

THE SQUIRREL SQUIRE

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

FALL 2016

LOOKING BACK ON THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE HONORS MENTORING PROGRAM

Kaitlyn Amuso

The Fall 2016 semester brought the beginning of the Westfield State Honors Mentoring Program. Despite formally starting in the fall, the program's impact on students began over the summer. Olivia Barbeau, a first-year student in the Honors Program, said, "the Mentoring Program has helped me to adapt better to the Westfield community since I was able to text my mentor all summer. I liked that I got to know a familiar face on campus before I even got here."

Based on their majors, hobbies, and interests, Olivia and other Honors Program members of the class of 2020 were paired with upper-class Honors students who volunteered to be mentors. The upper-class mentors were urged to connect with their mentees over summer break and answer any questions that they had. Olivia's mentor, Katie Hester, did not disappoint her. Olivia was relieved



Students helping each other at Student-led Advising night.

knowing that her mentor had a lot of the same interests as she does and was therefore able to help make her transition to college life at Westfield State much easier.

The mentees were not the only ones to benefit from the Mentoring Program. As the Honors Intern and a mentor myself, I got a lot out of the Mentoring Program. Planning events for the mentors and mentees to attend was enjoyable and rewarding. It was fulfilling to see how much some of the mentor/mentee pairings got to connect with one another. It was also nice to see how some of the first-year students made strong connections and friendships not only with their mentors, but with

other upperclassmen and first-years while attending events throughout the semester.

The first event of the semester that brought the mentors and mentees together was Early Move-In Weekend. The weekend festivities provided the opportunity for everyone participating in the Mentoring Program to get to know one another through upperclassmen sharing their involvements on campus with the first-years, ice breakers, a scavenger hunt, and a cookout at Stanley Park. Other events that happened throughout the semester ranged from a Wings Social that drew in a huge crowd to a Peer Advising Night held close to registration time. The events received good reviews. Woody Woodger, a senior English major, said, "the first informal night where one of my mentees came was wonderful. Being able to casually chat with kids from across majors as well as get to know my mentee personally was deeply rewarding and was an oppor-

tunity I wish I had as a freshman." Woody said of the events he got to attend, "they were always fun and well attended."

The first semester of the Mentoring Program was a success. People enjoyed coming to the events that happened throughout the semester, and first-year students are getting guidance that has helped them adjust to Westfield State and the Honors Program. I cannot wait to see what happens next semester. Who knows? Maybe some of our current mentees will rise up and volunteer to be mentors next fall.

Kaitlyn is a senior Communication major from Pittsfield, MA.



Students posing for a picture as part of the Early Move-In Scavenger Hunt.



Students enjoying wings at the Wings Night Social in the Honors Center.

Interested in being an Honors mentor in 2017? Contact: kamuso6500@westfield.ma.edu.

KICKING OFF THE SEMESTER ...



A Saturday evening pizza party, ice-breaker games, and a Sunday morning brunch, along with a Sunday afternoon scavenger hunt, t-shirt tie-dyeing, and a cookout in Stanley Park were among the highlights of Early-Move-In Weekend in September 2016. President Torrecilha, Honors Program administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni, along with upper-class Honors mentors, welcomed 65 first-year members of the Westfield State University Honors Program to campus. Enjoy more Early Move-In Weekend photos on page 3.

The Squire Squad

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Kaitlyn Amuso, Nicholas Cox, Erin Doyle, Michaela Grady, Ashley Linnehan, Christine Luongo, Katie Morris, Helena Rheault, Lauren Stornelli, and Woody Woodger.

Staff Editors:

Glen Brewster, Vanessa Diana, and Gretchen Konrad.

Interested in contributing to *The Squirrel Squire*?

Send your story ideas and photos to
Professor Vanessa Diana at vdiana@westfield.ma.edu.

Get in touch with the Honors Program:

Visit the Honors Center in Mod Hall 103.
 Call at (413) 572-8086. Email at honors@westfield.ma.edu.
 "Like" us on Facebook and Instagram! Follow the
 WSU Honors Facebook page for updates on upcoming events!

... EARLY-MOVE-IN WEEKEND 2016!



AWARD-WINNING HONORS STUDENTS

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP

In December, Westfield State University recognized eight students for their leadership and service with the President's Award for Excellence in Leadership. Each winner participates in a wide range of on- and off-campus activities. Rachel Cofsky of Charlton, Marissa Cremin of North Easton, and Samantha Lee of Hopkinton, all members of the Honors Program, were among the awardees.



Rachel Cofsky receives her award from President Torrecilha.

Rachel Cofsky, a University Honors scholar, is a senior dual major in Theatre Arts (Performance) and Communication (Media Arts and Analysis). As Head Resident Assistant, she has enjoyed being a positive role model and watching other RA's become successful under her guidance.

Rachel has split her time between being an RA with attending leadership conferences; participating in Musical Theatre Guild as a member, executive board secretary, and assistant director for the spring 2016 production; and participating in the Student Theatre Association, including roles as stage manager and choreogra-

pher. In her spare time she works as a peer tutor and a teacher at Growing Footprints Educational Center. Rachel has also volunteered at the Westfield Soup Kitchen and the Samaritan Inn, and is a student representative for the Communication Department Curriculum Committee.

