

# THE SQUIRREL SQUIRE

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 2      SPRING 2017

## NORTHEAST REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE, PITTSBURGH, PA

VANESSA DIANA, PH.D.



14 Honors Program students presented their work at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

All undergraduates should participate in at least one academic conference, as 14 Honors students did in April at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference (NRHC) in Pittsburgh, PA. Whether you are a first-year student or preparing to graduate, presenting your work at an academic conference will boost your confidence, enhance your learning, and sharpen your professional development. With the help of a SMARTS grant from the Office of Academic Affairs, students can get financial assistance to attend out-of-state conferences.

Sharing research publicly helps us see the value of our work. As Bryan Pimentel (class of '19) explained, "I presented on a problem that has been apparent throughout my life and discussed how to fix it." Expressing pride in sharing her work on linguistic

profiling, Meghan Tessitore ('19) reflected, "I presented a research project that I had spent a semester working on, exploring a topic that few people were familiar with." Christine Luongo ('19) appreciated "making connections with students from other colleges," and Ashley Linnehan ('19) sees "conferences in general as a special melding of enthusiasm and research," but she noted that by emphasizing city-as-text and providing

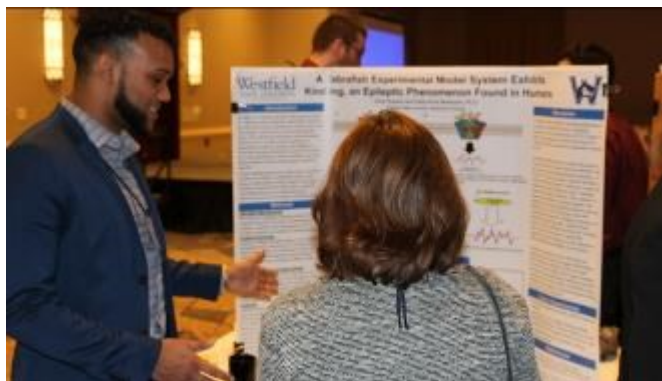
students a chance to bond socially, "NRHC also adds community to that equation."

That sense of community makes undergraduate conferences a great setting to develop professional skills and confidence. José Reyes ('17) observed, "academic conferences such as the NRHC provide a nonjudgmental platform to express any work you feel passionate about." Lauren Stornelli ('19) echoed the "nonthreatening environ-

ment," which, according to Amanda D'Aprix ('19), can help you develop essential professional skills: "Many students are scared to talk to their professors, but presenting to administrators from different honors programs was a great experience that helped remove this fear. The exchange of respect was also nice because we were treated like equals. As we enter the workforce, we will be working with people of different ages, experiences, and positions." Carolyn Wallace ('20) saw the professional benefits to her "as a future teacher. . . to work on my public speaking skills and my ability to adapt and have an open mind in professional group discussions."

So when should you plan to present your work at a conference? As soon as possible! For first-year students, presenting at a regional conference boosts confidence and opens doors.

Lillian Bruffee ('20) "was able to gain both networking and professional development skills early in my college career," and as Emily Slote ('20) explained, "If you start attending conferences as a first-year student, you will be more inclined to participate in them throughout your four years at



Andy Rosario describes his research on Zebrafish as models for epilepsy studies.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## HONORS PROGRAM STAFF CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Honors Program Director Dr. Glen Brewster was named vice president/president elect of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English Honor Society, which inducts approximately 9,000 members annually. Many Westfield State University chapter members present their creative and academic work at the annual Sigma Tau Delta convention each year. Gretchen Konrad, Administrative Assistant to the Honors Program, along with her colleague Ron'na Lytle, was among the first recipients of the "Phenomenal Women at Westfield State University" award during the Month Celebrating Women in Spring 2017. Dr. Vanessa Diana, Assistant Director of the Honors Program, serves on the Executive Board of the Planning Committee for the City of Westfield's 350th Anniversary Celebration. Honors Program staff and Honors alumnus Michael Brill (Class of 2012) attended the 2017 Pathways to Excellence fundraiser supporting scholarships through the Westfield State Foundation. Gretchen Konrad and Professor Diana serve on the Emilee Dawn Gagnon Memorial Scholarship Committee, which hosted a fundraising paint and sip event this spring.



