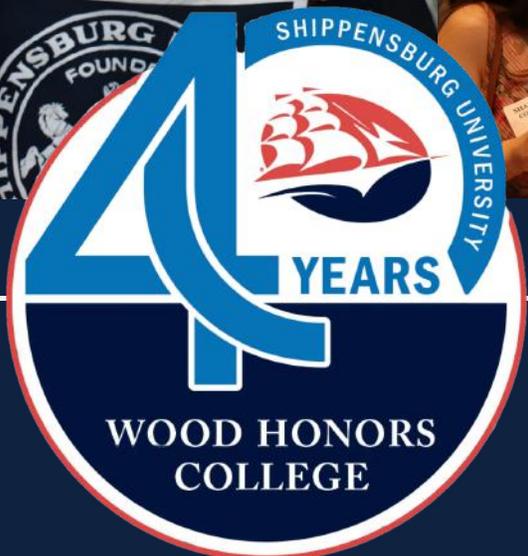




# Honors

# Innovation



Spring/Summer 2025  
Newsletter

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The Newsletter of The Wood Honors College at Shippensburg University  
A Publication of the Honors Student Organization (HSO) Media Committee

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# Letter from the Editors

*As I sit down to reflect on my time with the Wood Honors College,* it's hard to believe how quickly the years have passed. I joined the Wood Honors College before I even began at Shippensburg University and had no idea how much it would change my life. This past year, I had the incredible opportunity to work on the 40th Anniversary Celebration Weekend, which has been one of the highlights of my time here. Collaborating with faculty, staff, and fellow students to celebrate Honors' rich history was not only a chance to showcase what the Wood Honors College stands for but also an honor to help commemorate its legacy. As I worked on social media campaigns and event planning, I realized how much the Wood Honors College has shaped my own growth, both personally and professionally. Looking back, I'm proud of the ways in which I've contributed to the Wood Honors College's presence in the digital space as well. It's been amazing to help foster a sense of community among Honors students online. With graduation just a year away, I'm filled with mixed emotions. I'm excited for the next step but also nostalgic about the relationships, experiences, and opportunities that have defined my time at Shippensburg. I look forward to supporting this community as I prepare for what's next in my future.

**Megan Sawka,**  
**Junior Communications,**  
**Journalism, and Media major**



*As I prepare to graduate,* I look back on my college experience and am incredibly grateful for all of the opportunities I have had, for each one has helped me grow in ways that I may not have even been able to imagine or comprehend as a freshman. I would be lying if I said I wasn't scared to leave Shippensburg University, where I have forged bonds with amazing, inspirational professors who have genuinely altered the course of my life, as well as made many kind, extremely talented friends who will undoubtedly accomplish great things in the future. But I am also excited to venture into the world and enter the next step of my life. I will never forget Shippensburg University, its people, and the true grace I have been shown, but life has deemed it time for the next chapter. I am humbled by the talent that resides on our campus and within the Wood Honors College. I look forward to being an alum, fondly reflecting on SU's legacy, which I can say I had the joy of experiencing for four pivotal years of my life. I will take the real knowledge, kindness, compassion, and generosity this campus has shown me and aspire to pass it on into the future. Beyond preparing students academically,

SU builds students into a complete person, something that is critical for all of us to find true happiness and success. Love deeply, learn vigorously, give generously, find your passion and practice kindness.

**Alyssa Roadcap,**  
**Senior Biology major**



*I have always tried to live my life by embracing change,* recognizing its fear factor and learning how to rise to its challenges. For as long as I can remember, my hobbies and interests have been consistently inconsistent, because simply: I find interest in a little bit of everything. Starting my journey at Shippensburg University and the Wood Honors College this year, I knew from day one I wanted to get involved in as much as I could and explore all the different areas that impassion me. I am incredibly grateful for everything the Wood Honors College has done to help support my endeavors. I feel that even throughout just my first year, I have grown exponentially both as a student and as a person overall. I have been able to meet amazing friends, get involved with inspiring groups on campus, and I feel supported every step of the way. I deeply believe that college and life as a young adult is about innovation, change, and taking chances. It's about opening a door and taking that first step, even if you don't know what's behind it at first. I am beyond excited to see where the future takes me, all the change that is coming my way, and all the ways I will find growth within it. I know that every new experience, whether big or small, has the potential to shape me in ways I never expected. With each opportunity I take, I am learning more about myself, my passions, and the impact I hope to make in the world.



