

# THE SQUIRREL SQUIRE

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2      SPRING 2019

## NORTHEAST REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE: 18 HONORS STUDENTS PRESENT THEIR RESEARCH IN BALTIMORE

ELIZABETH FERRARA AND STEVEN FERRARA

Participating in the 2019 Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference (NRHC) in Baltimore was a powerful and influential experience. The rare opportunity to present research to fellow Honors students from across the region who have vastly different majors, backgrounds, and interests than your own can be intimidating, but is empowering and rewarding. NRHC gave 18 Honors students from Westfield State University (including two pairs of siblings!) an incredible chance to share knowledge. We all made the most of it and are grateful. At the academic conference, we found most valuable the wide variety of topics covered by student research and creative work, ranging from gender equality activism to cancer research,



Honors runs in the family: siblings Gabrielle and Christian Biseinere and Elizabeth and Steven Ferrara.



Visiting Baltimore's Inner Harbor while exploring the City-as-Text.

global climate change to local history. We presented projects on special education (Steven's Senior Honors Project) and Native American literature (Elizabeth's project from a core course). The variety of academic interests represented by the students attending the conference was extraordinary, and allowed us to get a glimpse into many different worlds and share a little bit about our own.

Although the academic conference was exceptional and gave us the opportunity to learn from each other, approaching Baltimore as a "City-as-Text" was the most valuable part of the trip. During the first day of the conference, students spent the day explor-

ing Baltimore through a variety of lenses. Some had the art lens on and explored museums and art along the streets, appreciating the sights that represent the culture of the city. Others explored the harbor, examining the historical significance of Baltimore's maritime history, while critically analyzing the struggles surrounding racism that affect our country to this day. One group participated in a service-learning excursion, and volunteered their days to prepare and serve meals to homeless women and children in the inner Baltimore area. We then reconvened in the conference center to debrief about our observations and experiences in the city. Every group came

out of this City-as-Text experience with a deeper understanding and appreciation for the city of Baltimore. The Westfield State University students all took away different experiences from the conference. They found value in networking for graduate school research, presenting to a wide audience of people outside the Westfield community, exploring a new city, and meeting new people.

The power of exploring and learning as a group solidified the NRHC conference as a truly influential experience. Spending three days in a new city with a group of peers is an opportunity that seldom comes around. The connections made on a conference trip that is based on City-as-Text learning and the exchange of research and creative projects are lasting and powerful. We wholeheartedly recommend future NRHC conferences to our fellow Westfield State Honors students. See p. 3 for more photos from the NRHC conference.

*Elizabeth is a sophomore Art and Psychology dual major from Merrimac, MA. Steven is a senior Special Education and Liberal Studies dual major from Merrimac, MA.*

## IN THE HONORS CENTER



Students enjoyed food and friendship at the traditional End-of-Semester Chinese Food Dinner. Outgoing and incoming SHAC officers shared ideas and a photograph after 2019-2020 elections.

### 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 Mackenzie Jackson at [mjackson9269@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:mjackson9269@westfield.ma.edu).

### SHAC OFFICERS for Fall 2018 - Spring 2019

**President:** Thomas Howard  
**Vice President:** Jennifer Oglesby  
**Secretary:** Olivia Hamparsoomian  
**Treasurer:** Carolyn Wallace  
**Historian:** Audrey Therriault  
**Publicist:** Katie Morris  
**Commuter Representative:** Gabrielle Biseinere  
**First-year Representative:** Jared La Valley and Mia McDonald  
**Commonwealth Honors Program Representatives:** Mackenzie Jackson and Ashley Linnehan

### The Squire Squad

**Student Editors and Contributors:** Massara Almafrachi, Elizabeth Ferrara, Steven Ferrara, Bradley Harvey, Mia McDonald, Matt Michalik, Emily Slote, and Anna Szczebak.

**Staff Editors:** Glen Brewster, Vanessa Diana, and Gretchen Konrad.

**Interested in contributing to *The Squirrel Squire*?**  
 Send your story ideas and photos to Professor Diana at [honors@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:honors@westfield.ma.edu).

(squirrel art courtesy of Prof. Elizabeth Stassinis)



### Honors Advisory Committee for Fall 2018- Spring 2019

**Thank you for your service.**

Heidi Bohler - Movement Science  
 Glen Brewster - Director, English  
 H. Zahra Caldwell - Ethnic and Gender Studies  
 Vanessa Diana - Assistant Director, English  
 Corinne Ebbs - Library  
 Janet Gebelt - Psychology  
 Frank Giuliano - Chemical and Physical Sciences  
 Joan Kuhnly - Nursing  
 Sonya Lawson - Music  
 Enrique Morales-Diaz - Academic Affairs  
 Erica Morin - History  
 F. Wilma Ortiz - Education  
 Ashiah Richeime - Diversity and Inclusion  
 Hillary Sackett-Taylor- Faculty Fellow, Economics and Management

Student representatives: Thomas Howard ('19), Mia McDonald ('22), Audrey Therriault ('21), and Bridget Venezia ('22).