### SHAC OFFICERS for Fall 2017 - Spring 2018

**Co-Presidents:** Lauren Stornelli and Meghan Tessitore

**Vice President:** Tyler Houle

**Secretary:** Lily Bruffee

**Treasurer:** Alex Jackson

**Historian:** Ashley Linnehan

**Publicist:** Katie Morris

**Commuter Representative:** Danny Dobek

**First-year Representative:** to be elected Fall 2017

### The Squire Squad

**Student Editors and Contributors:** Kaitlyn Amuso, Colleen Andrews, Ashley Linnehan, Thomas Madden, Katie Morris, Corey Pooler, and Alexis Wessig.

**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](mailto:vdiana@westfield.ma.edu).**



(squirrel art courtesy of Prof. Elizabeth Stassinis)

### Honors Advisory Committee for Fall 2016 - Spring 2017

**Thank you for your service.**

Michael Filas - Academic Affairs

Janet Gebelt - Psychology

Frank Giuliano - Chemical and Physical Sciences

Catherine Johnson - Nursing

Megan Kennedy - Education

Sonya Lawson - Music

Susan Leggett - Academic Affairs

Erica Morin - History

Wilma Ortiz - Education

Ashiah Richee - Diversity and Inclusion

Hillary Sackett - Economics and Management

Oliver Zeff - Library

Student representatives: Kaitlyn Amuso ('17), Amanda D'Aprix ('19), Ashley Linnehan ('19), Christine Luongo ('19), and Lauren Stornelli ('19).

### **Get in touch with the Honors Program:**

Visit the Honors Center in Mod Hall 103.

Call (413) 572-8086. Email at [honors@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:honors@westfield.ma.edu).

LIKE US on FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, and TWITTER!

# HONORS STUDENTS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

## NORTHEAST REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE



Students at the NRHC lead roundtable discussions, give oral reports, and present posters on research, service, internship, and student leadership projects.

*(Continued from page 1)*

WSU.” Corey Pooler (‘20) concluded, “this conference opened my eyes to the many opportunities of being an undergraduate student.”

As for seniors about to embark on their professional lives, Tom Madden (‘17) concluded, “with commencement just around the corner, NRHC was very much the

culmination of my undergraduate career, connecting my academic interests to professional pursuits.” Andy Rosario (‘17), who plans to attend dental school, especially valued the conference keynote speaker: “I was inspired by Dr. Jim Withers, who has been providing direct street medical care for the homeless in Pittsburgh for 20 years, to continue pursuing dental

medicine serving underserved communities but to also think more inclusively and provide street dental care for the homeless.” Emma Rodriguez (‘17) valued the professional connections: “I had the opportunity to present about my Google Analytics internship experience and to network with a professor who is in the field that I hope to be in after I graduate.”

Students interested in participating in the 2018 Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference in Providence, RI, should talk with Professors Brewster or Diana about how to apply.

*Vanessa Diana, Ph.D. is Professor of English and Assistant Director of the Honors Program.*



Seen here at the banquet on Friday evening, Westfield State students were one of the largest groups accepted to the conference.



## HONORS STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCILS

### COMMONWEALTH HONORS PROGRAM STUDENT COUNCIL

ASHLEY LINNEHAN



CHP Student Council members visit Mass MoCA in North Adams, MA.

The Commonwealth Honors Program (CHP) Student Council is made up of Honors students from public, state-funded institutions. Two of Westfield State Honors Program’s students are part of the council: Christine Luongo (Secretary) and Ashley Linnehan (Project Proposal Writer). The council plans events for all 26 Massachusetts state colleges, such as an over-night that was hosted by the

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in late April. Students from 6 different schools convened at MCLA to take part in the fun, forge social networks, and see various attractions that North Adams has to offer, such as Mass MoCA (Museum of Contemporary Art). The student council does a lot of important organizing, such as setting aside funds for the annual Northeast Regional

Honors Council conference registration and planning two events each year. They are

currently planning an over-night event at Westfield State on September 22-23 which will invite Honors Program students from across Massachusetts to visit WSU and join us for our annual trip to the Big E. Watch for emails about this event in the fall, and for how to get involved with the CHP Student Council.

*Ashley is a sophomore English major from Merrimac, MA.*



CHP Student Council members dress up for the student gala at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

### WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT HONORS ADVISORY COUNCIL

ASHLEY LINNEHAN



Alex Jackson talks with a prospective first-year Honors student during the phone/email-a-thon event.

