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# HSA HAPPENINGS

October 2018

Leadership. Service. Academia.



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## HSA Happening is...

A student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association. Its purpose is to supplement the West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.

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## HSA Recap

### Matthew Leinhauser

#### President of HSA



Photo Credit: Courtney Rothman

Bertrand Russell, a Nobel Literature Laureate, mathematician, philosopher, and political activist (to name just a few of the different hats he wore during his lifetime), reminds me of the Honors/HSA community. Russell, who held as many diverse roles throughout his life as HSA has majors, worked extremely hard and diligently to achieve his successes. He's quoted as saying, "No great achievement is possible without persistent work." These words have helped guide me as I lead HSA as President for the 2018-2019 school year.

In my free time, I find myself constantly working to improve HSA, making sure we, as a collective, do not settle for mediocrity. So far, I think our work has not gone unnoticed. Two meetings down and we are averaging almost 100 members per meeting, a huge jump in attendance from last year. I could not be more thankful for the executive board I have to work with. They simply are just the best. From planning out our whole fall semester, putting

on icebreakers at the first general assembly (GA) meeting, hosting dine-and-donate events, and serving as chairs for the revamped committee system, I want to thank them all from the bottom of my heart. With them helping to steer our ship, these past four weeks flew by with ease and many successes.

So what are those successes? In my eyes, our first success came over the summer when we welcomed 80 new incoming honors students. Their hard work and passion showed all throughout the summer symposium. I was particularly impressed with their work in the breakout sessions. At our first GA meeting, seeing so many honors students from different years and majors interact warmed my heart. Seeing how many natural actors we had during our second meeting was surprising! Unsurprising was how well received the message of what to do, and not to do, at community service was. Seeing upperclassmen mentor first-year students proved very valuable as well.

Finally, the message of positivity offered at the very end of HSA meetings seems to help keep positivity within our community. Following suit with our meeting structure, I'd like to conclude this piece with another quote by Bertrand Russell. "The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge." Within our community, the executive board's goal is to lead with love and positivity and guide with every lesson taught to us in all of our classes to date. Four weeks into the semester and I can already see how inspired by love and guided by knowledge we are. Here's to many more successes! ☒

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## Interview with President Fiorentino

Alexander Kuhn

Sophomore

**Q. What events and changes are you most eager to see the results of this school year?**

A. “Well- the- a couple things on the curricular front, we have the first year experience for the new students. We’re really making a concerted effort to get them off on the right foot as they start their college career. We have a great emphasis on student success, we want to identify the challenges our students face and do what we can to help them prepare and to be as successful as they can be. We have a new general education curriculum that we’ve been working on for a long time that we’re rolling out. We have a new building that we are breaking ground on. It will not be ready this year, but it’s very exciting. One of our major academic buildings, Anderson hall, is being renovated and that’s going to be finished for the second semester, the January semester, and that’s going to add 23 more classrooms to the mix which going to help in terms of our ability to schedule classes and it’ll enable us to remove the fence from church street. Those are a lot of the great things that are happening. I guess the other thing on the student affair side- we’re working on what’s called a co-curricular transcript, which is a formal process that enables students to track and document the non-academic things that they participate in on campus. So as they’re presenting their record to potential employers they can talk about the clubs they were part of and the service projects they worked on. It’s a

good way to help students document their college experience.”



Photo Creds: Mark Gutierrez

**Q. Do you have any advice for the new first-year class of West Chester University’s Honors College as they begin their time here?**

A. “I think that they need to understand- the opportunity- that this represents to them to really get a lot out of a college experience. This program is very well designed. The faculty who participate in it are passionate, Dr. Dean, the director, is passionate, there are service-learning opportunities. There have just been a couple examples of projects- oral history projects and construction projects, where students are in a position to and meet people from different cultures different and different backgrounds. It’s just an incredible opportunity, beyond just the basic courses that they take.”

**Q. In terms of what you have heard about other Honors Programs/Colleges at different universities, what differentiates West Chester University’s Honors College?**

A. “Well, I don’t consider myself an expert on honors programs at other universities, but I do know from talking to students who have come

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here who have looked at other programs, this program just offers an experience that is unmatched. It is one thing to have an honors' program where you have challenging courses, this is not just about challenging courses. This is about the full experience, including the opportunity to learn the value of public service- As Dr. Helion was just saying, to feel the satisfaction of helping other human beings, and have that all built into the learning experience. It becomes part of the learning experience. It's really a well thought out, very sophisticated experience that our honors' students are getting."

**Q. What do you admire most about West Chester University's Honors College?**

A. "Well I think that it's been here for a long time. We've had a number of very creative people who have led the program. It's built on successes over time and Dr. Dean has really taken it to a whole new level. He's a tireless advocate for the program; he works extremely hard to put the students into position to have incredible learning opportunities. And I feel when our students graduate from this honors program they are leaving here with an incredible set of experiences that are preparing them for life."

**Q. How do you personally see the West Chester University Honors College students implementing their mission statement, "To be honorable is to serve" around campus and in the community?**

A. "That's really been the theme of what I've been saying here. The way to appreciate service is to engage in service and to feel the satisfaction associated with serving other people. You have to provide for your family,

you have to make a living and all that, but I know myself personally, when I started serving on nonprofit boards and started experiencing the satisfaction of helping other people- it's not something you can read about. You have to experience it, and our program creates ample opportunity for our students to experience the satisfaction of serving other human beings." ☒



Photo Credit: Mark Gutierrez



Photo Credit: Mark Gutierrez

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# How to Survive Your First Semester of College

Sabrina Avanzato

## First-Year

The first semester of college can be a stressful time for first year students. Considering all of the unknowns and adjustments we have to make, it can be tough to get on track with the college mindset. Although most of us have experienced these feelings at one point or another, there are several things you can do to help yourself get through the first semester of college, and every one after.