**Madison Sharp,**  
**Freshman Communications,**  
**Journalism, and Media major**

# 40th Anniversary: Day of Service

The Honors Day of Service is an annual event held in April that focuses on one of the building blocks of Honors: service! This year's event was part of the 40th Anniversary Celebration Weekend. Planning this event was exciting as we collaborated with many new service organizations. The Book Nook was a new service option as well as the Peace Garden.



The other service projects included the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter, Reach Out School Supply Drive, stream restoration at Burd Run, and tree planting. The event was incredibly successful, as we had nearly 100 alumni and student volunteers. Thankfully, the rain held off for us, which was especially appreciated by our outdoor service participants.

- Casey Harper, Chair, Honors Student Executive Board



"My fiancé and I were thrilled to join the Honors Day of Service during the Honors 40th Anniversary Celebration. Service was a big part of my college and Honors experience, so it was meaningful to return to the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter, where I volunteered ten years ago and adopted two dogs. It was great to see how the shelter has grown. We cleaned bonding rooms and socialized cats as the dog area was prepping for renovations. Their longest cat resident hasn't been there a year, which gave us hope. If you're interested in volunteering, please reach out to CVAS."

- Elizabeth Karper, Honors '17, Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

"As a 1996 Honors graduate, I was thrilled to participate in the Day of Service as part of the 40th Anniversary Celebration! It was wonderful to see Honors students and alumni come together for the good of the community. My team collected educational supply donations for a school in the Dominican Republic as part of the Reach Out program. I was impressed with the poise and grace the Honors students displayed when asking members of the community to donate. It was a wonderful day that made me proud to be part of the Wood Honors College family!"

- Angela Berkosky, Honors '96, Reach Out School Supply Drive



I joined the Stream Restoration Project during this year's Honors Day of Service, helping remove debris and invasive plants from the Burd Run area. Dr. Sean Cornell guided us and clearly explained our tasks and their impact on the stream's health. While my team cleared the area, another group planted trees and spread mulch. The experience strengthened my connection to the Honors community and deepened my understanding of the local environment.

- Ted Crosset, Honors Sophomore, Stream Restoration



# 40th Anniversary: Saturday Sessions

## Honors Mini-Lectures & Reach Out Reunion

After the Day of Service, Honors alumni joined one of three sessions: "Power and Pariahs in Medieval Europe" with Dr. Senecal, a discussion on science and religion with Dr. Shane, or a Reach Out reunion with Dr. Keyes and Dr. Ricardo.



"It is one of the special pleasures of my job to continue relationships with students after graduation, and the Wood Honors 40th Anniversary highlighted this. It was dizzying to see former students alongside my current history students. Humbled by the experiences of alumni, I spoke with Shippensburg Honors grads who became authors, traveled the world, and started businesses and families. More important than their accomplishments was reconnecting with them—in conversations at lunch, on the dance floor, and simply in their presence. I am not alone in my joy at participating in this wonderful reunion."

- Dr. Christine Senecal

## Honors Jeopardy!

Codey Fickes, '17 led an Honors Jeopardy! session quizzing alumni and students on questions about the Wood Honors College. Team Angie (Angela Berkosky, '96; Christopher Eby, '11; and Mackenzie Longworth, '24) took the victory.



## Campus Tours

Honors students led alumni on campus tours that highlighted many recent updates to the SU campus.



# 40th Anniversary: Gala Celebration

## Dr. Alison Dagnes, Chair, Anniversary Celebration Committee

The Honors 40th Anniversary Celebration Weekend exceeded every hope and expectation I had. We held this multi-day commemoration to mark an important milestone, and it turned into so much more. Our alumni came back. It was incredible to witness former students seeing old friends and reminiscing. Our alumni got to see the transformation of Ship Honors into the Wood Honors College and experience the progress and expansion that's occurred.