SHAC kept things interesting this semester! To kick off our semester, we hosted a phone/email-a-thon night where current students contacted prospective future members of the class of 2021. SHAC also participated in the

2<sup>nd</sup> annual Fresh Check Day, a mental health awareness event. Our booth was called “Reach Out.” We encouraged participants to forego their phones while at our booth, and to either climb into the ball pit and get to know someone with provided questions, or to add their respective strings to the connections board. The purpose of the activities was to show those participating that no one is ever alone.

In further efforts to support Honors students interested in attending grad school in the future, we held a GRE work-

shop which included a panel of current and past WSU students who provided insight and gave advice to current Honors students thinking about grad school. Karaoke night provided a lot of much needed laughter heading into

final exams. At our always popular end-of-semester Chinese food dinner, we toasted graduating Honors scholars. (More event photos on p.11.)

*Ashley is a sophomore English major from Merrimac, MA.*

#### **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 want to find out more about SHAC?

Contact Lauren Stornelli at [lstornelli7659@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:lstornelli7659@westfield.ma.edu) or Meghan Tessitore at [mtessitore2357@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:mtessitore2357@westfield.ma.edu).

## HONORS STUDENTS PRESENT AT ACADEMIC CONFERENCES



Spring is the season for academic conferences! First-Year Honors students Hannah Ciepiela, Emily Slote, and Lillian Bruffee (pictured top left) present their research on riverfront development at the Westfield River Watershed Association Symposium. 24 Honors Program students traveled to UMass, Amherst, to present their work at the Massachusetts Statewide Undergraduate Research Conference in April, and 47 Honors Program students gave poster presentations at the Westfield State University Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Conference in May 2017. Faculty sponsors encourage students to take their research on the road, help students prepare posters, and attend conferences to support student presenters.



## HONORS STUDENTS GO GLOBAL

### STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE: NEW ZEALAND

COLLEEN ANDREWS



Colleen enjoying the beauty of New Zealand .

From the time that I first began touring college campuses, the notion of studying abroad has fascinated me. This spring semester studying abroad in New Zealand has contained some of the most incredible months of my life. I wanted to get out and connect with nature and learn to appreciate the beauty of the world around me, and bring this skill home with me. New Zealand’s rural, sparsely populated natural beauty is easy to explore and appreciate.

I have made friends from all over the United States and the world, which is such a gift. It

really is important to step outside of your personal bubble and work hard to understand people from all over the world. Although New Zealand is an English-speaking nation, that’s not to say they don’t have their own cultural differences. On top of learning about the people and the country I am studying in, I have had the opportunity to learn about other people and places as well: I had one roommate from the Netherlands and another from Norway. Cultural differences can be tricky, but it is undeniably important to embrace the

initial discomfort that comes with being surrounded by strangers from all over the world in this unfamiliar place. That uneasy feeling is an indicator that you are learning new things and working consciously at embracing differences.

New Zealand is home to some of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. I don’t think my experience is quite what someone thinks of when they think about study abroad though; I am not traveling around Europe and visiting a different country every weekend. That is not what I was after. I wanted to immerse myself in one place and see all that it had to offer. There is so

much to see in this one tiny country I could never imagine just passing through for a day. New Zealand is one of the most progressive countries I have experienced, and their ideas about environmental protection, equality, and social justice make this country one to be proud of. I am proud to have studied here, and I am proud of the friendships I have formed that I am confident will last a lifetime, and I am proud that I could represent Westfield State University from all the way across the world.

*Colleen is a junior Biology major from Quincy, MA.*



Colleen and friends on the water in New Zealand.

### SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD IN GUATEMALA



Interested in studying abroad or in another state?

The International Programs Office can answer your questions about Study Abroad, Exchange Programs, Short-Term Study Abroad Programs, and National Exchange Programs.

For more information, visit the International Programs Office in Parenzo Hall lobby, Room 130.

Honors students Jose Reyes (pictured above), Allison Bates (pictured opposite page left), and Tara Budrewicz (pictured opposite page right) traveled to Guatemala for a service-learning Short-Term Study Abroad course in Nursing and Psychology.

## HONORS STUDENTS GO GLOBAL

### MY NICARAGUA EXPERIENCE

COREY POOLER



Corey gets dance lessons from one of his students.