More than anything else, it is highly important to find resources to help you when needed. For example, finding an upperclassman in your major can be a great way to get information on the classes you need to take and when you need to take them. Getting this kind of advice from people who have already been in your position is a great way to ease your worries as you push through the semester. A good way to find such resources is through participation in HSA. For example, at a meeting a few weeks ago, first-year students in the club were split off by major. Each group had a few upperclassmen with the same major who were there to answer any questions the freshman had. Having these mentors who are also in honors is very helpful as they have already gone through everything that my freshman peers and I are currently dealing with, so they know what track we should be on in order to succeed in our majors.

Another helpful resource is the Learning and Resource Center (LARC) located in Lawrence.

The LARC is a great place to get tutoring if you are having trouble in a class. Tutoring takes place once a week for a given class and is a great way to receive one on one assistance. I have found it very helpful in allowing me to have a better understanding during actual class time. The LARC also provides academic success workshops that teach students study skills and time management methods which are designed to help students in any course.

There are many resources available to help students, especially first years, succeed in college. With all of these different ways to get assistance, the first semester of college has become a lot more manageable for me. ☑

For more information on the LARC, visit:

<https://www.wcupa.edu/viceProvost/universityCollege/larc/students.aspx>



Photo Credit: Sabrina Avanzato

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## Alumni Spotlight

### Matthew Dummeldinger

HSA Alumni



Photo Credit: Matthew Dummeldinger

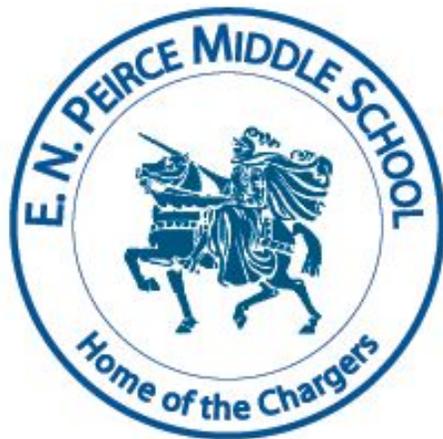


Photo Credit: www.wcasd.net

My name is Matthew Dummeldinger, and I graduated from West Chester University's Honors College in spring of 2017 with a degree in Mathematics Education and a minor in Communication Studies. This fall will be my second year as a seventh-grade math teacher at Peirce Middle School in West Chester Area School District.

Though technically my degree stems from the mathematics and education courses I took while a student at West Chester University, I find that the skills I picked up in the Honors classes have been equally as important in making me the educator that I am today. Collaboration, communication, and of course public speaking are key to being a successful teacher, and the Honors curriculum helped me develop these skills. Education is a career of service, and I take Honors' passion to serve use it in school every day. Empowering others as a leader is not an easy task, but it is one I feel more equipped to deal with from my experience in the Honors College.

My advice to current Honors students is to get involved as much as you can while you're a student and to take a moment every day to appreciate all that you have. It can be easy to take being a college student in as dedicated a community as Honors for granted, but truly it is a unique blessing. Work hard, make memories, and serve often, because it will all be over before you know it. ☒

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# How to Deal with Stress

Emily Dwyer

Sophomore

To all of the fellow students stressed with the first week of classes,

First of all, same. I get it, I love the first day of school when you dress in a cute outfit and your Mom takes a picture for FaceBook to add to all of the other first day of school pictures on our news feed this day. However, after this, after the picture and the good wishes, you are off to actually go to classes and follow through that decorative wall art calendar you made with all of your spare time before classes started. For some, they may breeze through this day, this week, and the entire semester, but for the rest of us, here are some helpful reminders to reduce our stress!

## 1. Breathe

Yeah, the first thing all professors like to do is go through the entire syllabus and point out every single date you will ever do something in class. Just remember, this will not happen all at once, please stop stressing over the final before you move to page two of the syllabus. Sixteen weeks is a lot longer than one might think. It is important to exhale all of the stress before you can make a productive semester.

## 2. Get organized

After you breathe a little bit, get those colored pens and daily planner out and ready to schedule the next four months. Once it is all written out all nice and pretty, life seems to feel a little less intense.

## 3. Take time to relax

Taking time to go out and have fun is so important. Whether your fun includes midnight ice cream trips or dressing up cute and dancing the night away, go for it. Now is the time to go out on that date or meet up with that old friend before you are actually busy, and not just that busy you say when you don't want to hang out with students.

## 4. Don't compare yourself to others

You and your friends will likely have different schedules. It's okay if your friends only have one challenging class and all of your classes are a challenge. This does not mean you are in the wrong major or won't succeed; your schedule is just a little different with a few more hours needed in the library.

Inhale and exhale, grab those colored pens, and make this the best semester ever. If your syllabus week just came down to you leaving labs and lectures most nights at 10 pm, well welcome to the STEM field but also, it will be okay and well worth it in the future. Remember what you are doing will get you to the next step in your life, and even if the composition of the inside of a clam does not seem too important now, it will lead you in the path you want to go. Stay patient in this part because what to come is so worth it. Go grab your friends, put on that cute outfit, and forget about all of the stress (for the night at least). ☒

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## HSA Executive Board

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Want to write for HSA Happenings? Here is what you can do....

Contact us: Courtney Purdy (cp883006@wcupa.edu), Mary (Molly) Parkes (mp884889@wcupa.edu), Alexander Kuhn (ak893568@wcupa.edu)

HSA Happenings will be published the first Thursday of every month, so get your submissions in at least 1 week prior to the release date!

Write articles relevant to HSA, whether it be an experience you had volunteering or an interview with an upperclassman that went to South Africa, we would love to read them!