



# news

OCTOBER | 2025

## Message from the President

### Dear Kathwari Honors Students,

When I think about what makes WestConn special, I think about communities like the Kathwari Honors Program—people who lead with both intellect and heart. Your Day of Kindness captured something essential about who we are as a university: that excellence is not just about achievement, but about generosity, empathy, and impact.

At WestConn, we're in the middle of an important chapter—renewing our university and reimagining what it means to serve our region. We're focused on building a campus culture grounded in care, curiosity, and courage. That same spirit is what I see in you. You represent the best of what we hope for in our students: thinkers who act, and leaders who lift others as they rise.

Mr. Kathwari's story reminds us that leadership is never just personal—it's a commitment to something bigger than ourselves. You're carrying that forward in ways that make me proud and hopeful for what's ahead.

Thank you for the example you set and the kindness you share. You are helping define what it means to be Distinctly WestConn.

With gratitude,

Jesse M. Bernal, Ph.D.  
President  
Western Connecticut State University

## CONTENTS

- 1 Message from the President
- 2 Honors Success Stories
- 3 Honors Course Spotlight
- 4 October Snapshot
- 5 October Snapshot
- 6 Upcoming Events

# Honors Success Stories

## KATHWARI HONORS STUDENT OWEN IBEY LEADS THROUGH CONNECTION

As President of SGA, sophomore Kathwari Honors Student Owen Ibey cares about community. He chose to attend WestConn for the wide array of opportunities available, and the Kathwari Honors Program has been an important part of his experience. Ibey credits the program with opening up pathways to try new things and giving him the chance to connect with students from different majors.

Having participated in student government in high school, Ibey knew he wanted to be involved with SGA from the start. During his first year, he became a Senator, which allowed him to learn from fellow student leaders. Ibey notes that the Day of Service and Homecoming are two of his favorite events because of how they help connect the full campus community. This year, Ibey had the opportunity to speak on CT LIVE alongside Amanda Lasicki, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, about the importance of the Day of Service. Ibey describes this as an enlightening experience that showed him the impact that this campus has when united as a community. In the future, he hopes to encourage similar student involvement throughout the year. "Community is the driving force of our university," Ibey says.

Ibey is also part of the Music Program, playing violin and serving as concert master in the orchestra. He values his experiences within the program, especially chamber ensembles, because the smaller setting allows for more connection between players and their audience. Ibey notes that music is all about connection, just like leadership. In the future, Ibey would like to pursue a career that involves public service in some capacity. For next semester, Ibey is looking forward to the course Honors 298 – Model United Nations because of the focus on leadership within the Honors community.

[Read the full story here.](#)



# Honors Course Spotlight

## HON 298 - ANCIENT APPROACHES FOR MODERN MALADIES GUEST SPEAKERS

Professor Christel Autuori teaches this course centered on holistic, multidimensional approaches to health and wellbeing. This fall, she has welcomed two guest speakers. Herbalist Alyssa Mancini spoke to students about botanicals and herbs, helping illustrate the role of nutrition and food as medicine, an essential part of the course. Acupuncturist Dr. Perry Levenson spoke to students about his experience practicing and teaching, as well as the philosophy behind acupuncture. Students have continued to explore the connection between body, mind, and spirit as part of wellbeing by participating in yoga and eco-therapy sessions on campus.



## HON 398 - AFRO-CARIBBEAN LITERATURE GUEST SPEAKER

Professor Danielle King teaches this course, which offers an in-depth examination of source material from the Caribbean and its diaspora, highlighting Afro-Caribbean voices in history, literature, art, music, film, sociology, and politics. Guest speaker Laura James spoke with students about her experience as an artist, author, and activist focused on representation and inclusivity.




**VISUAL  
LANGUAGE,  
CULTURE &  
ACTIVISM.**



**16 OCTOBER, 2025**

**A CONVERSATION WITH  
LAURA JAMES**

PAINTER. ILLUSTRATOR. AUTHOR. CURATOR

[WWW.LAURAJAMESART.COM](http://WWW.LAURAJAMESART.COM)

# October Snapshot

## WCSU'S PRODUCTION OF *AMERICAN PSYCHO: THE MUSICAL*

Congratulations to our Kathwari Honors Students on their magnificent performances in WCSU's production of *American Psycho: The Musical*, directed by Tim Howard. Shows took place from October 10- 19th.



Olive Conover



Marisa Curti



Paige Gualandi



Zola Kneeland



Azayda Lynt



Kate McPadden



Logan Perrault



Jessica Ragucci



Zachary Spreng



Isabella Vanore



Nora Watson



## HONORS TRIP TO STORM KING ART CENTER

Honors students took a day-trip to Storm King Art Center, a 500-acre outdoor museum in New York, to enjoy the outdoor sculptures and explore the grounds amid the fall foliage. The trip was an excellent opportunity to retreat into nature, experience monumental artwork, and bond with fellow students.



## STORM KING ART CENTER (CONT'D)



## HONORS DAY OF KINDNESS

On October 8, the Kathwari Honors Program held the first-annual Honors Day of Kindness. The event was a success, as Honors students spread kindness across campus by giving out joyful gifts to the entire campus community. The response was overwhelmingly positive. In the days before, students gathered at the Honors House to prepare by baking cookies, creating paper flowers, and writing motivational messages.



# Upcoming Events

**OCTOBER**  
**29th**  
 WEDNESDAY

## HONTEd MOVIE NIGHT & CRAFTING

**HONORS STUDENTS:** Join us in the Kathwari Honors House from **6:30-8:00 PM** for the annual *HONTEd* Movie Night and Crafting! Snacks, drinks, and crafting materials will be provided. Costumes are strongly encouraged!

**NOVEMBER**  
**4th**  
 TUESDAY

## HONORS REGISTRATION NIGHT

**HONORS STUDENTS:** Honors Priority Registration for Spring 2026 classes opens at midnight on November 5th. Honors Assistants will be present if you need any help with the registration process or just want to hang out. **Join us at the Honors House for a late-night gathering with self-care, games, pizzas, and fun from 10:30 PM - 12:30 AM.**

**NOVEMBER**  
**14th**  
 FRIDAY

## LEADERSHIP THROUGH HORSEMANSHIP PROGRAM

**HONORS STUDENTS:** This experience working with horses will help you utilize the tools you already have within you to facilitate a sense of well-being, to be mindful and present, and authentically connect with yourself and the world around you when everything feels chaotic. **10 student spots available. Apply for a spot by Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. [APPLY HERE!](#)**

**When:** Friday, November 14th at 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

**Where:** Pegasus, 310 Peach Lake Road, Brewster, NY

**NOVEMBER**  
**19th**  
 WEDNESDAY

## LET'S DE-STRESS

**HONORS STUDENTS:** Need to destress? Check out our self-care event, where we'll have essential oils, lip and body scrub making, coloring, and more. Taking care of yourself is important and this event is all about recharging and relaxing. **Join us at the Honors House from 11 am - 1 pm.**

**DECEMBER**  
**3rd**  
 WEDNESDAY

## HOLIDAY HANGOUT

**HONORS STUDENTS:** Come celebrate and connect with fellow students before the end of the semester and winter weather. Enjoy our fun holiday games, hot cocoa bar, cookie making, movie and festive snacks. **Join us in the Honors House from 11 am - 1 pm.**