In January of 2017, during the winter break of my freshman year, I was able to travel to the heart of Central America to fulfill many of my life-long dreams. I participated in the two week service learning trip to Nicaragua offered here at Westfield State.

When deciding to go on this trip, I was nervous for many reasons. I had never traveled that far before, and would also be going with a group of 14 people I had never met. I wasn't sure if I should go through

with it, so I called the most reliable person I know, my mother. She told me that study abroad would be an experience of a lifetime and that I should go for it, so I did. I sent in my application and next thing I knew I was waking up a few months later at 2am to drive to Providence International Airport to start the best two weeks of my life. After a flight to Miami, a flight to Costa Rica, and a bus ride to Nicaragua, I was finally at the hotel. I was excited, but at the same time nervous and worried.

The first few days consisted of visiting the community we would be helping, getting used to the city we were staying in, and getting to know the other people on the trip. Throughout the two weeks, I took part in so many amazing activities it's hard to recap them all. I worked with an organization called La Esperanza Grenada to build an addition to the elementary school in Grenada, went

ziplining down a volcano, swam in the top of a volcano, spent a night on a native beach, had adventures within a foreign country with new friends, and got to know some of the most amazing people I've ever met. When building at the school, we got to meet and teach the kids. I made connections with so many children, and these connections would help to open up my eyes to so many life values. I learned to appreciate

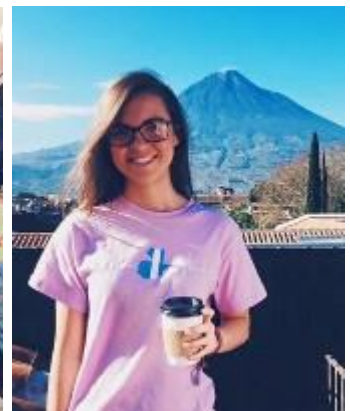
the little things in life and to be thankful for the opportunity to give back. I highly encourage anyone who wants to give back or wants to travel to go on this trip. After going, I have decided to return to Nicaragua as a student leader and look forward to making a difference in the world around me and in the lives of others.

*Corey is a first-year Mathematics major from Middleboro, MA.*



Corey and Micaela Connolly teaching a class in Grenada.

### SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD IN GUATEMALA



## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

### LOOKING BEYOND OUR BORDERS AND LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

KAITLYN AMUSO

“Beyond Our Borders: Exploring Texts from Africa, Asia, and the Americas,” an upper-level interdisciplinary Honors Seminar taught by Dr. Carol Bailey, was the second Honors Seminar that I took. Even though I didn’t need it to fulfill any requirements, I was drawn to taking this seminar because I was interested in learning about other cultures (my other upper-level seminar was “Japanese Culture” with Dr. Brian Chen), and because it related to my Senior Honors Project which focused on Intercultural Communication. The seminar allowed our class to reflect on, discuss, and write about issues that are happening all over the world, but specifically in places like Haiti, Brazil, China, Africa, Antigua, and others that we might not think about daily.

One of my favorite assignments was our World Event assignment, for which a stu-



Professor Bailey’s Beyond Our Borders poses for a picture with Professor Ulysse’s class on a field trip to Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

dent would bring in an event that had recently happened in the world and we would spend the beginning of class discussing that event in depth. We had numerous fruitful and educational discussions on topics such as the recent French Presidential election, moves that President Trump had made, and China’s involvement in Africa.

Our Beyond Our Borders cohort read and did assignments on many interdiscipli-

nary texts that kept us engaged. In addition, we took a field trip to Wesleyan University, where we sat in on a class taught by Professor Gina Ulysse, who is the author of *Haiti Needs New Narratives*, one of the books that we read this semester. We had insightful conversations with Professor Ulysse’s class about her book, about the differences and similarities between her class and ours, and about the different campus dynamics of Wesleyan

and Westfield.

I enjoyed the Beyond Our Borders seminar, not only for the discussions and the field trip, but also because the size of our class gave us the opportunity to have engaging discussions that sometimes got off topic in good ways, but in which everyone could learn from each other. Dr. Bailey expressed that this was one of her favorite aspects of our seminar. She loves that we had the opportunity to learn from her and our peers and that she got to learn new things from us as well. I appreciate that I was able to take a second Honors Seminar, one that opened my eyes to events happening around the world and that kept me engaged in the learning process.