### **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).  
 FOLLOW US on FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, and TWITTER!

## HONORS STUDENTS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

### NORTHEAST REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE, BALTIMORE, MD



18 Honors students, from first-years to seniors, presented their research at the Northeast Regional Honors Council Conference in Baltimore in 2019: Christian Biseinere, Gabrielle Biseinere, Lillian Bruffee, Christopher DiCarlo, Josselyn Donahue, Sarah Dunn, Elizabeth Ferrara, Steven Ferrara, Shannon George, Matthew Giebel, Thomas Howard, Brian Pimentel, Corey Pooler, Emily Slote, Brandon Sullivan, Audrey Therriault, Rachel Tynan, and Carolyn Wallace. Students were accompanied by Honors Program administrators Dr. Vanessa Diana and Dr. Hillary Sackett-Taylor. Pictured above students share their research related to the conference theme, “Generating Power: Impact. Influence. Endurance,” in poster, roundtable, and oral presentations. Gathering for meals, participants learn from keynote speakers, and exploring Baltimore through City-as-Text activities includes a visit to little Italy for gelato!

## HONORS STUDENT AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS AND RECOGNITION



### Recognition:

(L to R) Jarrod Petersen and Thalita Neves were selected to speak at the **Pathways to Excellence** reception, describing the impact of Westfield State Foundation Scholarships on their undergraduate careers. Thomas Howard, Meghan Tessitore and Taylor Beamenderfer were selected to share their research and creative work with donors.

### Fellowships:

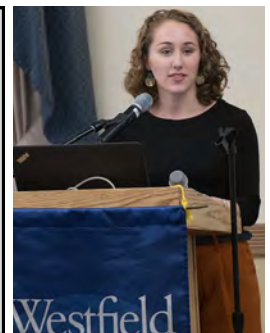
Four Honors Program students won **Summer Student Research Fellowships** to conduct independent research with faculty mentors this summer: Austin Buckner (Biology): Development of a Chemotaxis Macrophage Assay and Phagocytosis Assay Optimization, Research Advisor - Dr. Kristen Porter. Katherine Chapman (Psychology): The Effects of Anxiety on Attention: An Eye-Tracking Task, Research Advisor - Dr. T. Alex Daniel. Thomas Howard (History): A Dangerous Road to Success: Thomas Sheldon's Quest to Research and Finance the Westfield Canal, Research Advisor – Dr. Erica Morin. Rachel Tynan (Sociology): Creating an Age-Friendly Initiative: Making Restaurants Age-Inclusive, Research Advisor – Dr. Tamara Smith.

### Conference Presentations:

Commonwealth Honors Scholar Lauren Stornelli (Psychology and Spanish '19) presented her Senior Honors Project research at the **Eastern Psychological Association Conference** and attended the **New England Translators Association Conference**.

Commonwealth Honors Scholar Ashley Linnehan (English '19) presented her Senior Honors Project research on dialectical diversity at the national **Conference on College Composition and Communication** and to composition faculty and writing center consultants at Westfield State.

(R) Commonwealth Honors Scholar Julianna Campbell (English '20) presented her English education research at the **Westfield State Cross Cultural Symposium**.



### Awards:

(L to R) Meghan Tessitore (receiving her award from Professor David Lovejoy) was awarded first place for the 2019 **Phi Kappa Phi Undergraduate Student Scholarly Essay Award**. Kaitlyn Hester (with Junior Delgado, Director of the Career Center) received a 2019 **Rising Educator's Award** from the Massachusetts Educational Recruiting Consortium. Maninder Singh and Massara Almafrachi (with Azanda Seymour, Director of the Urban Education Program) each received a 2019 **Urban Education Program/Joan E. Fuller Scholarship** recognizing academic excellence and leadership.

Commonwealth Honors Scholar Christine Luongo (English '19) won third place in the **Critical Essay Contest American Literature Category** at the Sigma Tau Delta National English Honor Society conference.

Audrey Therriault (English '21) was accepted into the highly competitive **Salem Poetry Seminar** at Salem State University.

