parkes

*Below, parents of Sophomore Honors College students Courtney Purdy and Mary Parkes, account for why they thought West Chester University's Honors College was the best fit for their child.*

#### Julie Ball

1. There was something different about WCU. I could see my daughter thriving in this environment for the four years of her undergraduate degree and be prepared for the rest of her life ahead of her.
2. The admission and financial offices provided a plethora of information to lay the foundation for the undergraduate program that WCU offers.
3. Dr. Dean, the president of the Honors College, as well as fellow Honors College staff members explained in full detail what the WCU Honors Program had to offer and how he would be of assistance in our journey.
4. WCU resides only about an hour and a half away from home, so involvement with her family as well as making a life for herself on campus are both possible.
5. From the day I rode home with Courtney after her Honors orientation, I knew she was going to find lifelong friends within the Honors College community.

#### William Parkes

1. Reasonable cost of tuition when compared other options.
2. Diversity of programs offered, and a long history of preparing future "teachers" (the old saying "practice makes perfect", and WCU has has a lot of practice through the years).

3. The school's location is close enough to home for a visit, but far enough that it promotes staying on campus to experience to more fully experience student life.
4. The campus environment appears to be as safe as one could expect for a college campus (you are not bulletproof, so be vigilant and careful).
5. Acceptance into the Honors program provides support, flexibility and promotes growth of you as a person beyond the classroom.

### What Honors Students Love About HSA...

**"I love the strong community atmosphere!"** -Alyssa Adinolfi, Sophomore

**"I get to meet new people who are all willing to help me in my transition to college life."** -Aric Miller, First-Year

**"The incredible community of passionate learners and leaders."** -Riley Orr, Senior

**"Volunteer opportunities."** -Noah Morris, First-Year

**"HSA provides both a foundation and a jumping board for campus involvement at WCU. Most of the extra-curricular activities I am currently involved in can be traced back to my experiences with HSA. HSA also serves as a great touch-point for students to grow more through ample leadership and service opportunities."** -Max James, Senior

**"The best part of HSA is the free pizza every other Thursday night. Yum:)"** -Tyler Prehl, First-Year

---

## Back to my High School

Erica Belovich

First-Year Student

Over Thanksgiving Break, I had the unique opportunity to travel back to my hometown high school as a representative of the West Chester University Honors College. I was always very active within my high school, and so the idea of speaking to current students appealed to me greatly. I was surprised to find, however, that through this experience I began to understand the big effect the Honors College and West Chester University has already had on me.

When I entered the high school, I was greeted by my former guidance counselor, Mrs. Thrash, who immediately began asking me questions about my experience. I was surprised to find that I had a lot to say. I realized that since August, I had joined clubs, made friends, and began taking on leadership roles around campus. I felt proud of my accomplishments thus far, and I found myself fantasizing about my future at West Chester.

While presenting to the prospective students, I also became aware of all of the knowledge I had picked up regarding the Honors College and the Honors Student Association. I was able to answer a lot of the students questions and truly felt a pride for what I was a part of. I encouraged the students to research more and I told them about the large role HSA and the Honors College have within the community and in the global world.

One specific aspect of HSA that stood out to me personally was Aid to South Africa. This event is a way to raise awareness while also having fun. The event includes music, food, and games, and the money raised benefits organizations that work to improve South African life. In addition to this, it is a way for the community and students to work together for a greater cause. I loved explaining the concept of this event to the students I presented to and I cannot wait to attend and help this year.

Overall, going back to my high school made me realize my pride in the West Chester University Honors College, and increased my desire to encourage others to attend as well. It was a great experience, and it allowed me to learn more about the Honors College. In addition, it also encouraged me to take advantage of all of the opportunities offered by the Honors College and HSA. I hope to continue sharing my experiences and I am grateful that I was able to reconnect with the people who helped me to get where I am today. ☒



Photo Credit: Erica Belovich

---

## A Message from the HSA Second Vice-President

Elise Klingaman

Junior



Photo Credit: Elise Klingaman

Hi all! I'm going to be a bit corny here and say, **"How is it already December?!"** This has been one of the fastest semesters for me to date, and I think that's a good measure of the amount of fun I've had thus far serving as your Second Vice President. I've never had this large of a leadership role before in an organization, and around a few weeks before this semester began, my nerves grew. I kept thinking, "You've never done anything like this before, what are you doing?" But as I grew closer to my fellow exec board members who helped me find my place and take this new position step-by-step, I became much more confident and comfortable in my role.