*Kaitlyn is a senior Communication major from Pittsfield, MA.*

## HONORS COURSE ENHANCEMENTS



After reading British novelist Zadie Smith (photo left), who writes about her Jamaican and British cultural identity, students in Professor Shirley Wong’s Honors Introduction to British Literature, along with Honors Program faculty and staff, attended Smith’s reading at Amherst College. As part of the course enhancement evening, the group enjoyed Thai cuisine at Noodles Restaurant in Amherst.





## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

### CONSIDERING MUSIC AS A LENS ON SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

KATIE MORRIS

An upper-level interdisciplinary Honors Seminar called “Music as a Social Experience” sounds like an excellent concept, but with so many directions to take and social concepts to learn, how does one teach it? For Professor Sonya Lawson, the answer starts with the textbook, *Music as a Social Experience*, as well as various documentaries and YouTube videos through which Professor Lawson crafts an excellent course.

Each chapter of the textbook introduces a new concept, like *Music and Film* or *Music and Gender*. It opens with Questions or Thought, delves into some history, then goes through a variety of musical examples. Each musical piece comes with a listening guide that breaks the piece down second by second for full understanding. Students read the chapter and write a reflection about their reactions to the



The cast of *Spring Awakening* offers a musical glimpse into issues of adolescence.

concepts. Students are motivated to share their ideas during class, and Professor Lawson allows students to take the lead, pushing us to challenge our ideas and open our minds to new ones.

Through our projects, we were able to display our understanding of various concepts. For our first project, Music and Gender, we focused on a specific aspect of gender as it relates to music (like overly-masculine music) and presented our research to

the class. For our Capstone project, students wrote their own chapters of the book, focusing on a variety research topics related to music such as, video games, mental health, ethnicity, emotion, and more. Each student gave a ten-minute presentation followed by questions and discussion about our favorite parts of the presentations.

Professor Lawson also promotes student performances on campus with a class outing to WSU’s Theatre Arts pro-

gram presentation of the musical *Spring Awakening*. Tickets for the musical were purchased by the Honors Program as part of the upper-level Honors Seminar course enhancement. The musical was a fun event that led to some excellent discussion. And, it lined up perfectly with our *Music and Broadway* chapter.

All in all, my experience with the “Music as a Social Experience” Honors Seminar was incredible. It allowed me to broaden my knowledge of music through the lens of social constructs.

I highly recommend taking this upper-level Honors Seminar with Professor Lawson. You will come away with a new appreciation of music’s role in our lives.

*Katie is a sophomore English major from Avon, MA.*

## HONORS COURSE ENHANCEMENTS



In Professor Rachel Gibson’s Honors World Music course students enjoy hands-on active learning about global musical traditions as they practice folk dancing, drumming, xylophone playing, and guitar playing. Future students, rest assured: no prior musical experience required!



## HONORS STUDENTS INTERNSHIPS

### THE WASHINGTON CENTER INTERNSHIP

THOMAS MADDEN



Tom enjoys DC's famous cherry blossoms on the National Mall.

For the past semester, I've been interning with the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) through The Washington Center (TWC) in D.C. NLADA has a hand in many efforts that focus on advancing justice and access to legal counsel. In ad-

dition to advocating funding for legal aid providers who serve indigent Americans, it provides training for legal practitioners and drives reform projects. Through NLADA, I've learned about influencing policymakers, the application of federal grants, and the ways in which legal services assist vulnerable populations. While the experience has strengthened my interest in pursuing a career in law, it's also provided many chances to make professional and personal connections. Additionally, my work with the agency has allowed me access to exclusive events that include meeting Congressmen, Supreme Court justices, and leaders of the American Civil Liberties Union.

D.C. isn't all about work,

however; in addition to a Monday - Thursday work week, TWC includes a night course with career development on Fridays that features events catered to one's professional track. For instance, as part of the Law & CJ track, I've had the chance to hear experts on terrorism and to attend the first D.C. Reentry Symposium. TWC also provides a host of optional events to prepare for the GRE/LSAT, network, and hear from workers in one's field.