## HONORS STUDENTS SHINE

### THE WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY MODEL UNITED NATIONS TEAM

MASSARA ALMAFRACHI

Participating in the Model United Nations conference, a simulation experience to learn about international politics and diplomacy, has been one of our most rewarding experiences at Westfield State. Students from universities across the United States and the world come together to represent a country assigned to them, and our Westfield State University Model UN team of 14 members from a variety of majors was lucky enough to represent WSU in Canada, Boston and New York. During our stay in each city, we delegated for a different country. For example, in New York, we were the delegates for the Republic of Eritrea. We were assigned committees that discuss different issues



Representing Eritrea at the Model United Nations conference: Filsan Hussein, Zuleyka Contreras-Joubert, Tabu Mhina, Joey Joyal, Massara Almafrachi, Brianna Johnson, and Valerie De Jesus.

including human trafficking, pollution, global warming, women’s rights, and more. The position we take must benefit our country, so as the Eritrean delegation members, our responsibility consisted of finding allied countries and

writing the best resolution to meet our and their needs. This process is lengthy and can take days of hard of work. Finally, all resolutions are put up for voting. We are glad to say that many of the resolutions we signed or co-wrote passed and

were accepted by the dais and the committee.

At Westfield State, there is an opportunity for every one of us that fits our interest. The Model UN was the perfect opportunity for me. I was born outside of the US and was able to bring my perspective from my Arabic background into our proposals and resolutions. In addition, with every conference my point of view on the global issues we study has expanded and matured.

If you are interested in finding out more about Model UN, please contact me.

*Massara is a junior Business Management major and head delegate to Model United Nations from West Springfield, MA.*



(L to R) Seniors Emily Hadley, Shauna Legsdin, and Christian Biseinere presented their Senior Honors Project research at the Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference at UMass, Amherst, while retired Vice President of Student Affairs Carlton Pickron listened attentively.



24 Honors students were among the 82 who were inducted at the 2019 Phi Kappa Phi Initiation Ceremony.

## CIVICALLY ENGAGED HONORS STUDENTS

### GENERATING A SOCIAL STUDIES LESSON PLAN FOR WESTFIELD'S 350<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

EMILY SLOTE

In the fall of 2016, I took a City-as-Text Honors course combining English Composition and Introduction to Community Planning with Professors Vanessa Diana and Marijoan Bull. The course used Westfield's rich history to guide curriculum. When asked to complete a research paper on a part of Westfield's history, I chose the Pure Food Movement, which focused on food regulation in the 1870's and was a principal source of political support for the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906. Through extensive research, I dove into Westfield's unknown history and explored my college city in an educational and innovative way. Little did I know that I would be taking my newly learned knowledge about the Pure Food Movement and teaching it to second grade students two years later.

This spring, I took Social Studies in the Elementary Education Classroom with



Emily discussed the Pure Food Movement with a second grader at Powder Mill Elementary School.

Professor Laurie Risler, who asked us to develop a lesson plan using practice standards and content standards for the Massachusetts social studies curriculum based on Westfield's rich history as part of the city's 350th anniversary celebration. Professor Risler connected with second grade



WSU Education students make headline news.

teacher Kathy Knapik at Paper Mill Elementary School, who was eager to get her second-grade students involved with Westfield's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary. My education colleagues and I developed lesson plans about different aspects of Westfield history. I took inspiration from my freshman City-As-Text Honors course and developed a lesson plan on "The Pure Food Movement." My students got to explore food packages, view primary sources, and examine the different regulations that must be printed on food labels because of their own city's hard work during the Pure Food Move-

ment.

The second graders were so eager to learn about Westfield history, which made me hopeful that learning history can be fun if it's interactive, relatable, and hands-on. Civic engagement with a local history element can be taught as early as second grade if it's done right. It was so rewarding to see my lesson plan come to life. Writing a lesson is one thing, but being able to see it in action is such a powerful experience as a future educator. I am so grateful to have taken the City-As-Text Honors course during my freshman year because it gave me inspiration for my lesson plan. I started as a student during my freshman year and transformed into a teacher during my junior year, an experience I'll always hold dear to my heart.

*Emily is a junior Elementary Education and Liberal Studies dual major from Billerica, MA.*

## TEAMING UP WITH DINING SERVICES TO FEED THOSE IN NEED



Brandon presented his research on cancer treatment at the NRHC conference.

When Brandon Sullivan was challenged in his medical ethics course with Professor Karen Sladyk to address a public health issue, he decided to tackle food insecurity. "With some experience working in food services, I was shocked at how much food goes to waste," explains Brandon. He reached out to Westfield State Dining Services to propose a partnership with Rachel's Ta-

ble, a program of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts that redistributes food in order to alleviate hunger and reduce food waste. Now leftover food from the kitchens across campus that would otherwise be discarded as compost can be redistributed to those in need. Brandon has also contacted an agency in Westfield to receive Westfield State's donations in the near

future, so that the resources can serve local residents. Helping people is important to Brandon, who is a member of the Emergency Medical Services Club and hopes to attend medical school after he graduates.

*Brandon is a sophomore Biology and Health Sciences dual major from Wellesley, MA.*

## UPPER-LEVEL INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS SEMINAR

### WESTFIELD AT 350: CITY-AS-TEXT SEMINAR

MATT MICHALIK

My college career started off a little differently than most because some of my academic courses have emphasized community engagement. I began my first semester in an Honors first-year composition course named Discover Westfield, a place-based learning course, which means that instead of studying a textbook you study your location, an approach the National Collegiate Honors Council calls “City-as-Text.” In this case our “text” was the city of Westfield.

