

Honors Student  
Association

West Chester  
University

# HSA

## Happenings

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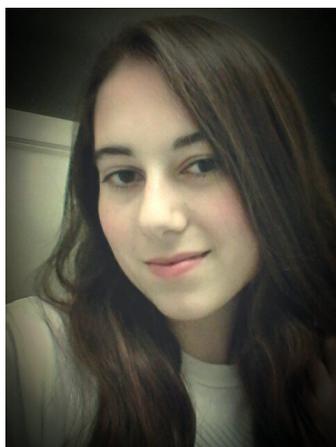
703 S. High Street  
September 2015

## Happenings in Honors

### Welcome Back!

*Welcome back HSA! We have an exciting new year in store, and this is the place to find out exactly what is happening within the Honors and HSA communities! This month, we hear about one of our newest members and her transition into the Honors community, the PASSHE trip to Norway, and a note from our newly elected HSA President. I hope you enjoy the September newsletter and thanks for reading! ~Devon Stroup, Editor*

### Honors: A Welcoming Community



Hi everyone! Today I am pleased to share my story of becoming part of the Honors College. My experience with Honors differs slightly from most because I started my freshman year at a community college and decided to transfer to WCU for my second semester. I had seen information about WCU's Honors College; but, after reading that students wanting to be part of the core program had to submit applications as incoming freshman, I didn't give it much thought. So, when I received a message from Dr. Dean stating that he had seen my transfer application and wanted to interview me and possibly allow me to apply to be a part of the Honors core program, I was stunned. After meeting with Dr. Dean, I was graciously granted permission to apply, went through the interview process, and several weeks later received a phone call in which I was offered a seat in the incoming Honors College class! It was the most exciting moment of my year.

The transition to West Chester was a bit hectic. I found out I had housing in Allegheny three days before I was supposed to move in, I had to completely rearrange my class schedule, and I spent most of my first week sending emails and knocking on office doors trying to get logistical details worked out. Once everything settled down, I was still concerned about making friends since I came in halfway through the year and I'm a rather introverted person. However, the Honors students who lived on the seventh floor were amazing and made me feel so welcome! That was what impressed me most about Honors my first semester at WCU: the incredible community. This semester I've started to take the Honors core classes with the freshmen class and it is a great experience! The Honors College has truly been the best part of my college experience so far and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity I've been given. ~ Abbey Bigler

## PASSHE Trip to Norway

*Two of our very own members, seniors Sarah Walker and Marissa Giovinazzo, took a trip to Norway this summer along with honors students from each of the schools in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). Here is what they had to say about their experiences!*

Traveling to Norway with Honors students across the PASSHE system is one of the most memorable experiences I have to date. My first time out of this country, this trip presented the first opportunity for me to immerse myself in a culture outside of our own. Throughout the trip we focused on environmental and sustainability initiatives, as well as peace and leadership, which ultimately resulted in getting to visit the Nobel Peace Institute and elect a candidate for the Nobel Prize! This was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity I will never forget, and I am eternally grateful for this trip offered by the PASSHE system.



In exploring Norwegian history and culture, we went to a Viking ship museum, and even rowed a Viking ship on the Fjord! Ultimately, this trip allowed us to make connections with each other, as well as Norwegian students, ultimately enriching the experience.

When we arrived at the American College of Norway, students were happy to welcome us to their country and share a great deal about their culture with us. One of our hosts, Karl, invited us to his family home for a dinner along with representatives from the Nobel Peace Institute and his family members. Not only was the dinner beautiful, as his family home situated itself over one of the Fjords, but presents itself as one of my most valuable memories, as it instilled in me the importance of making connections with individuals from other cultures and extending a welcoming hand in achieving peace. ~ **Marissa Giovinazzo**



Travelling to Oslo and Stavanger, Norway, with the PASSHE Honors cohort in May was one of the most valuable international experiences I could have asked for. Not only did we focus our efforts on international peace through studying the Nobel Peace Prize and spending the day at the Nobel Peace Institute in Oslo, we also studied environmental sustainability and explored the ways in which Norway is at the forefront of these new efforts. We experienced first-hand the rich culture and history of such a diverse nation, and had the opportunity to make once-in-a-lifetime connections between the PASSHE Universities and the students at The American College of Norway, some of whom are studying abroad at West Chester this semester! I cannot express how

grateful I am for this opportunity to learn and grow while exploring such a beautiful country and people.

My most valuable memory was the opportunity we had at the Nobel Peace Institute to meet some of the researchers and members of the Norwegian panel who ultimately choose the Nobel Peace Prize winners each year. It was absolutely intriguing to learn about the methods they use to go through the nominations and ultimately selecting a winner. They even allowed us as students to have some insight into these discussions, and we were able to leave the Institute having submitted a nomination for whom we feel should be considered for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. Stay tuned for next year's winner to see if our nominee is selected! ~ **Sarah Walker**

## Pictures from the Trip



### *Community Service*

*Adopt-A-Block* – Help serve the West Chester community by keeping our streets clean! Happening two weekend days a month, stay tuned for the upcoming October dates!

*For more information on how to get involved on campus, contact the WCU Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs at [www.wcupa.edu/volunteer](http://www.wcupa.edu/volunteer) or [JReindl@wcupa.edu](mailto:JReindl@wcupa.edu).*



### *Upcoming Events*

8th Annual Multicultural Student Leadership Conference – October 10<sup>th</sup>

GA Meetings – October 15<sup>th</sup> and October 29<sup>th</sup>



## Executive Board

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*Kellen Kane*

Immediate Past President  
*Christopher Whittall*

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
*Samantha Stalford*

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
*Chan To*

Treasurer  
*Jason Miller*

Secretary  
*Sara Nyholm*

Director  
*Kevin Dean*

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Aid to South Africa  
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Involvement Coordinator  
*Christopher Whittall*

Alumni  
*Sarah Walker*

HSA Happenings Editor  
*Devon Stroup*

Alumni Database  
*Marissa Giovinazzo*

International Outreach  
*Ahleah Miles*

Awards &  
Recognition  
*Haley Buckner*

Library Resources  
*Julianna Mann*

Buddy Coordinator  
*Micaela Forsyth*

Music & Performing Arts  
*Sigfried Aragona*

Community Service  
*Jackie Giovinazzo*

Public Relations  
*Taylor McCahan*

Curriculum &  
Community  
*Anthony Fallacaro*

Recruitment  
*Matt Dummeldinger*

Diversity  
*Morgan McMurtrie*

SGA Representative  
*Erin Yentz*

Fundraising  
*Josh Dandridge*

Social  
*Rebeka Yocum*

Grad School Fair  
*Kaity Blair*

Sports & Recreation  
*Dallas Commons*

Historian  
*Sarah Henry*

TAG  
*Stephanie Binder*

Housing  
*Jessica Gallo*

Technology  
*Derek Harris*

## A Quick Note from the President: Revamping HSA

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

-- Albert Einstein

As the Honors Student Association embarks on yet another wonderful year of excellence, it is important to note the changing culture within the organization. As each year passes, the population of our group fluctuates in ideals, beliefs, and ideas. What makes our organization so special is that our focus dovetails academia, leadership, and service.

With such great enthusiasm and energy provided by both the executive board members and committee chairs, I believe that this is going to be a pivotal year for HSA. We are no more than two months into the school year and I can already feel the positive vibes resonating from the efforts made to revolutionize our organization. Change is never easy, but I am confident in the leadership this year to make this the best year for HSA yet. ~**Kellen Kane**

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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