



HONORS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

HONORS STUDENTS SERVE THE COMMUNITY

From collecting non-perishable food and hygiene items to stream cleanups, Dr. Martin's Stewardship and Civic Engagement students are scheduled to complete over 1500 hours of service for twelve local non-profit partners this semester. The Fall 2025 non-profit partners include The Wardrobe, Westside Community Center, Habitat for Humanity of Chester County, ACTNow, Chester Ridley Crum Watersheds, Arts Holding Hands and Hearts, A Child's Light, North Star of Chester County, Safe Harbor of Chester County, the West Chester Food Cupboard, Home of the Sparrow, and Stanley's Dream. Students have participated in fundraising events, strategic planning, and volunteer experiences. On December 1st and 3rd, students had the opportunity to present to local funders, including members of the Chester County Community Foundation. Students in the class also had the opportunity to sit on the Benjamin Franklin Fund Grants Committee and select a grant recipient for a piece of Ben's original willed



Photos: Gerardina Martin

funds. The course focuses on philanthropic traditions and social entrepreneurship, while teaching practical proposal and presentation skills. Students are also invited to the Chester County Community Foundation's Annual Meeting and invited back in February to present the winner of the Ben Franklin Fund. Thanks to the students for all you do!

WCU'S UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL: RAMIFICATIONS



Dr. Wooten is assisting Dr. Megan Corbin in recruiting for Ramifications. Ramifications is West Chester University's student-run, peer-reviewed, open-access journal showcasing undergraduate research and creative work from all majors. Published each semester, it highlights the depth and range of student scholarship.

The journal features interdisciplinary work (research papers, creative projects with reflection) all authored by WCU undergraduates.

Submissions must follow academic formatting guidelines and include a faculty recommendation as well as IRB/IACUC approval when relevant. Ramifications gives undergraduates real publication experience, encourages cross-disciplinary dialogue, and provides open access to student research for the campus community and beyond.

For students with strong class projects or independent research, the journal offers a valuable opportunity to share their work publicly and contribute to academic conversations that matter. We encourage our Honors Students to submit regularly!

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STUDENT INITIATIVES

STUDENT PUBLICATION

Over the past year, Jayden Hartlaub had the opportunity to create her own psychology research project under the mentorship of Dr. Erin Hill, through a grant from the College of Science and Mathematics. Over the summer, Jayden's manuscript was published by the International Journal of Eating Disorders.



<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/eat.24490>

HONORS STUDENTS REPRESENT WCU AT THE INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE IN CHICAGO

Caitlyn Mullaney and Gabi Steffy had the opportunity to attend the Interfaith Leadership Institute in Chicago this summer. ILI is an immersive program designed to help young leaders build the skills needed to foster understanding, cooperation, and dialogue across diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.

During the multi-day institute, participants engaged in workshops, discussions, and hands-on activities focused on interfaith cooperation and community engagement. Our students explored how personal values and beliefs shape leadership, learned strategies for creating inclusive spaces, and connected with peers from across the region who share a passion for building bridges between communities.

Both attendees returned inspired and energized by the experience. They plan to bring what they learned back to our school through upcoming initiatives that promote respectful dialogue and celebrate the rich diversity within our community through their involvement in The Leadership and the Good Life Project directed by Associate Professor of Leadership Studies Dr. Zachary Wooten.

We are proud of their commitment to leadership rooted in empathy, collaboration, and understanding. Their participation at the Interfaith Leadership Institute reflects our ongoing dedication to empowering students to create positive change.



STUDENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES

CONGRATULATIONS!

Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI) 2025 Recipients

Emilyn Bedell
Composition and Music Theory

Kate Frederick
Earth and Space Sciences

Layla King
English B.S. Education

Ephrasinia Shimelis
Biology

Megan St Jean
Chemistry

KC Thoman
Secondary Education

Student Research and Creative Activity (SRCA) 2025 Award Winners

Kate Frederick
Earth and Space Sciences

Alexandra Gianaris
Biology

Jayden Hartlaub
Psychology

Student Undergraduate Research Foundations (SURF) Spring 2026 Recipients

Caitlin Biddle
School of Music

Maxwell Hutchinson
College of Sciences & Mathematics

Layla King
College of Education & Social Work

Mikaila Kornbau
College of Sciences & Mathematics

Levi Lewis
College of Business & Public Management

Elizabeth Saboe
College of Business & Public Management

Honors College Students highlighted, full list of students available: [Student Research](#)