Rachel says, "I enjoy the personal aspects of leadership, and I pride myself on being someone that others can count on. Sometimes all a leader needs is a bump in the right direction and someone else telling them they believe in them. A long line of nudges and I-believe-in-you's is what got me to where I am today."



Marissa Cremin receives her award from President Torrecilha.

Honors student Marissa Cremin is a junior dual major in Communication and Political Science. As Community Relations/Fundraising Representative in the Student Government Association, Marissa has led the Neighborhood Advisory Board and coordinated blood drives, the annual SGA turkey drive benefitting families in need, a spring cleaning formalwear drive and other charitable events. Marissa believes that a team is only as

strong as its leader, and that leading by example is the best way to ensure a sense of equity in a team.

In addition to her role on SGA, Marissa is a member of the Guest Lecture Series committee, the Honors Program, Lambda Sigma Honors Society, 2018 Class Council, and a Student Ambassador. She has also volunteered for the Buzz off Cancer events, the Samaritan Inn, White Oak School, Arbors Assisted Living and Habitat for Humanity.

Marissa explains, "I'm learning ways to become a better leader every day. Personal growth has always been so important to me and I try hard to keep up with the goals I set for myself. Every failure is a lesson, and the attitude you have is what ultimately affects how things will work out for you. I'm looking forward to another year in a leadership position that has brought me the ability to change people's lives for the better!"



Samantha Lee receives her award from President Torrecilha.

Samantha Lee, a Commonwealth Honors scholar, is a senior dual major in Elementary Education and Liberal Studies. Samantha experi-

enced a life-changing opportunity while at Westfield when she participated in a service learning trip to Nicaragua, both in 2014 and again in 2016, organizing 18 students on a worksite to build a school, and teaching Nicaraguan students. The impact she found most rewarding was the mark that the community of Nueva Esperanza left on her and the rest of the volunteers. Their positive attitude and approach to life was astounding. Samantha returned to Nicaragua to teach English this past summer.

On campus, Samantha is a student ambassador, a member of the Kappa Delta Phi Education Honors Society, has participated in Civic Engagement and Democratic Community Engagement Training, and as a presenter at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference, Westfield State Gala, and the Undergraduate Research Conference at UMass, Amherst. She is co-president of the Westfield State Relay for Life and co-president of the Student Ambassadors.

Samantha says, "As I spend time on campus, in class, at work, or just relaxing, I think about the students in Nicaragua. More than anything, they taught me the value of love and its impact on effective leadership. My weeks spent in Nicaragua are remembered by cinderblocks, cement, laughs, tears, smiles, and love from my students."

AWARD-WINNING HONORS STUDENTS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL - DICKENS SCHOLARSHIP FOR LITERATURE AWARD WINNING ESSAY

KATIE MORRIS



Katie Morris (5th from right) is recognized for her scholarship award at the Dickens Dinner.

Sophomore Honors student Katie Morris won the 4th annual Dickens Scholarship, a \$750 award that includes an annotated edition of *A Christmas Carol*, signed by Gerald Charles Dickens, the great-great grandson of Charles Dickens, author of the classic tale. Katie was presented with the award at a Dickens Dinner in December, where she addressed those in attendance about the importance of scholarship support for undergraduate students. Scholarship applicants were asked to write an essay reflecting on how themes in *A Christmas Carol* are relevant to their lives, particularly with regard to their own challenges or experiences. Below is Katie's award-winning essay.

In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge must face the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future before he can truly understand the folly

of his ways regarding the true meaning of Christmas. He needs to re-evaluate the choices he has made, and think deeply about where they will lead in order to make a change in his life. The theme of transformation is highlighted in this process.

In order to discover that I had Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, I too, had to go through this process. I had to face the ghosts of my past, present, and future.

I was brought back to the hallways of Avon Middle High School, and there was 15 year old me: a tall, lanky girl and a new sense of confidence.

By the end of the year, though, she started to notice something odd. I wished I could yell out to her, tell her to say something, but I could only watch.

Anthony, the boy she had invited into this group, used his manipulation with ease. He

had all of the boys in her group listening to his every command. Young Katie noticed this and became irritated, but she did not realize where it would lead:

The not being invited to hang out, the not being talked to by the rest of the group. The flat-out ignoring, and worst of all: the absence of reason. She just had to sit, and wonder. Her words meant nothing: they met no eye contact. She would not even know on graduation day.

Present Katie: I watched her shaking and crying in her room. Fear engulfed her. She didn't know what was happening. Everything in her room turned into a weapon. Her girlfriend Brittany's hoodie: a noose. Her pens: knives. Images swarmed around her head in a violent swoop, she fell into panic attack after panic attack.

But this was only the begin-

ning.

My helpless heart broke looking at the all too familiar scene.

With my heart heavy, I traveled into the dreaded future.

There was a small apartment. Future me sat on the couch with her hands in her hair.

Brittany came in and sat next to her, placing her hand on her knee.

