



HONORS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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STEWARDSHIP & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

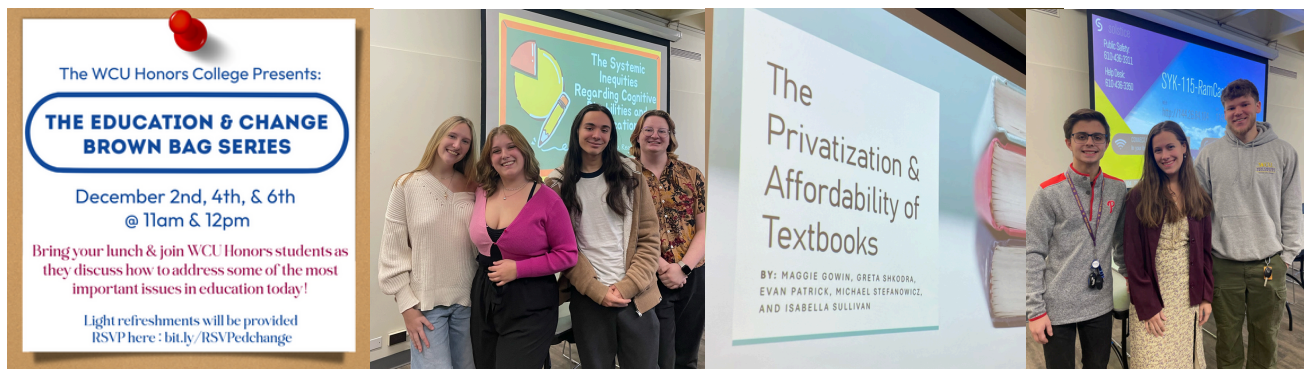
In Fall 2024, Dr. Gerardina Martin's HON 311-Stewardship and Civic Engagement Class worked with 9 non-profit partners to complete community engagement activities, such as grant proposal writing, service hours, and visits from Foundation experts who explained the concepts of Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy. Students complete over 1200 hours of service to the community, and they presented to funders and their non-profit partners on December 2nd and 4th. The non-profit partners included Habitat for Humanity, A Child's Light, The Wardrobe, North Star of Chester County, Safe Harbor of Chester County, The Westside Community Center, Community Warehouse Project, Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds, and Arts Holding Hands and Hearts.



EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS & SOCIAL INFLUENCE



Students in Dr. Dana Morrison's HON 312-Educational Systems & Social Influence, presented Action Research Proposals on important issues in the field of education. Groups tackled a variety of topics including student mental health, disability accommodations, textbook bias, student debt, and more! A key part of their proposals was developing a plan for making change on these issues.



FACULTY UPDATES

SOJAM A CAPPELLA FESTIVAL:

Professor Spencer Camacho presented two interactive leadership sessions at the Contemporary A Cappella Society's (CASA) 2024 SoJam A Cappella Festival held at Duke University in early November 2024. High school and collegiate groups from across the east coast explored followership empowerment in rehearsal contexts during his sessions.



Photo: Zac Baccaro



Photo: Bram Stone

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION (ILA) 26TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

In mid-November, Professor Camacho also presented two sessions at the 26th Annual International Leadership Association (ILA) Conference in Chicago. His first session was a pecha kucha style presentation exploring a cappella as a medium for leadership development and his section session was a workshop exploring the expansion of gender notions within contemporary leadership contexts.

EXCITING NEWS!

Over Fall Break, Professor Camacho proposed to his now fiancée, Zac, in the islands of Greece. Before you ask him plans about the wedding, Professor Camacho has passed the baton to Zac as he is an event director. They plan to marry in 2026 AFTER Professor's Camacho's doctoral dissertation is complete...