If you are in a leadership position or are considering stepping out of your comfort zone, I'm here to encourage you to JUST DO IT (thanks, Nike!). That "uncomfy" zone might just turn into your new comfort zone, as HSA has done for many of our peers. HSA is about attributing to the betterment of everyone in the organization, and that made it such a loving space to grow into this new leadership role.

All of our committees, events, and members are in the club to grow with and support one another, and I absolutely love being a part of such a positive organization.

Our main goal as leaders of such a group is to cater to your needs and make every meeting a place of comfort. If you have any suggestions to further our goal, flag us down at a meeting, stop on by the Honors House, or even shoot us an email!

I would also *never* turn down an invite to grab a coffee and a bagel with you at Saxby's. Not only are we all here to make your experience in HSA more fulfilling, we also all have tidbits of life advice here and there we'd love to share with anyone that will listen!

I know December has a rough start with deadlines quickly approaching, but keep on keepin' on, and always remember: you are enough. ☒

---

## The Beauty of Honors

Ian Duffy

First-Year Student

The beauty of the Honors College is that it opens doors. I cherish the Honors College because my first week of school was a series of closed doors. I wanted to make time for family and friends, but my busy schedule closed the door. I wanted to focus on my homework, but procrastination closed the door. I wanted to write papers I can be proud of, but self-doubt closed the door. I wanted to take deep breaths, but stress closed the door. Then the first week was behind me, and a new week began. My mentor told me something I will never forget: “The Honors College is here for you. Make use of it.”

I took Professor Hickman, one of the professors for HON100, up on his offer to help students with their schedules. He took the time to sit down with me and piece my life back together. Suddenly, I had time for my family again. Hanging out with friends and getting my homework done were no longer mutually exclusive. Doors started to open again.

My first HON100 class rotation was with Dr. Foeman. We had to write an essay every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I started using my papers as an outlet to express my fears of inadequacy, and that week, Dr. Foeman wrote me saying that I should stop doubting myself. She told me that I have the potential to be a great student, and with her help, I regained my confidence.

Homework continued to pile up, and even with my new schedule, I might have given up if it

were not for my Honors cohort. Living on the Honors floor with 80 of my peers meant I was never alone. My friends were always there if I wanted a break from homework, or if I needed a fresh pair of eyes for one of my papers, or if I just needed someone to complain to. The 7th floor became a fountain of laughs, good cheer, advice, and comradery.

Thanks to Honors, I do not remember my first week of school as the worst week of my life. Instead, I view it as the week the Honors College helped me to start living again. ☑

Want to write for HSA Happenings?  
Here is what you can do....

Contact us: Courtney Purdy  
(cp883006@wcupa.edu), Mary  
(Molly) Parkes  
(mp884889@wcupa.edu),  
Alexander Kuhn  
(ak893568@wcupa.edu)

HSA Happenings will be published the first Thursday of every month, so get your submissions in at least 1 week prior to the release date!

Write articles relevant to HSA, whether it be an experience you had volunteering or an interview with an upperclassman that went to South Africa, we would love to read them!

---

## Thanksgiving: HSA Style

### Erica Belovich

#### First-Year Student

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, HSA hosted a Thanksgiving Dinner in order to celebrate the holiday season and bring HSA members together. The event was held in Sykes Student Union, where many students helped to decorate and also donated food to the event. Becca Shoemaker, and HSA Member, served as the main coordinator for the event. She said, “Planning HSA Thanksgiving was such a privilege this year! I was overwhelmed by the number of people who volunteered to bring and make dishes, and when I walked into Sykes on the day of the event I was greeted by an army of people ready to help decorate! When our community comes together like that, the result is nothing short of magical. Overall, the day proved to be a success: forty hungry HSA members entered, and forty smiling and stuffed HSA members exited.”