"I don't know what I can do to help you Katie," she said, with tears rolling down her cheeks.

"I don't even know what to do with myself."

Brittany grabbed a tissue box and Katie looked at her, "You have every right to need space. Please don't worry. I know you'll be a great friend to me still. Can you just give me some time alone?"

I watched her, crying, and knew I had enough. I couldn't let my mental illness take control of my life. I couldn't give in to the fear. I needed help.

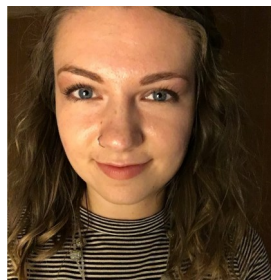
Today, I see a new version of myself. There is still pain, fear, and confusion; but there is hope as there was for Scrooge. Any person, regardless of their situation, can make a transformation in their life.

Katie is a sophomore English major from Avon, MA.

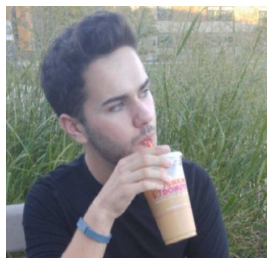
The Dicken's Scholarship is administered by the English Department each fall. For information about scholarships available to Westfield State University students, visit the following Westfield State University websites:
www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid/scholarship-applications
www.westfield.ma.edu/tuition-financial-aid/outside-scholarship-information

CELEBRATING HONORS STUDENT LEADERS

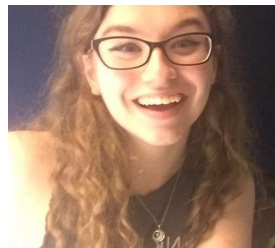
Many Honors students maintain their impressive GPAs while serving as leaders in various academic, professional, civic, and athletic organizations on campus and in the community. Kudos to our Student Leaders for their service in 2016-2017.



Stephanie Carvalho
(Music)
Music Director for Night Owls.



Connor Kennedy
(Criminal Justice/
Psychology)
SGA Rep, Class Council 2020.



Ashley Linnehan
(English)
Historian SHAC, SCED Rep SNEA, Submissions Manager *Persona*, proposal writer CHP.



Jason Phillips
(Movement Science)
Community Service Leader Urban Ed, Eagle Scout, 10-10 International Board Member.



Kaitlyn Amuso
(Communication)
Publicist SHAC, Secretary Lambda Pi Eta, Secretary Circle K, Student Programming.



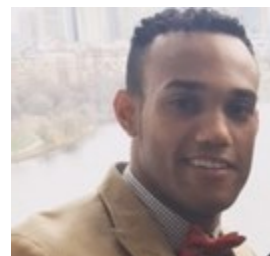
Amanda D'Aprix
(ELED/Liberal Studies)
Co-President SHAC.



Samantha Lee
(ELED/Liberal Studies)
Co-president Relay for Life, Co-president Student Ambassadors.



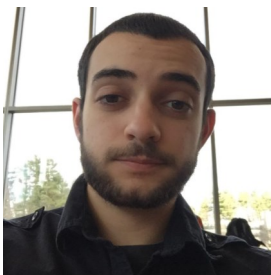
Christine Luongo
(English)
Co-President SHAC, Treasurer SNEA, Secretary CHP Student Council.



Andy Rosario
(Biology)
Treasurer Multicultural Student Association.



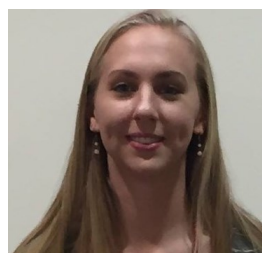
Sean Bacon
(Biology/Psychology)
RA in University Hall, President and Founder of Sustainability Club, Orientation Leader, Tutor.



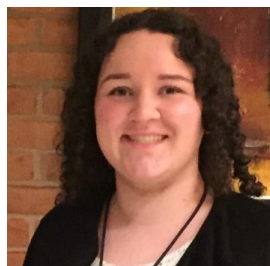
Marcus DiBacco
(Criminal Justice/
Political Science)
VP of Finance SGA, Treasurer Class of 2019, Programming Chair for Res Hall.



Shauna Legsdin
(Communication/
Spanish)
President Communication Club.



Ashley McLaughlin
(ELED/Liberal Studies)
Kappa Delta Pi ELED Liaison.



Lauren Stornelli
(Psychology/Spanish)
Vice-president SHAC, Secretary Psychology Club.



Jessie Cardin
(ELED/Liberal Studies)
Cross Country (Varsity) Captain.



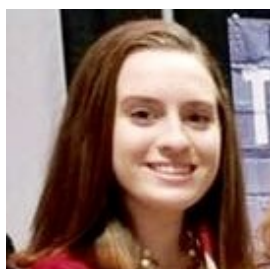
Danny Dobek
(Biology/Music)
Commuter Rep SHAC, church worship leader.



Randi Lemenager
(SPED/Liberal Studies)
President pleCEs Club, Secretary SHAC, SPED Rep SNEA.



Katie Morris
(English)
Vice-president SNEA.