With learning and writing about Westfield as a text came a lot of community involvement and engagement that many other students wouldn’t normally be exposed to. For me personally, it was a great way to come out of my shell and almost immediately feel at home at the university. The second week of my college career I woke up at 6 AM and was on a WSKB radio talk-show, “Rock on Westfield,” with Audrey Therriault and Professor Diana. The show was hosted by Harry Rock, a prominent member of the city and chair of the Westfield



Students in the Honors seminar Westfield at 350 posed with the birthday cake on Westfield’s Green.

350th Anniversary planning committee, whom I would see much more often in the next year. The course allowed me to present to the 350th planning committee ideas for possible celebration events for the upcoming celebrations in 2019. These experiences helped me to open up and feel more welcomed within the city by members of the community, while improving my public speaking abilities.

During my sophomore year, I decided to double up on my community engagement and

take an upper-level interdisciplinary Honors seminar called Westfield at 350. I was much more involved in the community during this course because our class attended the almost weekly lecture series “Westfield Wednesdays,” covering various topics on Westfield’s history. Many of my classmates took inspiration from the lectures for their final proposals for future research or service projects based in Westfield. I learned that the community members

really care about the City of Westfield and want to learn about its history; the size of the crowd during a lecture ranged from 125-500 people in attendance!

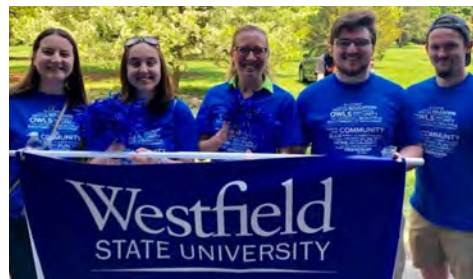
Through this course and my other campus involvement, I was asked to be a part of the committee to plan the university’s participation in the city-wide 350th parade.

There are many benefits to place-based learning, and it has changed my college career for the better. Academically, place-based learning helps to break away from the sometimes monotonous textbook-based courses, and providing a different type of learning helps to change the way a person thinks. Professionally, place-based learning helps to develop relationships with community members that could lead to internship, volunteer, or job opportunities. And socially, through developing communication skills and forming connections with the location that they are studying, students can help strengthen the connection between the university and the community. My place-based learning courses have helped me to connect with the city and its members. I feel more confident to call Westfield my home away from home.

*Matt is a sophomore Criminal Justice and Psychology dual major from Barre, MA.*



Students presented their research on WSU’s community engagement at the Pathways to Excellence Gala.



Honors students and Professor Diana lined up to march in the 350th Anniversary Parade.

## GO GLOBAL

### THE WORLD IS AT YOUR FEET: MAKING THE MOST OF STUDY ABROAD

ANNA SZCZEBAK



(L to R) Honors Program Assistant Director Dr. Hillary Sackett-Taylor and Carly Thibodeau traveled to Costa Rica to research ecotourism. Honors Program students Sarah Balestro and Cameron Swan were among the WSU students who traveled to Bolivia with Kathi Bradford, Director, Alumni Relations.

So. You've had this amazing, life-changing adventure. You've studied abroad. But what do you do now? (Besides rave about it to anyone who will listen.) Well, as I learned at the Welcome Back Reception for returning study abroad students, there are countless ways to extend the study abroad experience back to life in the US. This is important information to know for people who have studied abroad and those who are considering doing so. After you travel across the world and back, the world is at your feet. Here's how you take advantage of it.

#### Option 1: Let it get you a job

97% of students with Study Abroad on their resumes find employment within twelve months of graduating compared to only 49% of students who haven't studied abroad. Studying abroad makes you a more flexible and adaptive person, better prepared to succeed in a multicultural environment. These are all highly sought-after traits. Use them to your advantage! At the Welcome Back Reception, Giselle Frechette, Associate Director and Coordinator of

Experiential Education at the Career Center, spoke about how the Career Center can help you utilize study abroad to its full advantage throughout your career search. They can incorporate it into your resume and cover letter, identify opportunities where it would be an advantage, and prepare you to answer questions about it in an interview.

On the other hand, what if studying abroad changes the plans you had for the future? What if it makes you want to change the direction of your career and your life entirely? The Career Center can help whether you realize this now or while going through a mid-life crisis at fifty years old. The services offered at the Career Center will always be available to you.

#### Option 2: Showcase it

Also at the Welcome Back Reception, Lamis Jarvinen, the Director of the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, talked about how the CURCA celebration held on campus gives students the opportunity to present projects or research they've completed, either in oral or poster form. Is there a

project you did for one of your classes abroad? Have you written something about your experience since you came home? Are you looking to highlight your trip in a professional portfolio? CURCA will provide a medium to showcase these types of projects.