Becca was right about the amount of HSA members who volunteered and donated. The decorations looked beautiful, and there was a full table of stuffing, turkey, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, and cupcakes! First-year student Sabrina Avanzato expressed her satisfaction in the event by saying, “HSA Thanksgiving dinner was a great time! It gave my friends and I an opportunity to have a nice dinner together before break!”

As mentioned by Becca, the event also played a role in bringing the community together.

Students who never met before had the opportunity to share a meal. Specifically, it gave first year students an opportunity to meet upperclassman in HSA that they had not had the opportunity to meet yet. First year student Benjamin Naroden expressed this by saying, “This Thanksgiving celebration allowed me to enjoy the holiday season with my friends and meet more of the upperclassman in HSA.”

Overall, HSA Thanksgiving was a huge success. Everyone left with good attitudes and full stomachs. The event demonstrated how much can be accomplished when everyone works together to achieve a common goal. It was inspiring to see what HSA can accomplish, and I cannot wait to see what next semester will bring! ☑



Photo Credit: Erica Belovich

---

# Reflecting on my First Semester of Honors

Hunter Trzeciak

First-Year Student



Photo Credit: Hunter Trzeciak

As the semester winds down I have started to reflect on my time here at West Chester thus far. Coming into honors at the start of the semester I was excited to have an atypical experience compared to the rest of the freshman class.

Honors was an opportunity to take a “different” set of curriculum and an opportunity I could not wait to take. However, I do not think anything could have prepared me for the amount of useful information I was going to learn over the course of the semester.

HON 100 was split into four sections all taught by different professors. I appreciated the fact that I have gained four different perspectives throughout this course and the information

has been more than helpful. Professor Wooten gave insight on all the components that make up family, Dr. Foeman was able to help us find out about individual ancestry lineage through a DNA Test, Professor Hickman helped us tackle budgeting and money management, and Dr. McCown provided stress relieving outlets to help us escape the sometimes overwhelming college life. All aspects of this course proved helpful throughout this semester and are topics I feel I will be able to benefit from for not only the rest of my college career but for my entire life.

Now, HON 352. In all honesty this has been one of my harder classes this semester. I came in thinking I was a great writer. That thought was crushed when I got my first question set back. However, like anything else, you live and you learn. I buckled down and pushed through and now as we are nearing the end of the class I feel that I have been academically pushed and have gained useful writing knowledge.

Many of us (if not all) are used to being “top dog”. That is how we got into the Honors College in the first place. But when you combine a group of academic overachievers into one place there is bound to be someone who is “smarter” or will get a better grade than you. I have come to realize that it is in fact okay not to be the best all the time. Everyone is going at their own pace and not everything is a competition.

At the end of the day my first semester of Honors classes have taught me a lot and I cannot wait for next semester and to continue my learning within the honors curriculum. ☒

# HSA Soccer for the Win!

## Ben Naroden

First-Year Student

With HSA's intramural indoor soccer team, Lawrence Syndrome placing third in the league, it is safe to say "we're not just smart" - Dr. Kevin Dean. With the team consisting of 20 players total, the largest number of team members out of all fifteen teams, it was clear that HSA is highly involved in WCU's intramural sports.

Through a nearly undefeated season lead by captain Anna Dyska and co-captain Mark Gutierrez, Lawrence Syndrome represented HSA with a record of 6-1-0, placing third in the league. Winning the first six games seemed to be a simple task as IM Leagues ranked Lawrence Syndrome 4th in points scored, with an average of 8 points per game and 1st in points conceded, with an average of only 3.71 goals per game.

In the first six games, Lawrence Syndrome earned four of their six wins through the mercy rule, holding a score at least five points higher than that of the opposing teams score when the clock gets down to five minutes left in the game. This statistic made Lawrence Syndrome look like a real contender to win the championship.

The road to the championship for Lawrence Syndrome had unfortunately been cut short in the semi-finals by champions, Game Canceled. Lawrence Syndrome put up a fight, with the final score ending 7-9 after nearly coming back from a five goal deficit. Game Canceled were worthy contenders, led by senior and former varsity goalkeeper, Evan Bleiler.