Carolyn Wallace
(Movement Science)
Campus Activity Board.

HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW - - FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY

DISCOVER WESTFIELD LEARNING COMMUNITY: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CITY AS TEXT

AUTHORS - MARIJOAN BULL AND VANESSA DIANA



The “Discover Westfield” civic engagement learning community linked Professor Marijoan Bull’s Honors Introduction to Community Planning with Professor Vanessa Diana’s Honors First-Year Composition, using trips to downtown Westfield for hands-on learning and research. The paired courses fostered in first-year students a sense of attachment to the City of Westfield as their new home, as they learned about the city’s histo-

ry, met local leaders, and considered revitalization opportunities. Students submitted their writing about Westfield to various local outlets for publication and presented their ideas for downtown riverfront development to city leaders at a public meeting.

Marijoan Bull is Associate Professor of Geography and Regional Planning. Vanessa Diana is Professor of English and Assistant Director of the Honors Program.



Experiential learning activities included assessing the riverfront area that would be the subject of final design proposals, exploring downtown Westfield and the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, learning from local leaders about the history of Westfield "The Whip City," volunteering for historical Ghost Tours at the Old Burying Ground, and presenting riverfront planning ideas to city leaders and community members at the Westfield Athenaeum.

HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW - - FIRST-YEAR LEARNING COMMUNITY

DISCOVER WESTFIELD LEARNING COMMUNITY VISITS WESTFIELD FARMER'S MARKET, AND SO SHOULD YOU!

MICHAELA GRADY



Kirsten Longbottom and Samantha Donohoe sample artisan vinegars from Ellie's Oils.

Rather than going to the grocery store to get your weekly snacks, have you ever thought about taking a trip to the local farmer's market? During my first few weeks at Westfield State University, I was able to explore downtown Westfield as a part of my Honors First-Year Composition and Community Planning "Discover Westfield" Learning Community class. My favorite venue was the Westfield Farmer's Market, located at the Episcopal Church of the Atonement, just 2.5 miles away from campus in the center of town. Westfield State students can take the PVTA bus (from Scanlon Hall) downtown for free, so it is a quick and easy trip! The farmer's market takes place every Thursday from 12-6 pm, June through October. There is also an indoor farmer's market a few times in the winter months (more info available at westfieldfarmersmarket.net). Several booths at the outdoor

market sell fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, baked goods and soaps. Live music adds to the cheery and welcoming atmosphere. I highly recommend that Westfield State students, especially first-years, visit the farmer's market. I am thankful that my professors utilized class time to help us become engaged with our new community.

All items at the farmer's market are homemade or grown by the vendors. I spoke to two women who sold dairy products, and they explained



Discover Westfield Learning Community students and Professor Marijoan Bull pose for a photo at the Westfield Farmer's Market.

that everything they produce must be made in a certified kitchen. It is reassuring to know that all goods are high quality and made in clean environments. The goal of the farmer's market, after all, is to provide fresh products to customers.

My favorite stand at the farmer's market is hosted by the apple orchard, where the vendor gives Westfield State

gave away produce regularly for free. I encourage students to buy apples from him, instead of from the grocery store.

Going to the farmer's market and talking to different vendors is a great way to become connected to the Westfield community and to buy some delicious goods for a reasonable price. In my opinion, buying food from a farmer's mar-



Olivia Hamparsoomian and David Youngerman enjoy free apples as they chat with Farmer's Market organizers.

students a free apple and makes friendly conversation. It is very generous of him to give away his produce to so many students each week. I have been to farmer's markets in other cities, but I have never come across any vendor who

ket is a much more enjoyable experience and healthier than going to a commercial grocery store. Westfield is now my home, and everyone else's home here on campus, so let's do our best to stay involved and support local businesses. It will be easier to live a happy and healthy life when you are connected to your community and are proud of where you live. So please, make sure to visit the Westfield Farmer's Market when it is in season, or go to the indoor Farmer's Market during the winter months!

Michaela is a first-year Criminal Justice major from Pittsfield, MA.

HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW

THE COMPLEXITY BEHIND TURNING A COLLEGE DINING SERVICES SUSTAINABLE

ERIN DOYLE



Jennifer Oglesby, Haley Bernier, Alexandra Jackson, Justine Surette, and Camden Brannon sample offerings at the Florence Pie Bar.

Students in Professor Elizabeth Starr's Honors Composition course drew on the subject of their first-year read, *The Good Food Revolution* by Will Allen, to consider and engage with ongoing conversations about good food. They considered if we know good food when we see it, what makes food "good," and the different roles food plays for the better (or worse) in our lives and communities. Students pursued these questions by writing about their own experiences and then brought these experiences to a range of topics about how we grow, prepare, and access the food we eat.

Westfield State University changed from a contract-bound dining services offered by Sodexo, a large-scale food provider, to self-operating this summer. The WSU Dining Commons now offers entrees and specialties that feature sustainable, local, healthy options. But what do we consider sustainable, local, or organic? The United Nations defines sustainable as "development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own



Haley Bernier, Gregory Wilcox, and Elizabeth Bonaparte enjoy lunch at Santiago's Family Restaurant in downtown Westfield.

needs." Sustainability focuses on both how the food is grown and the effects the process will have on future generations and natural resources in order to preserve those resources. The United States Department of Agriculture states, "produce can be called organic if it's certified to have grown on soil that had no prohibited substances applied for three years prior to harvest. Prohibited substances include most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides." Locally-grown food originates less than 250 miles from the place of purchase or consumption.