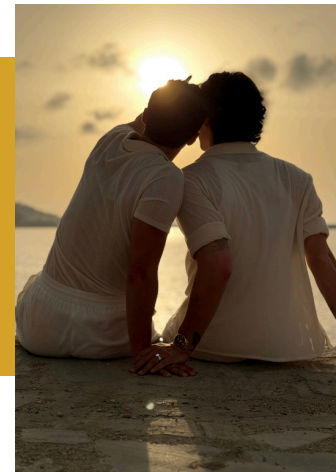


Photo: Spencer Camacho

BRAIN BOWL 2024

On October 24, 2024, Dr. Timothy Jussaume, Director of the Honors College hosted the 1st Annual High School Brain Bowl! Four local high schools joined us for a day of academic competition that included a campus tour and a free lunch at the SECC Dining Hall. We're grateful to faculty Dr. Dana Morrison, Dr. Peter Loedel, and Dr. Naomie Nyanungo for assisting us as judges and scorekeepers, as well as a number of our Honors students. We will be hosting a Brain Bowl for Honors College students this spring and are hoping to feature questions from our faculty.



ACADEMY OF RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

Associate Professor of Leadership Studies Dr. Zachary Wooten and Honors College Alumna Jocelyn Brown have been accepted to present at the Academy of Religious Leadership in Spring 2025. They'll be presenting research entitled, "¡Sí Se Puede! Utilizing Organizational Religious Leadership to Create Social Change in Migrant Communities."



FIFTH ANNUAL DR. CLIFFORD E. DEBAPTISTE FREDERICK DOUGLASS INSTITUTE LECTURE

On Thursday, October 10, Dr. Zachary C. Wooten, Associate Professor of Leadership Studies in the Honors College at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, delivered the interfaith invocation at the Fifth Annual Dr. Clifford E. DeBaptiste Frederick Douglass Institute Lecture. The event, held at 3 p.m., brought together students, faculty, and community members to reflect on themes of justice, equality, and empowerment inspired by the legacy of Frederick Douglass. The lecture series, named in honor of Dr. DeBaptiste, aims to inspire and engage attendees in discussions surrounding the enduring impact of Douglass's work.

YALE UNIVERSITY'S LIFE WORTH LIVING FORUM

Dr. Zachary Wooten, Associate Professor of Leadership Studies in the Honors College, was invited to present at Yale University's Life Worth Living Teaching Forum with his presentation titled "Leadership Education and the Good Life."

The event brought together faculty from around the world interested in the intersection of leadership, ethics, and meaning-making. In his presentation, Dr. Wooten articulated how effective leadership extends beyond traditional metrics of success, advocating for a model that prioritizes the well-being of individuals and communities.

The Life Worth Living Teaching Forum aims to foster dialogue around visions of human flourishing within higher education, making Dr. Wooten's contribution particularly timely and relevant.

Dr. Wooten continues to serve on the project planning team for the Life Worth Living Network at Yale's Center for Faith and Culture. Along with Dr. Matt Pierlott in the Department of Philosophy at WCU, Dr. Wooten leads WCU's Leadership Hub of the Life Worth Living Network. The hub will host a conference at WCU in the Summer of 2025. Learn more at www.wcupa.edu/leadershiphub.

CELEBRATING COLLABORATIVE SCHOLARSHIP: HONORS FACULTY-STUDENT TEAM PUBLISHES ON RABBI REGINA JONAS

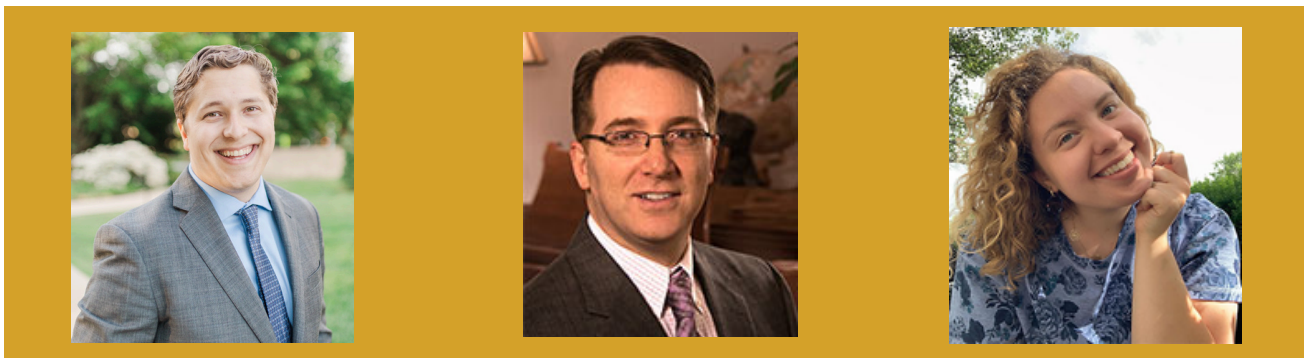
We are thrilled to announce the publication of a significant article co-authored by Honors faculty members Zachary C. Wooten, Ph.D., Matthew Pierlott, Ph.D., and Honors alum Elizabeth Gittleson. Their article, "Regina Jonas: A Life of Aspiration and Inspiration," was published in the *Journal of Leadership Education* in August 2024.