#### Option 3: Help others have the same experience

Whenever I ask people what their favorite part of studying abroad was, they always say that it was the people they encountered and the friends they made. You could have the same impact on the international students currently studying abroad here at WSU. The Office of International Programs employs students to be mentors to WSU's international students. Mentors pick them up from the airport, give them a tour of the school, help them move in, and serve as a connection for them on campus.

#### Option 4: Everything but the kitchen sink

There are countless opportunities available to you once you return from abroad. You could be an intern in the Office of International Programs. (Just like me!). You can join the International and Intercultural Club. You can write articles about your experience for the student newspaper or *The Squirrel Squire*. You can continue to pursue whatever language (that you began learning abroad. The point is, studying abroad isn't just a temporary experience. You've opened an international door, but in doing so you've unlocked an array of opportunities much closer to home. All you have to do is take advantage of them.

*Anna is a junior Business Management and English dual major from North Attleboro, MA.*

#### **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 COURSES IN REVIEW

### FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION STUDENTS DESTIGMATIZE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



Students in Professor Catherine Savini's Honors First-Year Composition course researched and worked to destigmatize mental illness. Projects included CURCA presentations on the suicide rate among police officers, the benefits of bullet journaling, and ADHD. Students hosted a de-stress event in the Dining Commons, participated in Fresh Check Day, organized a team for the Out of the Darkness American Federation for Suicide Prevention walk, and wrote a children's book about depression.

### A MESSAGE TO FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS ON MANAGING STRESS, THE WESTFIELD WAY

BRADLEY HARVEY

Honors students tend to get involved in lots of campus activities and leadership positions, which is a great way to make friends, have fun, and grow, but we also run the risk of getting stressed. I am a member of Campus Activities Board, Hall Council, and the SGA and I also have an on-campus job. At the end of my first semester, I came to realize that I had over committed myself and left no time for relaxing. I was constantly worried about time for my

schoolwork. I realized I needed to learn how to balance my busy schedule with taking care of myself.

Stress is a natural occurrence, but long periods of stress are detrimental to mental and physical health and can cause us to fall behind in our



schoolwork. That's why fun breaks are essential to your wellness. The many activities on campus can lower stress by helping you have fun while forming social connections, and the always-popular visits from therapy dogs on the green are a proven mood lifter. Going for a hike or a run in Stanley Park, working out at the gym, eating and sleeping well, avoiding caffeine, and finding ways to laugh can all reduce stress. When you have concerns, talk to anyone

who is willing to listen whether it be a professor, a friend, or an advisor. And if your concerns persist, the professional staff at the Counseling Center located in Lammers Hall are there to help. Learning how to balance our studies and extra-curricular commitments with some stress-reducing fun is an essential tool for all of us.

*Bradley is a first-year Elementary Education and Liberal Studies dual major from Belmont, MA.*

## HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW

### CONSIDERING AMERICAN LITERATURE FROM NEW PERSPECTIVES

MIA MCDONALD



Mia McDonald (C) and Roman Yusenko (R) take a break from presenting their poster at the spring 2019 CURCA celebration to pose for a photo with Professor Chen (L).

One of the most rewarding elements of being in the Honors Program is the opportunity to challenge oneself and one's expectations. The Honors course Introduction to American Literature with Professor Brian Chen in the spring semester of my first year allowed me to do just that. When he presented us with the mid-term project, he offered options for different ways to communicate our ideas about the literature we

had read, from a traditional literary analysis essay or film comparison to writing a "stream of consciousness" story that reflected a recurring motif from the course texts. The option I chose was the graphic mode, in which I used images to identify a recurring literary motif and wrote a narrative analyzing my graphic creation. Despite not being a particularly artistic person, I was inspired and felt connected to the messages in the text

enough to challenge myself to pursue this creative alternative.

Professor Chen, being very receptive to the ideas and individual thoughts of students, let me even further personalize this topic to fit my ideas. I chose to use my graphic representation to interpret the novel *Housekeeping* by Marilynne Robinson and the recurring motifs of light and darkness in the text. The interesting part about this assignment is how it allowed to me analyze the text from a different, nontraditional point of view through the lens of visual art. In my narrative, not only did I have to address elements of the text, but I also had to address the elements of my personal interpretation to explain the overall challenges of motherhood alluded to in the novel.