To adopt a sustainable model and emphasize produce from

local farms, WSU Dining Services sought assistance from UMass, Amherst and a grant from the Kendall Foundation to become self-operating.

Can local, small farms support the needs of a huge college campus? In WSU's first-year read, Will Allen shows how small farmers struggle to survive in a world where large

typically more expensive than other options. Many universities receive grants from organizations, such as the Kendall Foundation, but if they don't, including sustainable food can be costly. Andrew Mankus, Director of WSU Dining Services, does not think that it will cost too much more: "Going sustainable and local does not necessarily equate to more expensive. Since we have great purchasing power, we give the local economy a boost, create a demand for product, and put pressure on others to purchase locally, in turn creating more farmers and more opportunities for a sustainable system." Mankus wants everyone to know: "We're still trying to find our own identity. Be patient; we hear you, and we are always open to feedback." With a focus on local, sustainable food, our university is working to make positive changes.

Erin is a first-year Movement Science major from Westborough, MA.



Andrew Mankus, Director of Dining Services (3rd from left), offers a tour of the kitchens at the Dining Commons to Erin Doyle, Lily Howes, Haley Bernier, Elizabeth Bonaparte, Tanner Deegan, Kailyn Plante, and Tyler Houle.

HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW -- AN UPPER-LEVEL SEMINAR “CUBA AND PUERTO RICO: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS”

SEMINAR CAPSTONE PAPER LEADS TO CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

LAUREN STORNELLI

After I had finished the Honors core course requirements, it was time to take an upper-level interdisciplinary Honors seminar, and I was nervous for the work load. I signed up for “Cuba and Puerto Rico: a Postcolonial Analysis” with Professor Enrique Morales-Diaz. I had no idea what postcolonialism meant or what to expect from this class. On the first day of class, I really began to wonder what I was getting myself into. I learned that we were going to read four books and write four essays, each building off of the others to create a twenty-page research

paper at the end of the semester. When I heard this, I was worried. The longest paper I had ever written was thirteen pages. What I didn’t know is that I would become passionate about this assignment, leading me to present it at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference in Spring 2017.

As a class, we learned about how the relationship between the United States and Cuba and Puerto Rico has impacted each island, as you can see in the examples my classmate Nicholas Cox provides below. We looked at this relationship

through a postcolonial lens, and I was able to bring in my psychology major to support my analysis. My capstone paper, titled “Postcolonialism: A Psychological Mindset,” argued that postcolonialism is the moment when the colonized rebel against the colonizer, whether it be psychologically or physically. I used the relationship between the U.S. and Cuba and Puerto Rico to illustrate this concept.

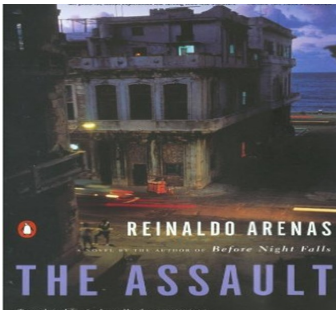
Outside of class time, we were assigned groups that met to discuss our readings. As each paper neared, we were nervous but ultimately realized

our hard work paid off. By the end of the semester, I found myself with a passionate new interest and a research project that I am proud to share publicly. After taking an upper-level seminar, I recommend it to anyone. At first, it seemed overwhelming, but as the semester went on, I found “Cuba and Puerto Rico: A Postcolonial Analysis” to be the class that I enjoyed most.

Lauren is a sophomore Psychology and Spanish dual major from Raynham, MA.

A GLIMPSE INTO OUR CONVERSATIONS: SAMPLES OF DISCUSSION TOPICS

NICHOLAS COX



The Assault is written with unusual and vile diction to show identity crisis in Cuba throughout the twentieth century. The author, Reinaldo Arenas, portrays himself as subhuman in order to demonstrate the poor treatment of human beings and the lack of freedom of speech in his time. Reinaldo passed away in 1990 with a hate-filled attitude toward Fidel Castro. How would he react to the death of his dictator today?



Raul Castro looks off into the distance with a sense of hope as he continues his brother’s legacy with a different mindset. By many accounts, Fidel Castro was an oppressor, while Raul seems to be a peaceful negotiator. Americans and Cubans now wonder what will happen to their relationship. Will it become peaceful with Raul in power until he retires in 2018, or will nothing change?



In June 2016, President Barack Obama signs PROMESA, or “The Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act.” The bill only grants temporary economic relief to Puerto Rico, and many Puerto Ricans see it as obnoxious and imperfect. One austerity measure is the reduction of the minimum hourly wage from \$7.25 to \$4.25 for island workers under age twenty-six. PROMESA is only a tiny adhesive bandage on a gaping wound.