This collaborative work emerged from Dr. Wooten's leadership education lab and his commitment to interfaith leadership initiatives. The article emphasizes the vital role of leadership educators in uncovering stories of remarkable individuals who have been overlooked throughout history. The authors focus on Rabbi Regina Jonas, the first woman ordained as a Rabbi, whose pioneering journey serves as an inspiration for current and future leaders.

In the article, they wrote, "Leadership educators have the responsibility to help students hear the stories of those who may otherwise be forgotten. There is great value to unearthing the stories of those who have been cast aside due to neglect or malice, both historically and in contemporary society. Given the interdisciplinary nature of leadership education, we benefit from a historical lens which helps us to understand who we are and where we come from."

To read the full article, please follow this link: [Regina Jonas: A Life of Aspiration and Inspiration](#).

Congratulations to Dr. Wooten, Dr. Pierlott, and Elizabeth Gittleson!



WABASH CENTER JOURNAL ON TEACHING (JOT) WRITING COLLOQUY

Dr. Zachary Wooten was invited to participate in the Wabash Center Journal on Teaching (JoT) Writing Colloquy in January 2025. The Wabash Center's Journal on Teaching (JoT) is an annual, multimodal academic periodical with a collaborative peer-review process. This collaborative peer-review process includes the JoT Writing Colloquy and is intended to strengthen writers and writing about teaching and the teaching life. The writing colloquy will be a combination of plenary sessions, small group interactions, individual instruction, and workshopping. The colloquy will be led by acclaimed authors with the theme for the colloquy and subsequent issue of JoT being "Spirit." Dr. Wooten and other scholars will explore the profound and varied interpretations of spirituality as they intersect with teaching and the educational experience.

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 Sunday, November 10, 2024. Congratulations and welcome to our newest members!

Danielle Cabibbo
Connor Dapp
Steven Eckroth
Renee Gatto
Galee Greisler
Jayden Hartlaub
Olivia Heim
Olivia Karczewski
Kadin Matotek
Alyssa McClintock
Emma McMonagle



Augustina Onubogu
Giulia Pagano
Erin Patterson
Grace Pekala
Amber Riley
Emilie Smith
Regan Steiner
Michael Thais
K.C. Thoman
Charlotte Thompson



Photo: Bella Nimmerichter

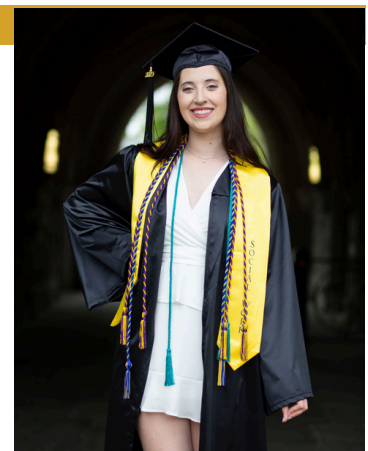
MEET THE HONORS COLLEGE GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Haley McDevitt graduated with her Masters of Business Administration from West Chester University in December 2024 becoming a double alum with her undergraduate degree in marketing, a minor in civic and professional leadership, and membership in the Honors College via the Honors Seminar Pathway. As a graduate assistant for WCU's Leadership Hub funded by Yale University Haley attended leadership conferences such as the Association of Leadership Educators in Minnesota and the International Leadership Association in Illinois, where she networked with global professionals to promote the hub's initiatives on leadership and human flourishing. She played a key role in expanding outreach efforts and preparing for the Hub's 2025 conference. Concurrently as a graduate assistant for the Louisville Institute Haley collaborated with Dr. Wooten on research exploring leadership, religious expression, and community on TikTok. Over two years they interviewed 25 content creators analyzing their evolving values and perspectives with the goal of publishing academic articles on their findings.