Our students turned out. Honors students are always engaged and interested, but they took it to the next level for this weekend. It was wonderful to work with so many undergraduates who made the weekend special. Our Wood Honors students made the weekend a success, and I'm grateful for everyone who helped so much.

Our faculty proved their continued excellence. From mini talks to Jeopardy to tearing up the dance floor, our faculty demonstrated their lasting dedication to our students and to Honors. Our administrators presented their support of Honors with snazzy dance moves and fellowship. The Gala was a hit because of their presence.

I came away from this weekend remembering the past while I looked forward to the future. Dr. Kim Klein, with the help of both Sharon and Cindy Poe, built a powerful institution on a foundation of scholarship and collaboration. They are to be congratulated and saluted for all they've done. Here's to 40 years, Honors! I can't wait to see what the next 40 bring.



Dr. Dagnes dancing with Dr. José Ricardo at the 40th Anniversary Gala.

## Kaitlyn King and Abby Lumadue, Anniversary Gala Co-Chairs

This fall, we were given the opportunity to serve as co-chairs for the 40th Anniversary Gala Committee. The Gala was the grand finale of a weekend-long celebration, so we knew we were taking on a big job. We oversaw decorating the Luhrs Performing Arts Center, delegating tasks to student volunteers, and ensuring the event went off without a hitch. We're proud to say we achieved our goal! The night began with Honors alumnus Luke Hershey singing and playing guitar as guests arrived. Soon after, the dance floor opened. Past and present Honors students proved we definitely know how to bust a move and even some professors joined in. After an evening of food, dancing, and reconnecting with new and old friends, Dr. Dagnes and Dr. Senecal announced the silent auction winners. Many alumni went home with incredible prizes, including a trip to The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, a Fourth of July weekend at the beach, a Yeti cooler stocked with summer party essentials, and more. We received so much positive feedback and loved seeing Honors students dress up, unwind, and celebrate together.



Abby Lumadue, Abby Zeigler, Elaina Georgelis, Kaitlyn King

## Audrey McGarrell, Honors '17

Thank you so much to Dr. Klein, Dr. Dagnes, Cindy Poe, and all of the other faculty, staff, students, and alumni who made the Honors 40th Anniversary such an incredible event! When I reflect on the weekend, two words come to mind: connection and inspiration. It was such a joy to reconnect with dear friends who were such an important part of my Honors experience and the professors who make Ship a truly exceptional place (and now I can check dancing to Chappell Roan with Dr. Senecal off my bucket list!). The other throughline of the weekend for me was inspiration. I was particularly inspired by hearing from my peers about their careers and passions; learning about environmental stewardship on campus and getting to play a tiny part in this by planting trees along Burd Run; and witnessing the commitment and enthusiasm that the Ship Honors community continues to have for education, service, and making the world a better place.



Honors students and alumni celebrated the 40th Anniversary of Honors.

# Partners in Peace: Nobel Seminar

Partners in Peace is a collaboration between the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway and the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). The Wood Honors College is honored to be one of 16 Honors Programs and Colleges from around the world that were selected to be inaugural members of Partners in Peace. The program was created by Dr. Kevin Dean, director emeritus of the West Chester University Honors College.



Dr. Klein speaks at Voices of Peace

Partners in Peace: Lessons in Leadership and Service is the first Honors seminar offered as part of the Partners in Peace collaboration with the Nobel Peace Center. In the seminar, students enhanced their “Nobel Knowledge” through individual presentations about the Nobel Peace Prize and Laureates, developed their leadership skills by teaming up to research leadership theories and Nobel Peace Prize Laureates who exemplified those approaches, and collaborated on Voices of Peace, a new signature Honors service-learning project. At the end of the semester, students were honored with the designation, “Inaugural Nobel Scholar,” to mark their accomplishments as the first Wood Honors College participants in Partners in Peace.

Opportunities for involvement in Partners in Peace will continue in 2025-2026! Students have been invited to make a presentation on Voices of Peace at the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in San Diego in November 2025, Dr. Steven Burg will offer the Partners in Peace seminar again in spring 2026, and Dr. Burg and Dr. Christine Senecal plan to lead students on a study abroad program in Norway in May 2026.