SURI SPOTLIGHT

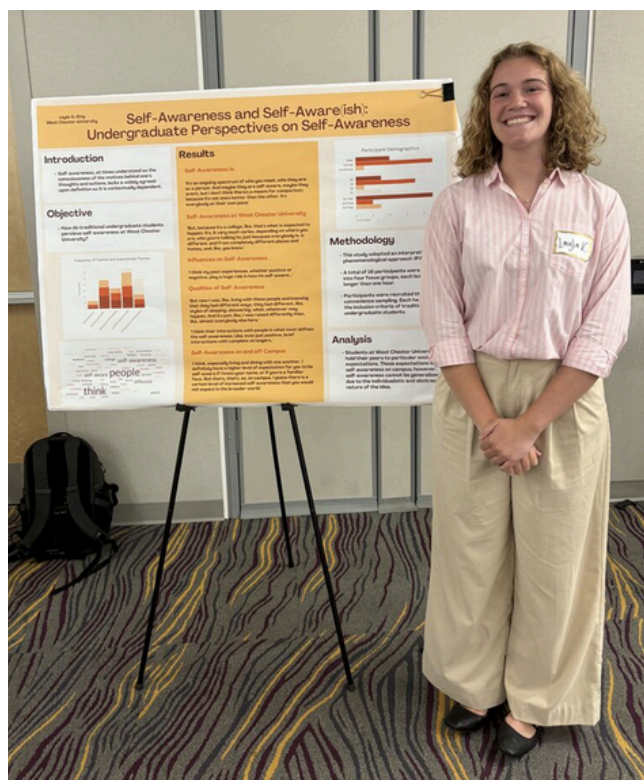


Photo: Zachary Wooten

During the five-week journey with the West Chester University Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI), rising sophomore Layla King used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore traditional undergraduate students' perceptions of self-awareness on campus at WCU. Under the guidance of Honors Professor Dr. Zachary Wooten, Layla helped to lead focus groups, engaged in extensive qualitative data analysis, and challenged her own beliefs through the lens of her peers' experiences. Layla developed an interest in this topic after taking HON 100: Self-Awareness and Development. Layla said, "I've learned so much about not only the qualitative process, but also myself as a learner and researcher."

SUMMER SYMPOSIUM 2025

The Honors College hosted ninety-two first-year Foundation Pathway and six Bridge Pathway students at the Honors College Summer Symposium August 19–21, 2025. Welcome to all our new students!



PEER MENTORSHIP

In partnership with the Peer Mentorship FYE and the Learning Assistance and Resource Center, the Peer Leadership Program within the Honors College has the honor of certifying peer mentors with the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) International Peer Educator Training Program Certification (IPTPC) for Level 1 and Level 2. Incoming students learning how to navigate the University look towards upper-level students to help them find classrooms, assist them with study skills, and find resources to help with their many needs. The Peer Leadership Program was developed to provide mentors with training and giving them the resources and skills they need to help be a positive role model and mentor. The Peer Leadership Program would like to welcome the new College Reading and Learning Association Level I Certified Peer Mentors for Fall 2025. The 39 newly certified mentors include:

Tyler Borichewski
 Pearl Budner
 Erin Butler
 Adriana Carlino
 Cass Cooper
 Avery Cronin
 Emily Doyle
 Megan Evans
 Aniya Fowler
 Jordyn Grant

Alicia Greene
 Anthony Hilton
 Addison Hocker
 Anna Jablovkov
 Tymir Jones
 Emily Lescinski
 Sophia Loomis
 Quinn McMullen
 Kira McQuiston
 Amirah Morris

Caitlyn Mullaney
 Iris O'Daniels
 Margaret Oparaocha
 Gianna Parrish
 Maura Pierlott
 Alexis Rambo
 Aleia Reeser
 Caeden Reuter
 Nick Romaniello
 Caroline Rudderow

Gianna Russell
 Nathan Schallack
 Kelsie Searfass
 Elle Stephenson
 Dalayna Tarity
 Madisen Truglio
 Isabella Trujillo
 Jasmine Vega
 Nasha Yisrael

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

HONORS STUDENTS EXPLORE SUSTAINABILITY, CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE, AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN JAPAN BY TIM JUSSAUME

In May 2025, Honors College students traveled across Japan for an immersive travel experience exploring overtourism, environmental sustainability, and the intersection of technology and contemplative practice. The program began in Kyoto, where students met with the Kyoto City Tourism Association to learn how one of the world's most visited cities is working to preserve cultural heritage while advancing sustainable tourism strategies. Students also toured iconic sites including the famous Kinkaku-ji (Golden Temple), Arashiyama's bamboo forest, and Fushimi Inari-taisha, the Shinto shrine famous for its



"ten thousand torii gates," which form a winding pathway of gorgeous red gates up the mountainside. An ikebana workshop introduced students to the philosophy and aesthetics of traditional Japanese flower arranging.



