A Note From Your President

By: Daniel VanHassent, HC XII

It is hard to believe that this year has already come and gone. It went by so quickly! But the talents and gifts of those involved made this year another successful one in the Honors Student Association.

Over the past few years, HSA has continued to grow. Dr. Dean has mentioned to us on several occasions that there used to be very few members in HSA; trying to get anyone to participate was like pulling teeth. This is no longer the case. At the first meeting of the school year, there were 131 members in attendance. The entire freshman class came to this meeting along with several brand new members who were interested in seeing what HSA was all about!

In the past, HSA has been recognized as one of West Chester University’s top organizations. This year was no different. For the second year in a row, the Honors Student Association was named the recipient of the 2012-2013 Community Service Leadership Award from the Division of Student Affairs!

This year could not have been an enormous success without the help of my peers. To my Executive Board, you all rock. You sat through those long meetings every week and contributed your time, energy and plethora of creative ideas to see the organization grow. Your dedication to the organization clearly showed while working efficiently with each other to better the organization. I am so honored to have worked with all of you. To the committee chairs, you should be very proud of yourselves. The many components of HSA would not be able to function without you. You have contributed so much time to your different committees and have done excellent work. To the members of HSA, you made the ideas of the Exec Board and the Committee Chairs come to life. There would not be an organization if it were not for you showing up to meetings and different service events.

All in all, I am so honored to have served this year as HSA President. I have grown as a person and as a leader. This experience was exhausting and I lost a lot of sleep over it, but it was definitely well worth it. I am so proud of everything that we have accomplished this year and I look forward to what the new Executive Board has in store for next year! As I pass the torch to Christine and the rest of next year’s executive board; I am proud to say this organization is in great hands. The Honors Student Association will continue its tradition of excellence and serving the community for many years to come. Thank you!
Once again the May 2013 Honors College banquet was enhanced by a performance from Gracenotes, the WCU women’s a cappella group founded by Kristen Waghorn Von Bargen (HC VII – 2009). They sang a ballad from the Broadway sensation Wicked, which I consider to be the WCU Honors theme song: “Changed for Good”. “I’ve heard it said,” the lyrics begin, “that people come into our lives for a reason.” The words continue, “But I know I’m who I am today because I knew you……….I don’t know if I’ve been changed for the better, but because I knew you I have been changed for good.”

As we bid a fond farewell to the truly outstanding graduates of 2013, I hear these words playing in my mind. What an amazing year this has been! Just hitting the highlights, WCU Honors students had a tremendous impact on this campus: A record number of Honors juniors and seniors were inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa, the university’s most prestigious academic honorary for scholarship, leadership, and service as was also the case with rising seniors being recognized for membership in Who’s Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities, the highest award given for scholarship and leadership by the Division of Student Affairs. Honors Student Anthony ‘Tony’ LaFratte was recognized as the Madeleine Wing Adler Emerging Leader, three Honors Students (Michael Jendzurski, Alexis Parks, and Francesca Cintorrino) were named among six Outstanding Senior Leaders through the Division of Student Affairs, Dan Bach was recognized as the Top Graduate from the College of Arts & Sciences, Cierra Mautone was recognized as the Top Graduate from the Department of Psychology, Dan Hinderliter received acclaim from the Department of Communication Studies, Emma Fitzpatrick was recognized as the Outstanding Student Teacher from the Department of English, Justin Caiazzo took three top honors in Theatre (the very same night as the Honors banquet,) Ashley Dutcher, Chase Kriza, Michael Jendzurski, DJ Matsko, Cierra Mautone, Melissa Murphy, Likhitha Musunuru, Alane Presswood, Jessica Rossana, Alexis Stinson, Samantha Terrell, and Jena Wood have all been accepted to professional/graduate school programs (others are pending), Victoria Ravenelle will be participating in an AmeriCorps assignment, Christina Thomson recently received a placement through the Peace Corps in Madagascar, and Michael Jendzurski was named the Ali Zaidi Award Recipient from PASSHE, naming him the top graduate in leadership, academics, and service within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

While all of these individual accolades—and the many more which were not specifically mentioned—are literally awe inspiring, what I consider to be the crowning accomplishment of the year is the collective recognition the Honors Student Association received by being named the 2012-2013 Community Service Leadership Organization of the Year. This recognition cannot be attained from the devotion of just one member or a devoted core; it is a collaborative, community based effort that is attained only when service to others becomes a defining principle of who we are as an organization. This award attests that students in Honors are not only recognized for their intellect, they are celebrated for their gift of time as they use their intellect in the service of others. Through the relationships they form throughout the campus and broader community, Honors students at West Chester are characterized by being change agents for good!

It is such an honor and privilege for me to serve as the Director of such a fine group of women and men……..they remind me on a daily basis that “we are led to those who help us most to grow, if we let them, and we help them in return.” For those graduates, I extend my appreciation and heart-felt gratitude, I can say with absolute confidence, because we knew you, we have been indeed changed for good.
Congratulations to the Students Inducted into Who’s Who for 2013:

Elizabeth Amand          Amy Millar
Megan Berberich          Ashley Murphy
Anthony Blubello          Hannah Peters
Jasmine Forster           Victoria Ravenelle
Skye Hisiro              Elizabeth Sherman
Christine Klingaman      Lauren Simmons
DJ Matsko                 Nikole Smith
Lisa C. McMahon           Daniel VanHassent

Farewell Class of 2013!
Congratulations to the 2013-2014 Exec Board and Committee Chairs:

President—Christine Klingaman
Immediate Past President—Daniel VanHassent
1st Vice President—Brianna Plaxe
2nd Vice President—Samatha McGinty
Treasurer—Christopher Whittall
Secretary—Brian Schwabenland

Alumni—Melissa Christie
Alumni Database—Sarah Walker
Awards and Recognition—Amanda Gilbert
ASA Exec Director—Zachary Wooten
Buddy Coordinator—Rebecca Bannan
Community Service—Alex Sheriff
Curriculum & Community—Dana Fillman
Seminar Recruitment—Nicole Medeiros

Dance for a Chance—Jackie Iovine
Diversity—Abbie Ganas
Fundraising—Amber Coe
Grad Fair Coordinator—Ansu Bensen
Historian—Haley Paiva
Housing—Marissa Giovinazzo

HSA Happenings Editor—Marissa Caldwell
International Outreach—Carl Sandberg
Library Resource—Lauren Leonard
Music and Arts—Jon Ruths
Public Relations—Brooke Hillman
Recruitment—Kristina Lail

SGA Representative—Tony LaFratte
Social—Ahleah Miles
Sports and Recreation—Katie Rincavage
Technology—Lisa McMahon
TAG—Emily Polefka
Web Master—Joe Cosentino