

HSA Happenings

Edited By: Mackenzie Taylor and Finn Schmidhuber

TO BE HONORABLE IS TO SERVE



HSA Happenings 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.

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Letter From the Editor

Hi H.S.A. Members, Alumni, and Prospective Students!

Can you believe the year is already over?! Finals have certainly been challenging, but the warm weather and summer break will surely bring some well-deserved relaxation. The end of the year inevitably brings about significant change, though – students graduating, positions being passed on to the next, new students coming in, and much more.

As such, this edition aims to reflect on the past year and what is to come. Within this edition, you'll hear from former HSA president Carlyn Crisi on her post-graduation plans, current HSA president Abby Boquist on reflecting on her experiences this year, and the upcoming HSA core executive board on their plans for next year. Moreover, students in the capstone course have completed incredible projects, a few highlighted as well.

I cannot wait to see all the incredible achievements the honors community achieves next year, and congratulations to the graduating seniors!

Sincerely,
Mackenzie Taylor

Mackenzie Taylor



New Executive Board

By: Jon Booz

Hey HSA!

Your new Core Executive board is so incredibly excited to work with each and every one of you!!! After going through such a strenuous period of transition, HSA this year would like to turn back to its roots surrounding one word: COMMUNITY. This word can be applied to all of the pillars of our organization. Community needs to extend beyond just an Honors Bubble or major-based bubble. Instead, a community is a place where each and every person can come to the table with a unique perspective on topics we discuss and have fun and effective conversations with one another. When looking into service, we would like to expand on previous projects to engage students with their community as well as possibly collaborate with organizations across campus to have students in HSA get a sense of the service efforts students from all over campus are taking.

Lastly, we want to ensure that HSA maintains its ability to be a safe space for students involved as well as prospective members by fostering a welcoming environment for all. Over the past weeks, we have assembled a fantastic extended executive board! With that being said, there are plenty more opportunities for everyone to get involved in the Fall, where we will hold interviews for our additional positions being placed into HSA. Know that your passions do not go unnoticed, and we are beyond excited to see you all in the coming year!!!

- Jon Booz on behalf of the new Core Exec:

Julie Stinson (President), Jon Booz (Vice President #1), Isabella Nimmerichter (Vice President #2), Makenna Marr (Secretary), and Connor Dapp (Treasurer)



End of Year Thoughts

By: Abby Boquist

Hello HSA!

Congratulations on completing the spring semester! This school year has been an eventful one for HSA - from exploring our identity as a student organization, to creating new and creative committee events, to transforming PEACE and attending the first HSA formal in at least four years, and even to helping with the search for a new director, this semester has been a memorable one. Thank you so, so much to everyone who has contributed throughout the year, whether you worked with a committee, showed up on Thursday nights, or helped out at a service event or social activity. Your insight into where we can and should grow as an organization has been instrumental in laying a solid foundation for the next chapter of HSA. I am thrilled to be passing the baton to a wonderful group of people who are already planning for the future of HSA.

It has been an absolute joy getting to work with our HSA community this past year. Our Thursday nights in SSL 151 have been some of my favorite parts of this year, and I hope you've enjoyed it just as much. To those of you who are graduating: we'll miss you dearly, and I'm so excited to see what the next adventure has in store for you! For those of you who still have some time: see you in the fall!

Take some time to rest, relax, and recharge this summer!

Take care,
Abby Boquist

Reflections on the Past School Year

By: Galee Greisler

This year brought many new experiences and opportunities for the Honors College. Through the ups and downs, the students made the best of the year. Here is a look into how the year went for three Honors students who did just that.

Olivia Heim

How did your first year as an Honors student go?

Olivia says her first year was good. As someone who has a lot of anxiety going into new situations, it surprised her how fast that anxiety went away.

What are you looking forward to in the upcoming years?

Olivia looks forward to having a more involved role in HSA as the social coordinator. She plans to use that as a way to bring together cohorts, as she feels the current first-year cohort is very close and wants to continue that moving forward.

What advice do you have for incoming freshmen?

Olivia says to spend as much time as you can connecting with those in your cohort and those outside of your cohort. She feels the more time you spend cut off from honors, the less involved you are, so it is better to open yourself up to the experience earlier on.

Lauren Holliday

How did your first year as an Honors student go?

Lauren says her first year was a whirlwind with lots of ups and downs and crazy experiences. Overall, though, she enjoyed it and is grateful for the opportunities it gave her.

What are you looking forward to in the upcoming years?

Lauren is excited for the capstone project. She doesn't know what she wants to do yet but likes how it offers more creativity as students decide what they want to do.

Reflections (cont.)

By: Galee Greisler

What advice do you have for incoming freshmen?

Lauren says to start assignments early! Especially the 352 question sets. She also says to keep in mind everyone is going through the same thing, so talk to the others on your floor. They can always help and understand you better as we're all going through the same thing.

Julie Stinson

How did your second year as an Honors student go?