The black and white flag of Puerto Rico represents a nation mourning over a “U.S.-imposed” Oversight Board mandated by the PROMESA bill. It portrays The United States’ dominance over the island. For example, Governor Alejandro García Padilla of Puerto Rico will be on the Oversight Board as an ex-officio member who will not have voting rights. The United States will make all economic decisions for Puerto Rico.

Nicholas is a junior Psychology and Spanish dual major from Norfolk, MA.

HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW



Professor Joseph Camilleri of Psychology and Professor Marijoan Bull of Geography and Regional Planning co-taught **Exploring Environmental Psychology, an upper-level Honors seminar**. The fundamental question explored was, what shapes and drives human responses to the natural and built environments? Topics covered include evolutionary inclinations, place attachment, biophilia, sacred places, scary places, and crime prevention through design. Lori Merlo (upper-left) talks about her proposed intervention for Stanley Park. Micaela Connolly (upper-right) explains her intervention for downtown Westfield. Some student reflections on the course include:



Professor Bill Cook and students in his **Honors Introduction to Criminal Justice** class during a discussion of the book *Chasing the Scream*, about the issue of drug addiction in modern society.

"I had never thought much about the downtown and based on the assignment I had to think critically about what is going on there."

"It was good to see the professors be in their element. But even better was when they were the listeners—basically being a student like us—and they asked questions and learned, too."

"I appreciated learning about topophilia because it gave a name to something I feel—I have always been aware of my strong attachment to my house on Cape Cod and now I can talk about it."

"I loved learning about thigmotaxis—it is just such a great word! And a real phenomenon."

"Two professors meant seeing the different sides and perspectives of concepts."



Students in Professor Chrissi von Renesse and Professor Jennifer DiGrazia's **Honors Math and Composition Learning Community** course explore the different geometric patterns that will show on the pole after dancing a traditional maypole dance. They worked on predicting which setup of dancers and ribbons will give them the same geometric patterns and how many different patterns there are that can be danced.

SENIOR HONORS PROJECTS

BENEFITS OF THE SENIOR HONORS PROJECT EXPERIENCE

CHRISTINE LUONGO

The year-long Senior Honors Project (SHP) may seem daunting or exciting, but all Honors students should consider the opportunity. As a sophomore, I hope to do an SHP, so I spoke to Commonwealth Honors Scholars (the designation earned by those who complete the SHP) to gain insight into the benefits of the SHP process. Through these interviews, I've seen that both students and professors appreciate the mentorship experience.

Dr. Laura Satkowski (2011) has since completed her Ph.D. and works as a research analyst in Manhattan. Laura says that the SHP helped her learn "more about research than any course could have taught me." She also discovered that she enjoys research, which has "impacted my career trajectory substantially." Her project advisor, Dr. Rebecca Burwell,



Becca O'Leary (center) with Dr. Sabine Macris Klein and Oliver Zeff, members of her SHP committee.

says, "I love getting to know students more deeply" through the SHP process.

Laura Mangini (2009) is now a lawyer. She believes that her SHP "was an important stepping stone for preparing for graduate school." Additionally, she notes that "it teaches you valuable lessons in receiving constructive criticism, something you are likely to be dealing with the rest of your career," while also helping to "put yourself ahead of the pack" for graduate school or finding a job. Similarly, Tyler Hastings (2017) states that the

SHP "makes you stand out to employers."

Students also shared their favorite parts of the SHP experience. Connor Jackson (2016) enjoyed the project because "it wasn't just for a grade; it was something that I got to choose myself." Samantha Lee (2017) appreciates the opportunity to "pull together what you've learned in your classes towards what you're actually going to be doing in the field." Dr. Burwell believes that students "gain a confidence in themselves" by committing to a year-long project. Lori Merlo

(2017) agrees, describing the SHP as "a great experience of learning and self-growth."

While most of the students I talked to completed research projects, Senior Honors Projects can also take the form of creative work. Theatre Arts major Becca O'Leary (2017) wrote a play for her project. She said, "seeing something that I created come to life was really, really rewarding."

So, while the Senior Honors Project may be a challenging process, it greatly benefits students in both the long and short term. Each student, with the guidance of a committee, chooses a topic, creative or research-based, but all SHPs ultimately serve as examples of what students can do with their passions.

Christine is a sophomore English major from Marshfield, MA.

A PASSION FOR WRITING: THE SENIOR HONORS PROJECT AND BEYOND

WOODY WOODGER

Andrew "Woody" Woodger is currently working on a creative Senior Honors Project, a full-length poetry collection titled "Give Your Gods One Last Doubt." Woody has recently had two poems accepted for publication, one of which he wrote for his Senior Honors Project. "Portrait: Kent as Car" is forthcoming in *Barely South Review*.

Woody will serve as one of the poetry editors for the online literary journal *Mind Murals* which represents poetry, fiction, and fine art from Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society members in the Eastern region. He and fellow poetry editors will comb through poetry submissions and select poems to be included in the finished issue. On campus, Wood is Editor-in-Chief of *Persona*, President of the WSU chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, and a tutor.



Woody Woodger is a senior English major from Lenox, MA.