From Kyoto, the group made a day-long journey to Hiroshima, visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Peace Park. This experience held special significance for many students who, just months earlier, had attended the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony honoring Nihon Hidankyo, the association of atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Returning to Hiroshima deepened their understanding of the hibakusha's stories, global nuclear policy, and the legacy of peacebuilding connected to the 2024 laureates.

The group also visited Nara, where students encountered the city's sacred deer and explored the famous Buddhist temples, Todai-ji and Horyu-ji. Time in Osaka's frenetic Dotonbori district invited reflection on the relationship between food culture, entertainment, and urban development.

In Tokyo, students participated in academic roundtables at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies with international scholars examining climate policy, biodiversity, and sustainable development. They also explored the intersection of technology and society through engagements with SoftBank Robotics. Tokyo served as the setting for several contemplative cultural experiences including a traditional tea ceremony, a hands-on kintsugi workshop, and an evening sushi-making class. Additional visits to Meiji Shrine, Harajuku, Shibuya Crossing, Senso-ji, and Akihabara offered firsthand perspectives on how tradition and technology coexist in Japan's largest metropolis.



On the final day, students carried out individualized plans designed as part of the travel experience. Some visited Tokyo Disney, others traveled to Kamakura and Enoshima for contemplative coastal and temple exploration, and several toured Tokyo's museums including the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation.

Students returned with a deeper understanding of how Japanese communities navigate global challenges, how tradition and technology interact, and how mindful engagement can shape more thoughtful approaches to travel, learning, and global citizenship.

The Honors College is excited to continue offering transformative global and experiential learning opportunities. We encourage students to consider joining future travel experiences, including our Spring 2026 journey to the National Parks of the American Southwest, where we will explore environmental ethics, public lands, and the unique landscapes that define this region.



Photos: Tim Jussaume and Gerardina Martin

FACULTY UPDATE



DR. WOOTEN TAKES THE “GOOD LIFE” PEDAGOGY TO DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND FACULTY FROM AROUND THE WORLD

This past summer, Dr. Zachary Wooten had the incredible opportunity to travel to Yale University where he served as a project team leader and pedagogical facilitator for professorial and doctoral fellows.

Dr. Wooten wrote, "It was a joy to connect with people from around the world and to share the 'Life Worth Living' pedagogical framework that I use at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. I'm grateful to be part of a global community committed to cultivating learning experiences that honor the depth and dignity of our shared humanity."

"Dr. Wooten was joined by a WCU doctoral student competitively selected from an extensive pool of applicants to be one of the trainees at the experience."

PUBLICATIONS

We're proud to share that "The Leadership of Interfaith Hospital Chaplains During the COVID-19 Pandemic," co-authored by Associate Professor of Leadership Studies, Dr. Zachary C. Wooten and Honors College alumna Jocelyn Brown, has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*. This important work highlights the vital role of spiritual care leadership in times of crisis and reflects the meaningful contributions of our faculty, students, and alumni to interdisciplinary leadership scholarship. The article features research conducted through a grant from Interfaith America (formerly Interfaith Youth Core). Congratulations, Dr. Wooten and Jocelyn!

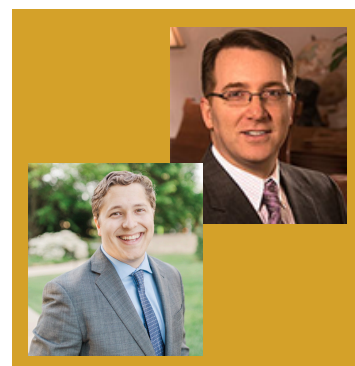


Dr. Wooten and Ms. Brown authored a second article focused on chaplains' perception of leadership identity: *The Perception of Leader Identity: The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Interfaith Hospital Chaplains*. It was accepted for publication and is forthcoming in the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Leadership Studies*, extending the impact of the study funded by Interfaith America.

FACULTY UPDATE

LEADERSHIP AND THE GOOD LIFE CONFERENCE 2025

This summer, West Chester University became a hub of global conversation and collaboration when Associate Professor of Leadership Studies Dr. Zachary Wooten and former Honors College Assistant Director Dr. Matt Pierlott welcomed scholars from around the world to campus for a special event. As part of the ongoing Leadership & The Good Life Project, the duo and Grad Assistant Victoria Rodway organized a one-day conference dedicated to exploring what it means to lead well—and to live well.