Julie says her second year was really fun! She feels she got close to a lot of people on the Honors floor in Allegheny. On top of that, she was able to get involved in HSA a lot more, which helped grow her appreciation for Honors and the opportunities it gives students.

What are you looking forward to in the upcoming years?

Julie is excited to be next year's HSA president and to take part in shaping its future with the new director. She and her board already have a lot of really great new ideas. She can't wait to shape HSA's future and welcome the new freshman class into the Honors community.

What advice do you have for rising sophomores?

Julie says to take advantage of as many opportunities and experiences as possible – the more opportunities taken, the better! You will learn a lot through them that you wouldn't otherwise learn. Also, Julie recommends trying as many things as possible. Step out of your comfort zone more, something she wished she did more of.

This is just a small look into the many great things Honors students have done and look forward to doing in the future.

- Galee Greisler

Wellness

By: Ellie Poplar



As we approach the end of the semester and the school year, it is important to take care of yourself. Many students are burnt out at this point in the semester. Taking breaks from studying is crucial when preparing for finals. Even if it is going on a walk, reading a book, or grabbing food with a friend, it can benefit your mental and physical health. It is often overwhelming for college students when assignments, exams, and projects pile up at the end of the semester. Being able to balance responsibilities will help us succeed as students when finishing the semester.

The number one thing college students should do when studying for finals is to list what is most important to what is least important. Prioritizing certain subjects or classes over others can benefit students as they can spend more time preparing for the more challenging finals than the ones that come more naturally to them. If you are studying for finals, remember how far you have come, how good it will feel when they are completed, how happy and accomplished you will be when you receive the grade you worked for, and how summer will be a nice break. Remember to enjoy the time before school ends and think positively. Being stressed is totally normal towards the end of the semester, but if you keep putting in the hard work, you will be so thankful you stuck it out.

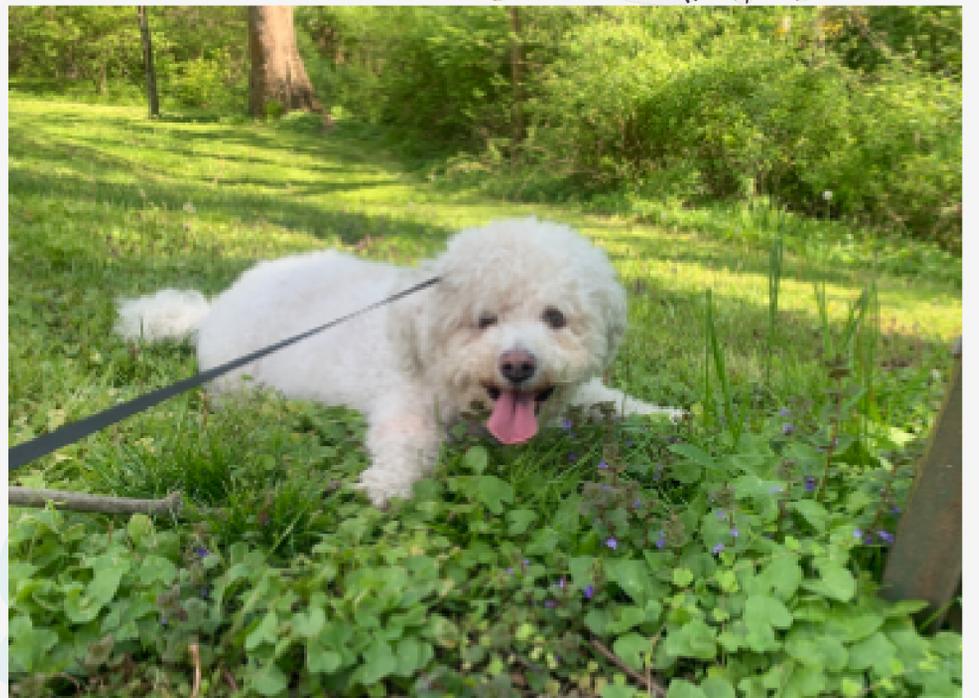
You are worth more than your grades and exam scores, and everyone has their own way of trying their best. Taking care of your mind, body, and soul and appreciating who you are as a person is important to remember during high-stress times such as finals.

- Ellie Poplar

Pets of HSA



Provided by Tess Garchinsky



Provided by Kathleen Ocallaghan



Provided by Maddy Oehme

The Artists of West Chester Project

By: Nolan Hibsman and Eli Leighton

The quote that best sums up the purpose of what we're doing is something Eli said in the beginning stages of the project. He said, "If you give someone art supplies to work with, they will have a relaxing and positive experience, regardless of their skills or confidence"

Throughout the semester, we have set up pop-up spaces on campus where people could stop and talk with us while creating a piece of art.

Eli's focus in this project is art therapy. He believes that as we grow up, we tend to forget our ability for artistic expression. He wants to give people the opportunity to create and remind us how important art is in our lives.