With a successful fall season, Lawrence Syndrome looks forward to the 7v7 outdoor soccer league in the Spring. ☑



Photo Credit: Ben Naroden

Be sure to follow HSA on Social Media!

**Instagram:** [hsawcu](#)

**Twitter:** [@HSAWCU](#)

**Facebook:** West Chester University Honors Student Association



---

# First-Hand Experience at the Summer Symposium of 2018

**Ben Naroden**

First-Year Student

The day had finally come: July 15th, 2018. The day I would finally get to meet many of my peers and future friends.

The anticipation had been killing me and the two and a half hour drive from my home in Hillsborough, NJ only gave me more time to build up with anxiety. When I finally arrived to West Chester University in my barely functional 2001 Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder, I remember freaking out about not knowing where to park despite the clear directions emailed to us, probably a result of all of my anxiety. After messaging people through a group chat we had created, I finally found out where to park where I nearly hit Emily Miller's car. As I finally made my way to the residential quad, we had a picnic waiting for us.

My roommate-to-be was not there yet, and I had not recognized any familiar faces until bridge student, Joey Bevilacqua (Track Joe) came up to me as I waited in line for food. Joe and I both graduated from Hillsborough High School and the familiar face eased some tension.

The following days were filled with tons of uncomfortable yet fun experiences that I got to enjoy with my new friends. This week was full of fun activities such as climbing a ropes courses, committing to trust-falls off of a picnic table, and working with a group of ten people to flip a tarp without stepping off of it. Through these activities, I finally went from a state of

anxiety and feeling uncomfortable to excitement about spending the next four years with my new friends.

If not for this wonderful experience that every incoming Honors student goes through, the Honors College would not be the close-knit community that it is known as today. ☒



Photo Credit: Ben Naroden

---

# This is Halloween

Allison Moyer

First-Year

On the 27th of October, the Honors Student Association travelled to the ghostly place called the YMCA filled with goblins, wizards, and terrify skeletons for the annual event of Healthy Halloween. However, the superheroes came to save our lives. Every child superhero raced each other through the haunted maze, bounced their energy out with the bloody bounce house, and scared away the villains with their spooky crafts. They created popcorn filled witch hands, painted their faces to disguise themselves with the villains, and solved riddles to defeat the goblins.

Additionally, the princesses came out to the haunted YMCA. Belle, Cinderella, Anna, and Elsa came to lift the spirits of the parent zombies. They danced the night away in their beautiful gowns and gave the zombies a night to remember. For the first time, the parent zombies smiled. They laughed and danced to the “Monster Mash.” The princesses trick or treated around the block to collect their candy for the ball as well. Lastly, the little bugs and animals went home with a scare from the haunted hallway. Goblins, monsters, and ghosts came out from the dark shadows to frighten these little animals.

Overall, the superheroes, princesses, bugs and animals came together to scare the goblins, wizards, and skeletons into their portal. However, the goblins and wizards vowed to come back around next year, but the superheroes, princesses, and bugs will be waiting for their return. In all, everyone enjoyed the fun-filled night. They went home with memories to last a lifetime with the huge bouncy houses, haunted hallway, and arts and

crafts to decorate their homes for the holiday. Both the kids and parents embodied the spirits of Halloween, and HSA came home proud knowing they gave these kids frights and smiles with their funky costumes. ☒



Photo Credit: Allison Moyer



Photo Credit: Allison Moyer

---

## What Will You Create...?

### Andrew T. McLaughlin

#### Alumni

*For this edition's Alumni Spotlight, we have included Andrew T. McLaughlin's speech at the Omicron Delta Kappa's (ODK) induction. ODK, the National Leadership Honors Society, recognizes and encourages superior leadership and exemplary character. ODK encourages collaboration among members across the five phases celebrated by ODK: scholarship, athletics, service, communications, and arts (ODK.org).*

10 years ago I sat in these same seats thinking, *how do I become President of this organization? I'm already president of the Honors Student Association and the student government, and boy would this look good on my resume. And you know, maybe this would help me get that big scholarship next year. Maybe even an extra bump on my grad school applications. I'm sure Dr. Dean and President Adler would be so impressed...* PAUSE. You see, I had...and have...a tendency to be competitive.