- Dr. Kim Klein, Director

Partners in Peace is certainly unlike any other class I have taken. Its targeted information toward the Nobel Peace Prize is something I really looked forward to after scheduling the class, and it has certainly been very interesting! At the beginning of the semester, we completed our Nobel Knowledge presentations, which served as a great source of information about the Peace Prize. It seemed that many of us in the class did not know much about the Peace Prize prior, so this was valuable. I did mine on the festivities surrounding the Peace Prize ceremony that takes place on 10 December in Oslo, Norway every year. I found it exciting to research what the Nobel Laureates get to participate in before the ceremony. Dr. Klein helped with finding good sources of information for all students as well, making the project a breeze.

~ Jaeden Forsythe, Honors Sophomore



Students discuss plans for Voices of Peace

In the Partners in Peace class, student pairs researched a Nobel Laureate and a corresponding leadership style, then delivered 30-minute presentations. While initially daunting, the project proved there's no better way to master a topic than to teach it. Each of us was challenged to evaluate our own leadership skills in light of the styles studied and the inspiring work of each Laureate. We gained empowering new perspectives on how to develop and apply these skills to advance peace. Doing this alongside the Voices of Peace project was especially rewarding, as we put these ideas into immediate practice and saw powerful results.

The final component of the class was nominating a Nobel Laureate for 2026. After researching nominees and presenting proposals, we selected Rushan Abbas by consensus. A Uyghur American activist from Xinjiang, China, she founded Campaign for Uyghurs (CFU) in 2017. The Uyghur people face what former U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called “genocide,” with over 1.5 million interned in concentration camps as of 2021. Abbas’s work has been crucial in exposing these crimes and countering the Chinese government’s propaganda.

- Cole Pearson, Honors Junior



Cole Pearson speaks at Voices of Peace

# Partners in Peace: Voices of Peace

by Brea Fennick and Victoria Sutherland, Honors Sophomores

In the Partners in Peace Seminar, Dr. Klein challenged us to create a service-learning project inspired by the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate that would promote peace in our local community. Our resulting project, Voices of Peace, took place on Monday, April 14 in the Tuscarora Room. It included a speaker panel, interactive discussion and activities, and a Peace Feast, and it involved approximately 125 participants from campus and the local community.

The Voices of Peace program focused on the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Nihon Hidankyo. This organization works to promote the rights of the atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, known as the Hibakusha, and advocate for nuclear disarmament through survivor testimonies. The stories of the Hibakusha emphasize the horrors of nuclear weapons and portray the personal impact of their aftermath. One of our goals for Voices of Peace was to convey the background of Nihon Hidankyo in every element of the program. We paid homage to the organization's Japanese origins through the inclusion of Japanese-inspired music, décor, activities, and food.

To execute this event, our class divided into four teams—Strategy, Program, Public Relations, and Community/Finance—based on our strengths. The program we developed began with an overview of Voices of Peace and an introduction to the Nobel Peace Prize. Three professors then provided unique perspectives on Nihon Hidankyo. Dr. Joseph Shane, Professor of Chemistry, explained the science of nuclear weapons; Dr. Mark Sachleben, Professor of Political Science, discussed nuclear arms proliferation and current nuclear disarmament efforts; and Dr. Steven Burg, Professor of History, concluded with a discussion of the power of Nihon Hidankyo's strategy of using survivor testimony to promote global change.

Interactive activities followed each speaker's presentation, including folding origami cranes and writing messages of peace on paper leaves that were placed on our Peace Tree, which prompted participants to consider more deeply how they could contribute to promoting peace in our local community.



Posters around the room described the events of the atomic bombs and first-hand accounts.

The discussion continued while participants enjoyed a Japanese-inspired Peace Feast. After dinner, participants learned about opportunities to apply their new knowledge to volunteer at the Shippensburg Peace Garden.



Partners in Peace student Ali Sina Sharifi adds a leaf to the Peace Tree.

The participants in Voices of Peace included Shippensburg University students, faculty, and administrators; Shippensburg Area Senior High School students and teachers; and community members. The event helped attendees develop a greater understanding of not only the mission of Nihon Hidankyo but also what the Nobel Peace Prize truly represents. It enhanced understanding of how communities can come together to address pressing issues, such as the threat of nuclear conflict. The event also helped participants gain valuable information about the bombings, the global impact of nuclear weapons, and the importance of striving for peace from the efforts of Nihon Hidankyo.