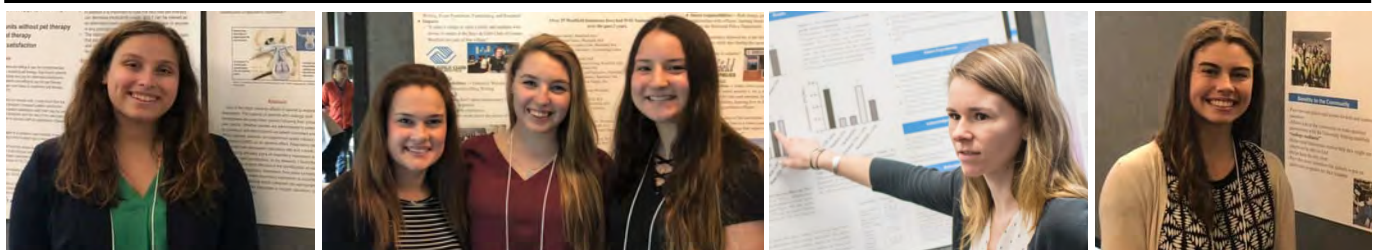
The opportunity to create

this artistic interpretation enabled me to look at the text from a different perspective, and it challenged the expectations of what I thought an Honors course would be like. The Honors approach is not about simply a heavier course load with more difficult readings and more assignments. Instead, it is about challenging and engaging students in different ways to learn more material. It is about forging connections between different academic subjects and looking at the real-world applications of such interpretations. Most importantly, thinking about subjects in new and creative ways is an overall valuable experience that enhances an academic career.

*Mia is a first-year Economics and Mathematics dual major from Westfield, MA.*



Students in Professor Chen's Honors Introduction to American Literature course worked in groups to create posters sharing their analyses of representations of motherhood in various works of American literature, which they presented at the spring 2019 CURCA celebration to an audience of fellow students, faculty, and staff.



(L to R) Rachel Pollan, Anna Szczebak, Danielle Bass, Katelyn Thibault, Tanner Deegan, and Victoria Pike were among the many Honors Program students who presented their work at the May 2019 CURCA celebration.

## HONORS COURSES IN REVIEW



Professor Karen Loeb's Honors Principles of Sociology class trip to New York City included stops at Alexander Hamilton's gravesite at Trinity Church, the National September 11 Memorial Museum, and a fire engine parked outside one of the towers.



As part of the unit on South Asia, students in Dr. Edward Orgill's Honors World Music class attended a concert featuring world-renowned tabla player Zakir Hussain and the Masters of Percussion at the UMass, Amherst, Fine Arts Center.



(L to R) Odette Benes and Luvron Brice presented their research on visual representations of the body in Professor Imo Imeh's Honors Art History Survey Course. Odette's group looked at representations of women in advertisements, video games, and manga. Luvron's group considered portraiture in the age of selfies.

Maddy Scott presented her Honors Contract project on communication practices and young alumni donor engagement.

## ON TO THE NEXT CHAPTER

### BEST WISHES, DR. KANTROWITZ!



Dr. Kantrowitz served as the Grand Marshal for the 2019 Westfield State Commencement .

Professor Ricki Kantrowitz retired in May 2019 after 36 years as a professor of Psychology. In 2007, Professor Kantrowitz was appointed as Chair of the Honors Program, and remained in that role until 2011. During her tenure, the program grew dramatically, from about 60 students to over 200 students. We can thank Dr. Kantrowitz for many of the signature ele-

ments of the Honors Program today. Her legacy includes initiating the Honors Living and Learning Community (which began in Courtney Hall), the Student Honors Advisory Council, Priority Registration for Honors students, and *The Squirrel Squire* newsletter. She also oversaw the Honors Center move from its original site in Parenzo Hall

to the current Honors Center home in Mod Hall. Dr. Kantrowitz remained a steadfast supporter of and mentor to Honors Program students throughout her career at Westfield State.

The Honors Program team and students wish Dr. Ricki Kantrowitz the best in her retirement.

## HONORS STUDENT GRADUATES AND ALUMNI

### 2019 Honors Graduates

#### Jobs

**Jamie Allivato** is a nurse at Baystate Medical Center.

**Sean Bacon** is a project manager at Epic Systems Corporation.

**Christian Biseinere** is a junior software developer at LLumin.

**Darren Boykin** is a TSA agent at Logan Airport.

**Marlayna Bucu** is a medical receptionist at Convenient MD Urgent Care.

**Nicholas Cox** is an assistant paralegal at Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen and Loewy, LLP in Boston.

**Laura Daggett** is a long-term substitute 3rd grade inclusion teacher.

**Megan Gentile** is owner and operator of Techniq dba Technical Support Service and manager at Heritage Books.

**Kayla Ovelheiro** works at Behavior Services of Western Massachusetts and Behavioral Health Network.

**Rachel Pollan** is a nurse in residence in the ICU of Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, NH.

**Madeleine Scott** is Assistant Director of Alumni engagement and Giving at Williston Northampton School.

**Alissa Smith** is a residential caseworker at Key Program.

**Cameron Swan** is working at TJX Companies.

#### Graduate School Plans

**Mary Curtis** has been accepted to the Masters in Guidance Counseling Program at Fitchburg State University.

**Carolyn Dufraine** (University Honors Scholar/Music '18) will be pursuing a Masters in Music at UMass, Amherst.

**David Kennedy** (Commonwealth Honors Scholar/English

'18) has been accepted into the MFA program in Creative Writing at the University of Nevada, Reno, with a teaching assistantship and a stipend!