Fast forward 10 years. I look at these few hours in this room through a wildly different lens.

If I've learned one thing since my West Chester experience, it's that what was important about these four years wasn't those accolades I received or titles I held. It wasn't about deciding what I was going to be, where I'd live, who I'd work for, who I would marry. And it certainly wasn't about the parties I attended or Sunday fundays on High Street. What was important (and it took me about 10 years and writing this speech boil it down to this) what was important was that this place gave me tools, tools to create.

So let's talk about some of these important tools and what we might create with them.

-----  
The first tool is the most obvious –

**Knowledge.** Malala Yousafzai, human rights and education advocate and the youngest Nobel Prize Laureate, said in her 2013 speech to the United Nations: "Let us wage a glorious struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism, let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world." One teacher. If one teacher, one person can change the world, think what 976 full- and part-time faculty and almost 15,000 undergraduate students at this university can do. Scholarship cannot be understated.

Keep using your time here to engage with your professors, in the classroom, office hours, through extracurriculars; they have so much experience, and I wish I had embraced it even more than I did. Whether or not a class is in your field of study, you'd be surprised how often you'll draw on each and every piece of your time here on a daily basis. And yes, even if you're a music major, you'll be glad you paid attention in your math credit when it's time to understand your student loan consolidation, your first mortgage, or how to balance the books of the small music lessons business you decided to start. Knowledge is like the hammer in your tool box. It's needed to help put all of your creations together.

-----  
The second tool in our creation toolbox is our **Character.** You're here partly because you've developed a reputation...a good one. College is your crash course in becoming an adult, but you can hardly be prepared for what comes next. Seriously. You'll graduate and all of a sudden realize that you're flying solo. And if you're not confident in what defines you, it'll

---

be scary. Well...it's going to be scary regardless but less scary the more self aware you are. Nonetheless, you'd be surprised how much of you is a result of your time here.

So what does define you? What defines your character? I'll go first. Already told you about my competitive streak. I'm also kind, enthusiastic, sometimes stubborn, and collaborative. I'm an opera singer. I'm an entertainment producer. A son, colleague, friend, lover, and brother.

Now your turn. Figured you might need a little stretch, so underneath your seat there's a little card and a pencil. Take thirty seconds and write down what defines you at this point in time. They can be one word. Descriptors of you.

Then take that home with you tonight – think through those adjectives. Think about how they are a result of your experience here. Are you proud of them? How do wish they were different? Are they assets? Strengths? Liabilities? Will they help you create something in this world?

-----  
Tool number 3 – **Relationships**. Your interpersonal relationships will be rewarding in the good times and will see you through the bad. You've built many relationships during your time here. Cherish them. Maintain them. In the opera world, we sometimes spend six to eight weeks at a time away from home while on a particular gig. As recent as last year, I've spent as few as 30 nights in a calendar year in my own bed. If it weren't for the relationships I've maintained and the global sense of community I've built in my career – beginning with my time at this school, then my ability to create...to draw on my experiences while on stage...would be quite limited.

Physically practice engaging with people you don't know. If you're sitting next to someone

you don't know – maybe a parent or friend of another inductee – before you leave this room say hello! Talk to the stranger who sits next to you on a plane. You might learn something from them. They might learn something from you. That oncologist you happened to speak might one day be the expert you need to fight a family member's battle with cancer. The meticulous stockperson you said hello to as the grocery store – she might actually be the perfect hire to manage your company's million-dollar wardrobe inventory. Relationships have been my most valuable tool.

-----  
**Passion** – You've likely chosen a major, maybe a career path, and begun perfecting your craft. Your passions tend to be rooted in these four years, but they'll evolve. I left here thinking I'd be a professional opera singer for the rest of my life. I'm very talented on stage, and on many levels am fulfilled by performing, but I'm honestly not so sure it's ever been my passion. Don't get stuck just because you've devoted a lot of time to a career or relationship. There will be times in these next five, ten years alone where taking a risk to go somewhere you've never been or do something you've never been is the right move. I've struggled these last few years with what I want to be when I grow up. Ten years after being here. After a decade building a career as a performer, I'm now fulfilled by being a manager. A creator in a different way.