The conference brought together faculty from a wide range of disciplines and institutions, including guests who traveled all the way from the United Kingdom to join the dialogue. Throughout the day, attendees engaged in lively discussions, interactive sessions, and thought-provoking presentations that examined leadership not just as a set of skills, but as a path toward building meaningful, flourishing lives and communities.

Participants explored questions such as:

- What does “the good life” look like in today’s world?
- How can leaders cultivate well-being—for themselves and those they serve?
- What role do ethics, empathy, and purpose play in shaping effective leadership?

Keynote Speaker Angela Gorrell added much to the day as well. As the Leadership & The Good Life Project continues to grow at WCU, this summer’s gathering marks an exciting step forward in connecting global perspectives with local learning.

RECAP: [Leadership and the Good Life Conference Video](#)

ASSOCIATION OF LEADERSHIP EDUCATORS



Prof. Spencer Camacho and Dr. Zachary Wooten, along with Honors College alumna Jocelyn Brown, successfully obtained a mini-grant (\$1,500.00) from the Association of Leadership Educators to implement a program focused on global leadership.

The four-part “Living and Leading Globally” series will engage 24 Honors College students in conversations with internationally based alumni to explore equitable impactful global leadership.

Through virtual sessions and a final mentoring workshop students will develop personal global leadership roadmaps and learn how to lead across cultures and systems. The program emphasizes inclusive access to global learning and offers top participants additional development tools and community-building resources.

FACULTY UPDATE

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Professor Spencer Camacho contributed research in various forms within the field of leadership studies over the past five months. Camacho conducted research with leadership colleagues in two projects presented at the Association of Leadership Educators (ALE) 2025 Conference. In addition to his work with Dr. Daniel Jenkins, PhD Candidate Bram Stone, and Dr. Krista Soria on the poster presentation: Exploring Instructional and Assessment Strategies in Leadership Education, his research paper with Bram Stone and Dr. Dami Alegbeleye titled Illuminating the Professoriate: Preparing Today's Doctoral Students to be Tomorrow's Leadership Educators won the Outstanding Practice Paper Award. Camacho also presented Bridging the Gap: Preparing Leadership Doctoral Students for Teaching Roles in Academia at the 27th International Leadership Association (ILA) Global Conference.



A CAPPELLA FALL 2025 PRESENTATION TOUR



Photo: Jordy Parnell

Professor Camacho has traveled to various parts of the country this fall semester presenting for and masterclassing vocal groups in the a cappella community. Camacho presented Follow their Lead: Choral Direction Guided by Ensemble Needs to Temple University's American Choral Directors Association collegiate chapter. He also traveled to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina to be the keynote speaker for the Contemporary A Cappella Society's SoJam Festival. He presented an interactive composition session titled The Lego Method: Building Blocks of Vocal Texture and closed with a session integrating Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership for a group dynamic session titled Every Voice Leads: The Five Practices in Harmony. The first weekend of December, Camacho travels to Dallas, Texas to present Arrangement ArchiTEXTURE: Building A Cappella Scores at the AcaTex Festival, a competition and educational event for 26 southern a cappella groups. Camacho will be teaching alongside contemporary a cappella pioneers such as Deke Sharon (music director and arranger of the Pitch Perfect franchise) and Rob Dietz (vocal drummer for Glee).

MEET THE HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Carly Lare currently works with the Honors College as a Graduate Assistant, focused on supporting alumni relations and Leadership and the Good Life, while pursuing her Masters of Business Administration. As part of Carly's role as a Graduate Assistant, Carly collaborates with fellow alumni on meaningful outreach, compiles multimedia resources for the Good Life Hub, and assists in long-term planning for Leadership and the Good Life.

In 2022, Carly graduated from the West Chester Honors College with a degree in Ecology and Conservation Biology, along with minors in Communications Studies and Civic and Professional Leadership. Outside of West Chester, Carly is the Executive Director of CRC Watersheds Association.



Bella Nimmerichter is an Honors Graduate Assistant who works on Honors College assessment with Dr. Martin. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in public administration. She is a true asset to the Honors College and works behind the scenes to help us provide students with accurate information to succeed in their majors. She has worked diligently to create new advising sheets for each major, which are being updated on the Honors College website. In addition, she helps with Honors College events such as backyard parties, graduation, ODK inductions, and more. You might see her sitting in the Honors Conference Room on Monday through Wednesday, as well as at our many events – please stop in and say hi! Thank you, Bella, for all your hard work and dedication!!

Alyssa Weaver is a graduate assistant this year with the Honors College, working with Dr. Jussaume. They have been building new university resources to support students pursuing competitive graduate fellowships, helping to strengthen pathways for students across campus. She also supports the Honors College recruitment process, representing the program at local high schools, and assisting in coordinating the interview process for prospective students. Alyssa is currently pursuing her Master's in Communication and will graduate in December 2026.