**Sarah Morgan** will be pursuing a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Education Leadership at Southern New Hampshire University

**Rachel Nicholson** is pursuing a Masters in Library and Information Sciences with a concentration in School Library Teaching at Simmons University.

**Kayla Ovelheiro** is pursuing a Masters degree in Mental Health Counseling at Westfield State University.

**Jarrod Petersen** will be pursuing a PhD in the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department at Brown University and will serve as a Teaching Assistant there.

**Amber Pettell** (Commonwealth Honors Scholar/Communication '18) is pursuing a Master of Arts in Mass Communication specializing in Public Interest Communication at the University of Florida.

**Sara Rudd** will be pursuing a Masters of Teaching Mathematics at Mount Holyoke College.

**Alissa Smith** will be pursuing a Masters in Forensic Mental Health Counseling at Westfield State University.

**Shaunna Souve** will be pursuing a J.D. at Western New England School of Law.

**Meghan Tessitore** will be pursuing a J.D. at Western New England School of Law.

**Lauren Stornelli** will be pursuing a PhD in Clinical Psychology at Palo Alto University.

**SEND US YOUR NEWS!**

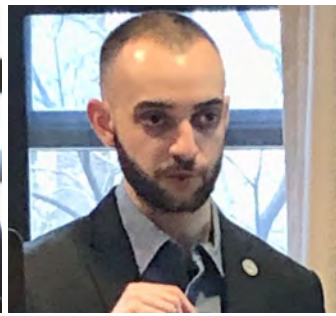
### SPRING 2019 SENIOR HONORS PROJECT PRESENTATIONS



CHRISTIAN BISEINERE



NICHOLAS COX



MARCUS DIBACCO



EMILY HADLEY



SHAUNA LEGSDIN



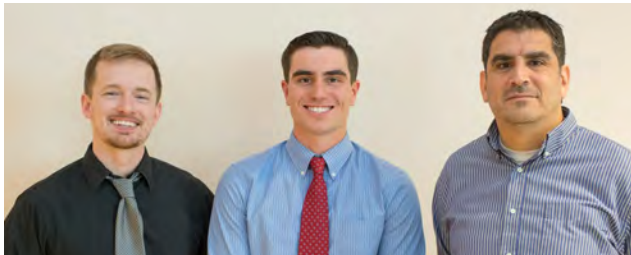
MEAGAN LLEWELLYN



LAUREN STORNELLI



CAMERON SWAN



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. Congratulations to Honors students who presented their projects in spring 2019, and thank you to their committee members, library liaisons, and the Reading and Writing Center consultants for supporting their work. Celebratory photos with committee members are part of the tradition. For Senior Honors Project titles, see p. 14.

## COMMONWEALTH HONORS SCHOLARS



**Shauna Legsdin:** Communication and Spanish, *The Influence of US Stereotypes in Spain and Mexico on International Relations*, Dr. Makoto Saito.

**Ashley Linnehan:** English, *Promoting Linguistic and Dialectal Diversity in Westfield State University's Reading and Writing Center*, Dr. Catherine Savini.

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.



**Sean Bacon:** Psychology, *Mental Resilience, Discrimination and Social Support*, Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce.

**Christian Biseinere:** Computer Science, *Exploring Reinforcement Learning Algorithms in a Multi-Agent Snake Environment*, Dr. Steve Bou Ghosn.

**Nicholas Cox:** Psychology and Spanish, *The Relationship between Social Media Use and Suicidal Ideation*, Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce.

**Amanda D'Aprix:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies, *Books, Bullying, and Bibliotherapy: How the Bibliotherapy Method Applies to Children's Literature about Bullying*, Dr. Megan Kennedy.

**Marcus DiBacco:** Criminal Justice and Political Science, *A Law and an Industry:*

*How the Federal Government and Big Pharma Are Managing the Opioid Epidemic*, Dr. George Michael.

**Steven Ferrara:** Special Education and Liberal Studies, *Strategies Used by Successful College Students with Learning Disabilities*, Dr. Sandra Berkowitz.

**Emily Hadley:** Environmental Science, *Recession of Glaciers in the Sierra Nevada de Mérida (Venezuela) over the Last Four Decades*, Dr. Carsten Braun.

**Kaitlyn Hester:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies, *Critical Literacy in the Elementary School Classroom*, Dr. Stephanie Grimaldi.