If you're not happy where you are. If you think there is something else you might rather be doing. Try it. Believe in something. Always seek to do something you're passionate about.

-----  
The fifth and final tool I'd like to highlight is **Service** – Many of you are in this room because of service to your community. You wouldn't be here if it weren't for your humility, generosity, selflessness. When I was here, I spent literally thousands of hours giving back to this campus

---

community. Organizing, supporting, protesting, fundraising. But the moment I walked out the door, life started. Bills needed to be paid, I had to decide where to live and with whom, grad school became all-consuming, and then it was time to make a living.

One of my greatest disappointments is that this tool...this tool SO necessary for creating value and self worth...the sense of selflessness and the desire to give back - for me that tool fell to the bottom of the toolbox. I've since learned that service doesn't need to amount to thousands of hours...it's certainly not something competitive. It can be an hour of volunteering to walk dogs at the local shelter. Signing up to work the polls at your next election. Holding the door for someone and offering a smile as they start their day. Keep this tool not in your toolbox but in your back pocket! It will allow you to create the most in this world.

So, we've now got our tools. Now what might we create with them?

The company I work for and have for the last seven years is the foremost global provider of entertainment for private events. On the main wall at our New York headquarters, we have a three-word mission statement ... Create. Meaningful. Experiences. We entertain at over 900 events a year, and each and every Saturday, at whatever event I may be managing from New England to Texas, Mexico, or Japan, my goal is just that. I succeed in my work by using each one of these tools and more.

Author Charlotte Eriksson in some ways inspired my words today. And I think she says it best in summing up our need to create – whether it be artistic or otherwise.

*Don't try to present your art by making other people read or hear or see or touch it; make them feel it. Wear your art like your heart on your sleeve and keep it alive by making people feel a little better. Feel a little lighter. Create art in order for yourself to become yourself and let your very existence be your song, your poem, your story.  
Let your very identity be your book.  
Let the way people say your name sound like the sweetest melody.*

*So go create. Take photographs in the wood, run alone in the rain and sing your heart out high up on a mountain where no one will ever hear and your very existence will be the most hypnotizing scar.  
Make your life be your art and you will never be forgotten.”*

— **Charlotte Eriksson**

So again I ask: What will you create? Your toolbox will soon be absolutely full with so many shiny new tools. Get ready to use them.

Will you build a business, a network, a home, a family? Will you create positive change, a movement, hope, happiness, a legacy? Soak in every moment of the next six months...year and a half that you have here. Collect these tools that are at these fingertips and then...create something meaningful. Thank you so much.

**Congratulations to the 2018 Omicron Delta Kappa inductees:**

Courtney Brennan  
Domenica Castro  
Robert J. Clark  
Olwen DeSarno  
James Devor  
Marissa Elizardo  
Nicole Faiola  
Amari Gilmore  
Camila Guillen  
Molly Hudson  
Alexandria Hunter  
Max James  
Rossy Linares  
Helena McKendrick  
Michael Moriarty  
Sarah Naber  
Alexander Schmidt  
Becca Shoemaker  
Julia Strohl  
Juah Toe  
Adam VanLuvanee

**President:** Spencer Camacho  
**Vice President:** Hannah Laboski  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Anna Landis



**THANK YOU!**

Thanks to HSA for your kindness and thoughtfulness as we welcome baby Jeremiah to our family! We are so grateful to be surrounded by the Honors community as we begin this next adventure.

**-Prof. Zach & Mrs. Melissa Wooten**



*Social Coordinator Becca Shoemaker and Prof. Wooten with a baby celebration gift from HSA*



## HSA Executive Board

President

*Matthew Leinhauser*

Secretary

*Michael Nangle*

First Vice President

*Ollie Desarno*

Treasurer

*Julianna Zak*

Second Vice President

*Elise Klingaman*

Director

*Dr. Kevin W. Dean*