Portrait: Kent as Car

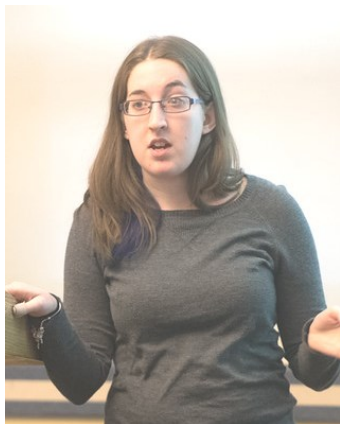
- Woody Woodger

When they pull out his tubing they tell us to wait outside. Rather we not see what he looks like as a jalopy gutted - axle tweezed out through the grill. Behind

the curtain I assume his plastic pipes look like oiled snakes, extracted from an offshore well. But I prefer to imagine them as dandelion roots, preserved still in fresh dirt.

CONGRATULATIONS, COMMONWEALTH HONORS SCHOLARS

FALL 2016 SENIOR HONORS PROJECT PRESENTATIONS



Allison Bates



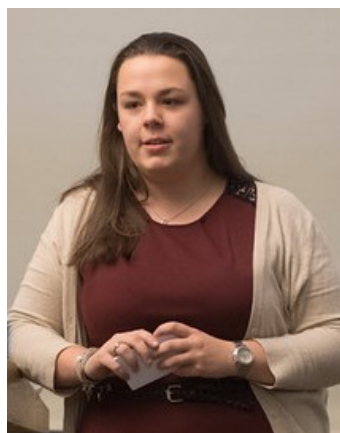
Tyler Hastings



Christina Lankarge



Samantha Lee



Randi Lemenager



Lori Merlo



Rebecca O'Leary



Andy Rosario

The designation of Commonwealth Honors Scholar is awarded to students who complete a minimum of four Honors courses (at least one upper-level Honors seminar) with a B or higher, maintain an overall GPA of 3.30 or higher, and complete a six-credit, individually designed Senior Honors Project (SHP). Listed below are recipients, their major(s), their SHP titles, and their Project Advisors.

Allison Bates: Psychology, *How Gender and Sexual Identity Affect Views of LGBT and Heterosexual Individuals*, Dr. Robert Hayes.

Tyler Hastings: Economics and Business Management, *Hedge Fund Sorcery*, Dr. Liem Nguyen.

Christina Lankarge: Movement Science, *A Campus Response to City Change: Promoting Physical Activity at Westfield State University*, Dr. Melissa Roti.

Samantha Lee: Education and Liberal Studies, *Inquiry-Based Learning in the Elementary Mathematics Curriculum*, Dr. Megan Kennedy.

Randi Lemenager: Special Education and Liberal Arts,

Positive Inclusion through Theater: Examining Representation and Opportunity for People with Disabilities, Dr. Heather Crocker-Aulenback.

Lori Merlo: Athletic Training, *REDS-S: The Relationship between Disordered Eating and Injury in Male and Female Athletes*, Dr. Kelly Anne McKeown.

Rebecca O'Leary: Theatre Arts, *The B Word: A Play on Queerness and Bisexuality*, Dr. Sabine Macris Klein.

Andy Rosario: Biology, *A Zebrafish Experimental Model*

System Exhibits Kindling: An Epileptic Phenomenon Found in Humans, Dr. Kelly Anne McKeown.

INTERESTED IN
LEARNING MORE ABOUT
SENIOR HONORS PROJECTS?
CONTACT
DR. GLEN BREWSTER,
HONORS PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
OR
DR. VANESSA DIANA,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
OR STOP BY
THE HONORS CENTER
MOD HALL 103
FOR MORE INFORMATION.

HONORS STUDENTS GO GLOBAL

STUDYING IN TANZANIA - - HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT: ARE PEOPLE JUSTIFIED IN THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS WILDLIFE?

HELENA RHEAULT

This is an excerpt from Helena's blog about her semester in Tanzania. Read more posts and enjoy Helena's beautiful photography at <http://helenarheault.wixsite.com/helenarheault/tanzania-1>



Helena Rheault spent the semester in Tanzania at the School for Field Studies studying wildlife conservation and management.

We traveled from the Ngorogoro Conservation Area (NCA) to interview families living in nearby Upper Kitete village to find out about local conflicts with wildlife. Due to the fact that the people live so close to protected land, they interact with the local wildlife much more than they care for. If you asked me when back in the U.S. if I would want to live next to a wildlife protected area in Tanzania, I would have said pack my bags and take me there. I mean, who wouldn't want elephants in your backyard? It turns out this is just about the most naïve position I could take.

In Tanzania, human-wildlife conflict drives conservation and wildlife management efforts. Since being here I have

quickly realized that I have been biased. Naturally, as an aspiring conservationist and wildlife lover, I see human-wildlife conflict and I think: how can I make things better for the animals? But I have forgotten about the people. No matter how much we love elephants, lions, and all the other beloved African mammals, they can be a real pain sometimes. A smart conservationist will first help the people resolve their conflicts if they really want to defend the well-being of wildlife.