We were fortunate to have the presence of Dr. Kevin Dean, the founder of Partners in Peace and professor and director emeritus of the Honors College at West Chester University, and Dr. Nicole Hill, Interim Provost of Shippensburg University, at our event, and we are grateful for their support. Voices of Peace will be an annual event, organized by the new Partners in Peace Committee, that will honor each year's Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, highlighting their cause and their contribution to promoting peace.



The students in the Partners in Peace class, along with Dr. Kim Klein and Dr. Kevin Dean.

# Northeast Regional Honors Conference

## Casey Harper, Honors Senior Ship ANCHORED: A Case Study on Teaching with Augmented Communication Devices

The purpose of my research was to examine effective methods of teaching to support transition-aged students with disabilities. The research was specific to those who are nonverbal and who use Alternative or Augmentative Communication devices (AAC) to communicate. The overall effort in developing the research was to serve a low-incidence disability population in developing self-advocacy and social skills in a workplace setting. My experiences throughout building and administering my research were impactful for me. I was able to gain hands-on teaching experience while also exploring topics of interest on a professional level. The Ship ANCHORED program was created and developed in partnership with my research, which serves transition-aged students (18-22 years) with disabilities from Big Spring High School who have intensive life skill needs.

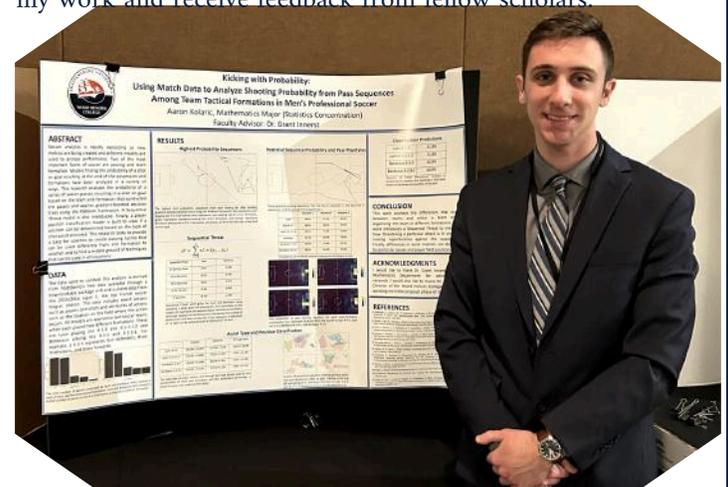
I was provided the opportunity to present my research in a poster session at the Northern Regional Honors Conference (NRHC). This conference focuses on Honors students and the strides they are making both in and out of the classroom. The privilege to present at this conference was impactful for me. Sharing my project and the program that I partnered with was a unique experience, as I was able to collaborate and exchange ideas with other students at neighboring universities. Swapping ideas in an effective and professional manner was an exhilarating experience and helped to solidify the importance of my project and my research. I am truly grateful to have presented at the NRHC.



## Aaron Kolaric, Honors Senior Kicking with Probability: Using Match Data to Analyze Shooting Probability from Pass Sequences Among Team Tactical Formations in Men's Professional Soccer

This March, I had the pleasure of presenting my Honors capstone project at the 2025 Northeast Regional Honors Conference (NRHC). The NRHC was a wonderful experience where I met students from a variety of schools and disciplines. Not only was I able to connect to learn about the backgrounds and future plans of peers, but I was also able to speak about academics regarding my capstone project. The presentation of my project took the form of a poster. With this, students freely roamed and asked questions about the work. Speaking with students in disciplines outside of my mathematics major enabled insight into my work through a different lens. Students offered insight with details where they believe my work is meaningful in the realm of soccer.

The capstone project offered a way for me to apply knowledge from the classroom to real-life applications. Having played soccer for fourteen years, it was a goal of mine to complete a project with soccer as the key focus. Through the process, I applied multiple machine learning models to soccer data to extract insight and make predictions. The research looked to derive meaning behind approaches in soccer that stem from games, players, and coaches and provide numeric results to find common trends and key areas where teams achieved the largest amounts of success. Without the Honors capstone project, a desire of mine would not have been met in being able to explore this topic. Additionally, the NRHC gave me an outlet to demonstrate my work and receive feedback from fellow scholars.