While the program focuses on professional growth, the city also has plenty of opportunities for leisure and entertainment. From national landmarks like the Washington Monument and Library of Congress to the many free museums across the District,

there's no shortage of interesting sights. The District also has a thriving nightlife. Additionally, if you're a sports fan, I recommend checking out a Capitals or Wizards game at the Verizon Center, located just a few stops away on the Metro at Gallery-Place, one of the city's most lively cultural hot spots. Considering all that the city has to offer, I highly recommend the program to anyone with an interest in studying abroad. Though it may not come with the same attractions of international internship programs, the nation's capital comes with a wealth of experiences that can't be found anywhere else.

*Thomas is a senior Criminal Justice and Psychology dual major from Quincy, MA.*

### HOW FAR I'LL GO: DISNEY COLLEGE PROGRAM INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

ALEXIS WESSIG

If you told me a year ago that I'd be working in Walt Disney World, I would have been shocked. Me? In Florida? Alone, as a first-year student? But here I am two months into my Disney College Program internship. I go back to WSU in August, but I'm still connected to home by taking WSU courses online as well as Disney heritage classes offered at Disney University.

This program is the best decision I could've made for my college career. Yes, working in food and beverage for 42-50 hours per week on top of doing my course work is



Alexis on her first day as a cast member at Disney World in Florida!

busy but it's possible, I promise! I still have time and money to spend with friends doing fun things in the park or just hanging out! We have a bus

system just for college program kids (CP's for future reference) to take us to everything Disney-related, the other housing complexes, and local shops. CP's get free admission and discounts at most parks, so you will still have money for food and fun after rent is taken out of the weekly paycheck.

I've met so many people from all over the world here. I love it. I did VoluntEARS, where we built a playground with some girls from Australia. One of my best friends on the program is from Australia as well, and my roommate is

from Norway! I love the global connections I'm making here. I do miss home, though, so it is nice meeting people from close to home too. But honestly, the best friends I've made are work friends who are always up for spontaneous IHOP post-work trips, no matter how late.

To find out more about the Disney College Program, contact Dr. Carlton Pickron, Vice President of Student Affairs.

*Alexis is a first-year dual major in Special Education and Psychology from Springfield, MA.*

## HONORS STUDENTS - AWARDS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND ACTIVITIES



The Westfield State University chapter of Phi Kappa Phi awarded two Co-First-Place awards to Honors Program students Ashley Linnehan (left) and Christine Luongo (right) in its annual scholarly essay award. Both papers were written for English Professor Emily Todd’s American Literature to 1865 class. The co-winners are also roommates! Christine wrote the paper entitled “Female Stereotypes in *Charlotte Temple* and ‘Circumstance,’” and Ashley submitted her paper “Cautioning Against A Patriarchal Society.” On the very same day, Christine and Ashley were also inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society! Congratulations to these talented English majors!



Honors Program sophomore Danny Dobek (pictured left) is among 14 semi-finalists in his category to advance to the National Association of Teachers of Singing national competition in Boulder, Colorado, in July 2017. Danny is the only student to advance from the New England region. Congratulations to Danny and to his voice professor Dr. Mary Brown-Bonacci for this fantastic achievement!



Commonwealth Honors Scholar Samantha Lee (pictured right), co-president of the Relay for Life Club, kicks off the 2017 relay, a hugely successful fund raiser for the American Cancer Society.