Human-wildlife conflict in Tanzania results from increased population growth, lack of urban areas, dependence on agriculture and pastoralism, and the fact that 30-40% of the country is protected national parks and game reserves. With the changing seasons some species have annual migrations and others just expand their home ranges to outside park boundaries. Meanwhile, people establish their settlements and farms right up to the very edges of protected areas. Once animals start moving out, they end up in the middle of farms with some delicious food sources, whether it's pigeon peas, maize, a goat, or some sheep.

In America, avid gardeners know all too well the frustration when trying to keep deer, rabbits, and other opportunistic critters away. However, here in Tanzania, it's not a matter of losing a few veggies

but rather losing a year's worth of income, their livelihood, and food on the table until the next growing season. Rural families (75% of the population) generally have two ways of surviving: agriculture and raising livestock.

Of the families we interviewed, all of their crops were affected by elephants, buffaloes, baboons, and forest pigs. Many families were exhausted and frustrated. Most of the husbands stay up all night to guard the crops. They only have traditional weapons at

detering the wildlife, by providing start-up costs of building fences or establishing other deterrents, and collecting data on wildlife conflict.

Given the hardships animals cause them, most people laughed at us when we asked about their attitude toward wildlife. One woman did say she loved animals, but obviously not when they were ruining her crops or eating her livestock. This negative attitude towards wildlife is a threat. If the people in rural communities of Tanzania can



Elephants eat farmers' pigeon peas, and other wildlife feed mostly on maize.

their disposal, such as spears, use fires, or make noise to scare the animals, all ineffective methods and highly dangerous. Buffaloes and elephants can be some of the most dangerous animals. Families are not compensated for lost crops.

The government, NCA, and NGOs should be doing more to help these people protect their crops with new methods that are actually successful at

find resolution with their struggle for access to resources to support themselves, they will more likely see the value of wildlife and be willing to actively defend animals. Seeking harmony between humans and wildlife is the first step in the right direction to more successful management strategies.

Helena is a junior Biology major from Somers, CT.

HONORS PROGRAM INFORMATION AND EVENTS

STUDENT HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

ASHLEY LINNEHAN

This semester was extremely busy for the Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC). We started off the year with a trip to the Big E, the annual regional exposition for all New England. It was well-attended and everyone enjoyed food such as fried Oreos, carnival games, rides, and a multitude of vendors. We then held an abstract writing workshop as well as a graduate school information night. The abstract writing workshop was geared toward submissions for the Northeast Regional Honors

Council Conference to be held in Pittsburgh this April. Fourteen students have been accepted to present there this year!

We hosted the grad school information night to have students begin thinking about what they want to do after completing their undergraduate degrees and how to research graduate programs. There was a huge turnout for our pumpkin carving event, which helped everyone to get into the Halloween spirit, including our very own Profes-

sor Diana. Our Lip Sync Battle put the celebrity ones to shame; everyone in attendance was very enthusiastic. To kick off finals week, we had a Stress Relief night. Coloring, glitter jars, and food: a perfect recipe for a relaxing night in the midst of the end of the semester craziness. We then hosted an Ugly Sweater Party. Not only did everyone dress up in their favorite ugly holiday sweaters, but we also made gingerbread houses to celebrate the holiday season. We handed out certificates to win-

ners of both the gingerbread house contest and various categories for the ugly sweaters. And of course finals week would be much harder to survive without our traditional end-of-semester Chinese dinner. SHAC has even more fun and informative events planned for next semester! All Honors students are encouraged to attend SHAC meetings and events.

Ashley is a sophomore English major from Merrimac, MA.



SHAC activities included Lip Sync battles, Stress Relief craft night, an Ugly Sweater Party, a trip to Yankee Candle, and the End-of-Semester Chinese dinner. See more photos on p. 16, including SHAC Officers (l. to r.) Dan Dobek (Commuter Rep); Ashley Linnehan (Historian); Lauren Stornelli (Vice President); Christine Luongo and Amanda D'Aprix (Co-Presidents); Randi Lemenager (Secretary); not pictured are First-Year Reps Tyler Houle and Bryan Pimentel and Treasurer Will McKinnon.

IN AND OUT OF THE HONORS CENTER WITH SHAC



STUDENT HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC) acts as a liaison between Honors students and administration. SHAC allows Honors students to be heard in an open and constructive way. In addition to addressing student concerns, the council plans fun events throughout the year. Have ideas for programming or just want to find out more about SHAC? Contact: Amanda D'Aprix 8121@westfield.ma.edu or Christine Luongo at cluongo0748@westfield.ma.edu.



PITTSBURGH - BOUND!

CONGRATULATIONS TO HONORS STUDENTS PRESENTING THEIR WORK AT THE ANNUAL NORTHEAST REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE IN APRIL 2017!

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Lillian Bruffee | Amanda D'Aprix | Ashley Linnehan | Christine Luongo | Thomas Madden |
| Bryan Pimentel | Corey Pooler | Jose Reyes | Emma Rodriguez | Andy Rosario |
| Emily Slote | Lauren Stornelli | Meghan Tessitore | Carolyn Wallace | |