**Thomas Howard:** History and Political Science, *Sufism: Medieval and Modern*, Dr. Mark Abate.

**David Kennedy:** English, *The Witch and the Northman*, Dr. Michael Filas.

**Meagan Llewellyn:** Biology, *Modeling a Ketogenic Diet Using Cell Culture: The Effects of Ketone Body Beta-hydroxybutyrate on Neuronal Cells*, Dr. Robin White.

**Christine Luongo:** English, *Destabilizing Dichotomies: Bisexuality in Young Adult Literature*, Dr. Sophia Sarigianides.

**Sarah Morgan:** History, *Race and American Public Education*, Dr. Nicholas Aieta.

**Kathleen Morris:** English, *Rethinking the Way We Teach: Moving from Standards-Based to Student-Based Education*, Dr. Paige Hermansen.

**Jarrod Petersen:** Biology, *An Anatomical and Mechanical Investigation of the Walking Appendages in the Striped Searobin, Prionotus evolans*, Dr. Jason Ramsay.

**Lauren Stornelli:** Psychology and Spanish, *Errors and Biases in Bystander Identification of Perpetrators*, Dr. Joseph Camilleri.

**Cameron Swan:** Psychology, *Decision Making in Business Management*, Dr. T. Alex Daniel.



Honors students, pictured on this page with President Ramon S. Torrecilha, are among the nineteen 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 Award 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).

- Jamie Allivato:** Nursing
- Ashley Bieg:** Communication
- Darren Boykin:** Criminal Justice and Psychology
- Marlayna Buco:** Biology
- Aaron Clancy:** Business Management
- Rachel Conklin:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies
- Mary Curtis:** History
- Laura Daggett:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies
- Kaitlyn Dumas:** Biology
- Megan Gentile:** Computer Information Systems
- Natalie Guzman-Escalera:** Nursing
- Lauren Hartmann:** Mathematics
- Jessica Hogan:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies

- Stephanie Mathieu:** Criminal Justice
- Matthew Matos:** Environmental Science
- Stephenie McSweeney:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies
- Hailey Peich:** Social Work and Psychology
- Rachel Nicholson:** History
- Kayla Ovelheiro:** Psychology
- Rachel Pollan:** Nursing and Spanish
- Elizabeth Potter:** English
- Charlotte Ross:** Music
- Sara Rudd:** Elementary Education and Liberal Studies
- Madeleine Scott:** Communication
- Alissa Smith:** Criminal Justice and Psychology
- Casey Smith:** Criminal Justice
- Shaunna Souve:** Criminal Justice and Psychology
- Meghan Tessitore:** Criminal Justice and Sociology
- Rebekah Whittier:** Environmental Science

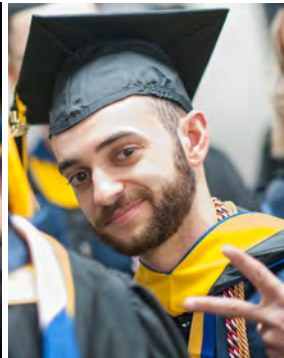
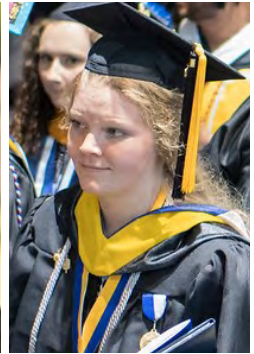
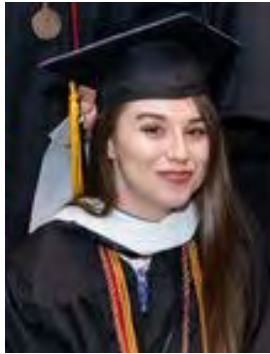
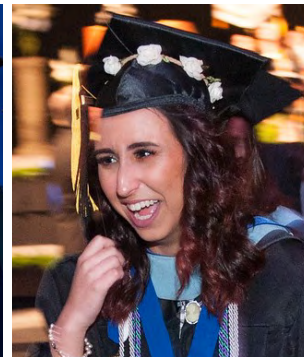


Honors students, pictured on this page with President Ramon S. Torrecilha, are among the twenty-nine Honors students who were recognized as University Honors Scholars at this year's Academic Excellence Awards Ceremony in April. Many of these students also received departmental recognition at the Academic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

## CONGRATULATIONS, 2019 HONORS PROGRAM GRADUATES!



Congratulations to Class of 2019 Valedictorian Megan Gentile, University Honors Scholar and Computer Information Science major (L), and Salutatorian Meghan Tessitore, University Honors Scholar and Criminal Justice/Sociology dual major (R). President Ramon S. Torrecilha recognized their achievements at the May 2019 Westfield State University Commencement Ceremony.



19 Honors students were recognized as Commonwealth Honors Scholars and 29 Honors students were recognized as University Honors Scholars at the commencement ceremony at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield, MA. The pictures above show some of the students' emotions on this milestone. We at the Honors Program wish them the best and look forward to hearing news about their future accomplishments!