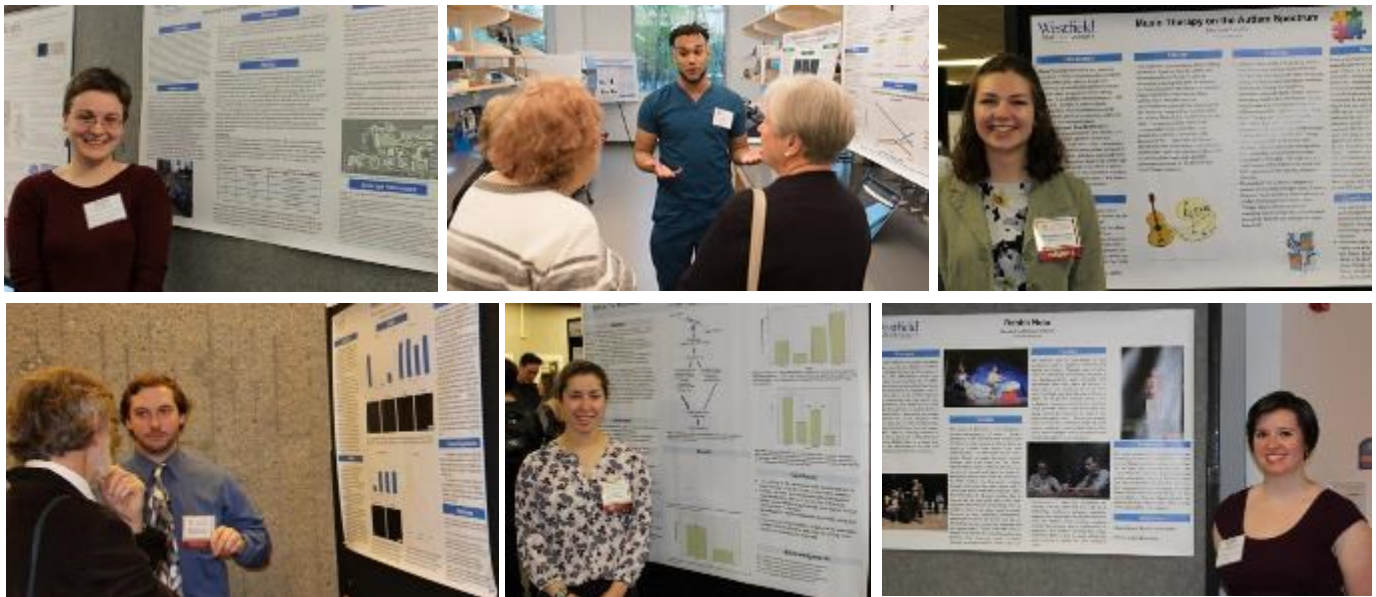


Honors students get involved on campus and in the community. Students are pictured above volunteering at the Boston Marathon, Fresh Check Day, Pathways to Excellence fundraiser, and the Honors Program Accepted Student Luncheons.



An Honors Program tradition: End-of-Semester Chinese Dinner and “toasting” graduating Honors scholars.

## HONORS STUDENTS FROM RESEARCH TO NEW CAREERS



Commonwealth Honors Scholars present their research at conferences and fundraising events on and off campus.

### 2017 Honors Graduates

**Kelly Avard** is a Security Lab Technician for the Hampshire County Sheriff's Office and is planning to pursue a Master of Criminal Justice degree at Westfield State University.

**Ariana Becker** is volunteering at the Sustainability Demonstration Center in Guacimal, Costa Rica, on various projects including wildlife rehabilitation and gardening.

**Miranda Boucher** is pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

**Holly Brouillette** is pursuing a Master of Education degree at Merrimack College.

**Stephanie Carvalho** is a residential support person at Berkshire County Arc ("arc into the community" for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities).

**Ashley Deleon** is pursuing a Master of Elementary Education at Westfield State University.

**Lauren Grams** is a 7th grade Special Education teacher at Community Charter School of Cambridge.

**Katie Hebert** is pursuing a Master of Education degree at Westfield State University.

**Robert Haluski** is applying to the National Institutes of Health post-baccalaureate program.

**Devan Hunter** is a mental health worker/activities therapist at Butler Hospital in Providence, RI.

**Megan Juchno** is pursuing a Master of Education degree as a Reading Specialist at Westfield State University and is a 2nd grade teacher in Springfield.

**Christina Lankarge** is pursuing a graduate degree in Clinical Exercise Physiology at Springfield College.

**Samantha Lee** is an Elementary School garden teacher with AmeriCorps and Education Outside in San Francisco, CA.

**Lori Merlo** is pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at UMass, Lowell.

**Fiona Mwariama** is a pre-school assistant teacher with the Guild of St. Agnes in Worcester, MA.

**Rebecca O'Leary** is the Box Office Manager at the Chester Theatre Company in Chester, MA.

**Jose Reyes** is a Psychiatric Clinician/Psychiatric Rehab Specialist at the Holyoke Medical Center and is entering the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-medical certification program at Elms College in Chicopee, MA.

**Andy Rosario** is a lab assistant while studying for the Dental Admission Test in preparation for applying to dental school.

**Emily Tarjick** is working at Thom Family Services and pursuing a Master of Social Work degree at Westfield State University.

**Noelani Washington** is working as a Rehabilitation Nurse at Bay State Noble Hospital.

**Alexa Whitney** is working as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Brookhaven Hospice in Middleborough, MA.