Bella Nimmerichter is an Honors Graduate Assistant who works on Honors College assessment with Dr. Martin. 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 should be able to go on our website for several colleges and departments this Spring. You might see her sitting in the Honors Conference Room on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, as well as at our many events – please stop in and say hi! Thank you, Bella, for all your hard work and dedication!!

Victoria Rodway is a graduate assistant this year with the WCU Leadership Hub, an initiative of and funded by the Life Worth Living Network at Yale University. Victoria has been working along with the Leadership Hub team on strengthening the Hub's website and resources, editing videos and materials to add to the website. Victoria has been a part of the conference planning team for the June 2025 Leadership and the Good Life Conference. She continues to contact faculty and students at Universities nationally to invite them to this exciting event. To see the work Victoria has been doing on the project check out the Leadership Hub Website: [Victoria Rodway](#). Victoria is pursuing her Masters of Social Work and will graduate May 2025.



ALUMNI CHAPTER EXECUTIVE BOARD

I'm thrilled to announce the re-launch of the West Chester University Honors College Alumni Chapter! I'm proud to introduce the 2024–2026 Honors College Alumni Chapter Executive Board:

President | Caitlin Viespoli '22
Vice President | Dr. Kecia Nesmith '99
Secretary | Carly Lare '22
Treasurer | Matt Crider '19

Alongside this dynamic team, we have a dedicated group of alumni serving as ambassadors for the chapter. The executive board held our first meeting this month, and we're eager to build connections among alumni, support current Honors College students, and guide the future of our chapter.

Looking ahead, we're excited to launch two key initiatives in the Spring semester: the Alumni Awards, in collaboration with the Honors department, and an event during Alumni Weekend.

We look forward to connecting with all of you and creating new opportunities to engage with the Honors College community in the years ahead.

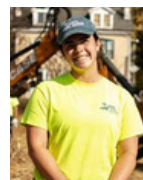
Best regards,
Caitlin Viespoli '22
President, Honors College Alumni Chapter



Caitlin Viespoli '22



Kecia Nesmith '99



Carly Lare '22



Matt Crider '19

ILA GLOBAL CONFERENCE



Haley McDevitt, Honors College Graduate Research Assistant, attended the 26th International Leadership Association's (ILA) Global Conference in Chicago: "Architects of Change: Leaders Followers & Communities." Haley represented the Life Worth Living Leadership Studies Hub, an initiative directed by Dr. Zachary Wooten and Dr. Matt Pierlott in partnership with Yale University. As the world's largest cross-sector gathering of leaders and leadership scholars, educators, and development professionals, ILA's Global Conference offers an unparalleled experience to discover innovative leadership research and practice, forge meaningful connections, enhance your skills, find solutions, and shape the future landscape of leadership. Haley represented WCU well, making meaningful professional connections and spreading the word about the Leadership Hub of the Life Worth Living Project in preparation for our Summer 2025 conference.

STUDENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES CONGRATULATIONS!

Summer Undergraduate Research Institute (SURI) 2024 Recipients

Gabrielle Curtis
Sports Medicine

Garrett Fong
Biology

Sage Forsythe
Biology

Ava Hawthorne
Biomedical Engineering

Lee Irvine
Political Science

Chris Needham
Biomedical Engineering

Gianna Parrish
Cell & Molecular Biology

K.C. Thoman
Secondary Education

Abigail Walton
Instrumental Performance

Student Undergraduate Research Foundations (SURF) Spring 2025 Recipients

Danielle Cabibbo
Education and Social Services

Eliza Mathias
Health Sciences

K.C. Thoman
Education and Social Services

Student Research and Creative Activity (SRCA) 2024 Award Winners

Abigail Boquist
Secondary Education and K-12 Health and
Physical Education


Hannah Linkowsky
Early and Middle Grades


Rajal Vyas
Biomedical Engineering

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

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