HONORS COLLEGE ALUMNI CHAPTER UPDATE

SYMPOSIUM PANEL

In August, the Honors College was thrilled to invite five of our wonderful alumni to join us for a panel at our 2025 Summer Symposium. The alumni panelists shared valuable insights about their experiences at West Chester and helped welcome the Honors College Class of 2029! A huge thank you to Carly Lare, Brooke Hillman, Elise Lerario, Frank Hoskings, and Josh Dandridge for spending the afternoon with us!



LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

The Honors College is proud to reflect on our truly remarkable network of alumni. To date, more than 1000 students have graduated from the Honors College Pathways and are now creating real change in their communities. We are excited to share that our alumni are looking to reorganize our robust network, to reconnect meaningful relationships and support the continued evolution of the Honors program. The Alumni Board is pleased to announce a new opportunity for alumni to serve as "Alumni Ambassadors," a position on a steering committee of graduates who will help guide the direction of WCU Honors College Alumni efforts.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Calling all alumni! The Alumni Board would like to receive your input on the direction of the Honors College Alumni Chapter, your updated contact information, and to hear about where you are now! If you are an alum, please take a few minutes to fill out the following survey: [Alumni Survey Form](#)

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Alumni Chapter is seeking nominations for this year's Alumni Awards, which will be presented at commencement in May. Do you know an Honors College graduate doing exceptional work? Submit a nomination today! [Alumni Award Nomination Form](#)

OMICRON DELTA KAPPA INDUCTION CEREMONY

Omicron Delta Kappa, the National Leadership Honor Society, was founded on December 3, 1914 at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, by fifteen student and faculty leaders. The Society recognizes and encourages superior scholarship, leadership and exemplary character. West Chester University is honored to have been selected for a Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa.

Emphasis is placed on the development of the whole person as a member of the College community and as a contributor to a better society. Omicron Delta Kappa promotes the idea that leadership of exceptional quality and versatility in college should be recognized, that representatives in all phases of college life should cooperate in a worthwhile endeavor, and that outstanding students, faculty, and administrators should meet on a basis of mutual interest.

West Chester University's Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa inducted a new class of students Wednesday, November 5, 2025. Congratulations and welcome to our newest members!

Emily Abdill
Nicole Anandan
Brooke Banas
Mya Bishop
William Burke
Rhianna Colelli
Natalie Crossney
Jake Faller
Martin Follmer
Rachel Haupt
Paige Ickes



Hannah Mathur
Abigail Mentonis
Emma Neill
Kylie Orseno
Kailey Pacifico
Gabriella Sasso
Alison Sharpe
Julia Shulby
John Stanziani
Rebecca Stratton
Lukas Williamson

2025 Honorary Member: Dr. Stevie Grassetti

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Galee Greisler Vice President: Olivia Heim Secretary: Jayden Hartlaub Treasurer: Danielle Cabibbo



Photo: Michelle Wills

BRAIN BOWL

The West Chester Honors College proudly hosted the 2nd Annual Brain Bowl in October, welcoming high school students from across the region for a fun, fast-paced day of academic competition. Teams faced off by answering questions from across a wide range of subjects, including history, science, literature, arts, and current events. Visiting teams also enjoyed lunch and a tour of West Chester's campus as part of their day with us. The Brain Bowl continues to grow as one of the Honors College's signature events, bringing together curious students and celebrating academic excellence.



Participating teams:

- Great Valley High School (winner)
 - Solanco High School
 - Cedar Crest High School
 - Renaissance Academy
 - Daniel Boone High School
- Hatboro-Horsham High School

DECEMBER MEDALLION CEREMONY

The Honors College has a total of 14 students graduating this fall who were recognized at the Medallion Ceremony on Thursday, December 4, 2025.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE DECEMBER 2025 HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATES!

Ivana Agova
Aleja Barrera-Cruz
Alexis Caltabiano
Emily Donald
Lindsay Evans
Liliana Goodrich
Markis Haynes

Seminar Pathway
Foundation Pathway
Foundation Pathway
Seminar Pathway
Foundation Pathway
Foundation Pathway
Seminar Pathway

Bethany Ketterer
Makenna Marr
Kathryn McLaughlin
Elizabeth Nelson
Ellie Perrin
Sarah Poissant
Isabella Trujillo

Seminar Pathway
Foundation Pathway
Seminar Pathway
Bridge Pathway
Foundation Pathway
Seminar Pathway
Seminar Pathway

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

Edited by Michelle Wills



*Voted "Best Honors Newsletter" by the
Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC)!*



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