**Woody Woodger** is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA.

**SEND US YOUR NEWS!**

### SPRING 2017 SENIOR HONORS PROJECT PRESENTATIONS



KAITLYN AMUSO



MIRANDA BOUCHER



STEPHANIE CARVALHO



ROB HALUSKA



PETER SKAZA



WOODY WOODGER

Congratulations to Honors students who presented their Senior Honors Projects in spring 2017, and thank you to their committee members, librarians, and the Reading and Writing Center for supporting their work.



At the end of their year-long independent research work, Commonwealth Honors Scholars present their Senior Honors Projects to faculty, staff, administrators, fellow students, and families. Celebratory photos with committee members are part of the tradition. For Senior Honors Project titles, see p. 14.

## COMMONWEALTH HONORS SCHOLARS



The designation of Commonwealth Honors Scholars 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.

**Kaitlyn Amuso:** Communication, *Intercultural Communication in the Higher Education Workplace*, Dr. Shirley Acquah.

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

**Miranda Boucher:** Athletic Training, *Functional Movement Screen Y-Balance Test and Injury Prediction*, Dr. Paul Higgins.

**Stephanie Carvalho:** Music, *Music Therapy on the Autism Spectrum*, Dr. Sonya Lawson.

**Robert Haluska:** Biology, *Ketones and the Brain*, Dr. Robin White.

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

**Randi Lemenager:** Special Education and Liberal Studies, *Positive Inclusion through Theater: Examining Representation*

and *Opportunity for People with Disabilities*, Heather Crocker-Aulenback, M.F.A.

**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, *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.

**Peter Skaza:** Psychology, *Honors Student Identity*, Dr. Janet Gebelt.

**Andrew Woodger:** English, *Senior Honors Project title: Give Your Gods One Last Doubt*, Leah Nielsen, M.F.A.



Smiling Honors students, pictured with President Ramon S. Torrecilha, are among the fourteen Honors students who were recognized as Commonwealth Honors Scholars at this year's Academic Excellence Awards Ceremony in April. Many of these students also received departmental recognition at the Academic Excellence Awards ceremony.

## UNIVERSITY HONORS SCHOLARS



*The designation of University Honors Scholar is awarded to students who complete a minimum of six Honors courses (at least one upper-level Honors seminar) with a B or higher and maintain an overall GPA of 3.30 or higher. Listed below are recipients and their major(s).*



**Kelly Avard:** Criminal Justice

**Ariana Becker:** Environmental Science

**Holly Brouillette:** Biology

**Paige Circosta:** Nursing

**Micaela Connolly:** Computer Information Systems

**Ashley Deleon:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

**Christopher Evans:** Computer Science

**Alexandra Gaspar:** Environmental Science

**Joseph Grabowski:** Mathematics

**Lauren Grams:** Special Education and Liberal Studies

**Jeffrey Hamilton:** Biology

**Emily Hanshaw:** Criminal Justice and Psychology

**Katherine Hebert:** Biology

**Devan Hunter:** Criminal Justice

**Megan Juchno:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

**David Lepine:** Biology

**Amber Logan:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

**Will MacKinnon:** History

**Thomas Madden:** Criminal Justice and Psychology

**Ashley McLaughlin:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

**Fiona Mwariama:** Psychology

**Hope Nadeau:** Spanish

**Mary Paine:** Business Management

**Elizabeth Patruski:** Liberal Studies

**Jose Reyes:** Psychology

**Emma Rodriguez:** Business Management

**Anne Stack:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

**Emily Tarjick:** Social Work

**Maddison Uzar:** Math and Economics

**Noelani Washington:** Nursing

**Alexa Whitney:** Biology



Honors students, pictured on this page with President Ramon S. Torrecilha, are among the thirty-one Honors students who were recognized as University Honors Scholars at this year's Academic Excellence Awards Ceremony. Many of these students also received departmental recognition at the Academic Excellence Awards ceremony.

### CONGRATULATIONS, 2017 HONORS PROGRAM GRADUATES!



Best Wishes to the Class of 2017 Honors Scholars, including (pictured above, left to right) Co-Valedictorians Commonwealth Honors Scholar Randi Lemenegger and Honors Program participant Stephanie McVeigh and Co-Salutatorians and University Honors Scholar Kelly Avard and Commonwealth Honors Scholar Samantha Lee.