# Award Winners, 2024-2025

## Outstanding Honors Capstone Project Award

Congratulations to **Abbie Morgan**, who was recognized with the Outstanding Honors Capstone Project Award at the Honors Spring Celebration on April 30, 2025! Abbie's Honors capstone project was "Development of Benchtop NMR Techniques for Kombucha Analysis." Honorable Mentions were awarded to **Casey Harper**, "Ship ANCHORED: A Case Study on Teaching with Augmented Communication Devices" and **Makayla Hall**, "Coding Education in the Digital Age: How to Integrate Coding in the Classroom to Increase Student Engagement."



Makayla Hall, Abbie Morgan, Casey Harper



## Spirit of Honors Award

The Spirit of Honors Award is presented to a senior who exemplifies the Wood Honors College's commitment to excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service. The 2024-2025 recipient of the Spirit of Honors Award was **Casey Harper**. Casey compiled an outstanding academic record, presenting her Honors capstone at two conferences. As Chair of the Honors Student Organization Executive Board, she strengthened the organization by developing a new leadership training program, encouraging collaboration among committees, and expanding the annual Honors Day of Service.

## Outstanding Honors Mentor Award

Congratulations to Honors junior **Kenny Tran**, recipient of the Outstanding Honors Mentor Award!

**Kenny's mentee, Andrew Kerstetter, nominated him for the award:**

"Kenny is constantly trying to make me a better student and keep me accountable. He has given me tips on college and overall life advice. We formed several connections, such as both of us working the same exact job when we were younger. Kenny personally met with me one hour into scheduling day to help modify my schedule when classes filled up. Kenny's knowledge of Shippensburg University and our shared major of finance has helped give me some perspective on my own future goals and what I can expect to experience in the future. My college experience would most certainly not be the same without Kenny. He has become my friend and to this day keeps me accountable to campus deadlines and offers reminders."



# Wood Honors College Semester Recap



*Book Arts and Crafts*



*Ice Fest*



*Voices of Peace*



*Valentine's Day Bingo*



*Spring Celebration*



*40th Anniversary Gala*



*Day of Service*



*Flower Pot Planting*



Welcome to the newest member of the Honors community! Congratulations to Dr. Melara and his wife, Erica, on the new addition to your family!

## Consider a Gift to Support Wood Honors College Students!

Please consider making a gift to these important funds that support Honors College students. To make a gift, visit the SU Foundation website at <http://www.sufoundation.org/initiatives/academics/honors/>.

- Wood Honors College Endowment: Supports Honors students' undergraduate research and creative projects, participation at national and regional conferences, and other educational opportunities that are central to the Wood Honors College experience.
- The Wood Honors College Endowment for International Education: Supports the new biannual Honors International Seminar.
- Wood Honors College Colloquium Fund: Supports Honors interdisciplinary service-learning projects around the world.
- Wood Honors College Scholarship Fund: Supports merit scholarships for incoming Wood Honors College students.
- Wood Honors College Study Abroad Scholarship Fund: Supports students who desire to expand their academic experience and cultural horizons by studying abroad.
- Wood Honors College Associates Fund: Supports the most urgent needs of the College.

**Thank you for your generosity!**

**Shippensburg University**  
**FOUNDATION**

# Congratulations, Spring Graduates!



Larissa Cooper  
Jenna Cornell  
Joey D'Ambrosio  
Amanda Fry  
Aiden Gonder  
Makayla Hall  
Noah Hays  
Madalyn Helfer

Christian Honicker  
Aaron Kolaric  
Nicholas Kornilow  
Becky Mellott-Roth  
Kylie Montgomery  
Ewan Moore  
Abbie Morgan  
Amanda Holmes

Jacey Moyer  
Alyssa Roadcap  
Ethan Rosenberry  
Hunter Shoenfelt  
Sophia Stauffer  
Ashley Unger  
Kayla Vosburg  
Sara Vosburg