Nolan's focus in this project is storytelling. While you create your art piece, we chat with you and ask you to share with us. You might choose to share your deepest fears or maybe just your plans for dinner. Nolan will record the meaningful things you share, to be shared at a later date (anonymously if you would prefer).

Our final vision for this project is to set up a gallery displaying the artists of our community. The pieces created, and the stories collected will be displayed for the community to interact with and hopefully identify with. We want to connect our community through creative expression and remind everyone that we all have some beauty to share.

- Nolan Hibsman and Eli Leighton



Artists of West Chester table at the P.E.A.C.E. Carnival

Used Soccer Equipment Drive Capstone

By: Rachel Potter

On April 16, I completed my Capstone Project alongside the Hershey Soccer Club (HSC)! My project was a used soccer equipment drive to benefit low-income youth players in my hometown. HSC is a nonprofit which aims to make soccer available to all, and growing up, HSC offered me countless opportunities. I wanted to give back to the organization that supported me and make sure that

soccer is available to everyone, regardless of socio-economic status in my community. My goal was to collect gently used equipment to ensure athletes could play without cost. My event exceeded expectations, and I collected more than 100



items of equipment! Going forward, the HSC equipment drive will be overseen by board member Tonya DeGraff who offered to take over for me.

- Rachel Potter

Fighting Food Insecurity Capstone

By: Shannon Conroy

This past semester, I used my capstone project to work with the West Chester University Resource Pantry. My goal was to fight against food insecurity among college students by expanding the marketing outreach of the Resource Pantry. With the help of Graduate Assistant Skylar Kelly, Assistant Director Katie Clay, and Administrative Assistant Alondra Martinez, the project resulted in dozens of new students registering to use the pantry.

The Resource Pantry is a food pantry on campus with free resources for all students. Students can check out a quick snack before class or use the campus for produce and ingredients to cook at home. The Pantry also provides hygiene products, baby products, school supplies, and other personal care items. The Pantry exists to help eliminate food and product insecurity on the WCU campus.

While working with the Pantry, I helped to create advertisements for events and ongoing updates. I also expanded the presence of the Pantry's social media by gaining followers and connecting with students on campus. I frequently posted about Pantry information, new food items, and events the pantry was participating in. According to Skylar Kelly, a graduate assistant working at the Resource Pantry, "One of the biggest issues with the pantry is that not enough students know it exists. All students can use the pantry, no matter their economic background or other factors." By spreading awareness of the Resource Pantry through marketing efforts, a larger population of students felt comfortable utilizing the resource. Overall, I had a really great time working on this project and getting a chance to spread awareness of the Resource Pantry and help the WCU community in a meaningful way!

- Shannon Conroy



Resource Pantry Pop-Up event on the quad

Not Knowing What Comes After is Okay

By: **Carlyn Crisi**



When I think back on the past four years of my life, it is evident that Honors has held a huge part of my life. I have held onto the Honors Student Association as a space for me to explore my leadership skills and connect with other students. My greatest memories of the community come from the people, those who have left, and those who I have had the pleasure of inviting in. Meeting students through Summer Symposium, weekly meetings, and interviews has given me such joy, and I am excited for the legacy the current underclassmen will leave within the Honors Student Association.

As I think ahead to graduation in less than a week, the uncertainty of my future grows more and consumes my mind most of my days. As a student teacher, my time during the week with friends and my West Chester University community is limited, and as the realization of leaving this town— this home— comes to light, I wish I had more time. More time. That is what every graduating senior wishes for. More time. More time for student activities and organizations. More time for hanging out with friends. More time for everything that West Chester offers. More time that we don't have.

To those who have more time, cherish all that you have left at this amazing University and within the Honors Student Association, and take hold of all the opportunities that come your way. People say that college is the best years of your life, and although I know that this is true because of the deep connections I've made, the communities I've served and the endless opportunities I have taken advantage of, the good years are not going to end with or without a plan. Life's potential after graduation is left still unfulfilled, and it's in each of us to fulfill our lives the way that makes us happiest.

I am still unsure about my future, and although I am submitting job applications, the process takes time, and nothing is certain for me yet. Not knowing is no doubt stressful but also leaves room for rest, grace, and clarity. I hope whoever reads this, whether you are a current senior, an underclassman, an alumni, or a parent, understands that it is *okay* not knowing what comes next for you. For students, it is *okay* not to have a plan when they graduate. Having ambition and passion for what you are doing now and trying to navigate what comes next builds a great deal of hope for your future. Good luck to those who are graduating and those who are staying, and remember, not knowing what comes after West Chester University does not define you or your success.

-Carlyn Crisi



HSA Executive Board



**Abby Boquist:
President**



**Victoria Grace:
Co-Vice President**



**Hannah Schindler:
Co-Vice President**



**Carson Danaher:
Treasurer**



**Annie Sample:
Secretary**



**Prof. Urrutia: HSA
Advisor and Interm
Director**