



news

SEPTEMBER | 2025

Message from the Director

Dear Honors Students,

Welcome back to all our returning students and to our 87 students newly admitted to the program! This year inaugurates our new Honors Faculty designation, and you will have access to 10 courses over this academic year with these innovative, energetic, and inspiring faculty members. You can learn more about them [here](#), and we'll be recruiting up to 10 more Honors faculty to begin next year. So if you have worked with excellent faculty outside the Honors program, please encourage them to apply for an Honors Faculty position!

We're also looking forward to this year's events, trips, and the Kathwari Spring Seminars, all of which will provide you with opportunities to accrue Engagement Points. Again, if you have ideas on events or programs you'd like to see the Kathwari Honors Program sponsoring, just let us know.

Keep an eye on your email for forthcoming announcements about registration, reminders about requirements, and news about Honors student and faculty successes. In this, my final year as Honors Director, my goal is to build upon the foundation of community that Caitlin and I have worked hard to establish. Your involvement and feedback will help us with building a stronger and tighter Kathwari Community.

Dr. Brian Clements

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Meet the Assistants



Nicole Jabanoski - Honors Graduate Assistant

Nicole is completing an MFA in Creative and Professional Writing with a focus on fiction. She writes the newsletter and Honors Success Stories. Nicole previously taught middle school English. Outside of work and school, you'll find her walking her dog, traveling, or reading fantasy novels.

EMAIL: jabanoski001@wcsu.edu



Gabriella Dane - Honors Assistant

Dani is a senior biology major (bioscience track). She assists with data projects and house management for the Kathwari Honors House. Dani enjoys public transit and using her UPass.

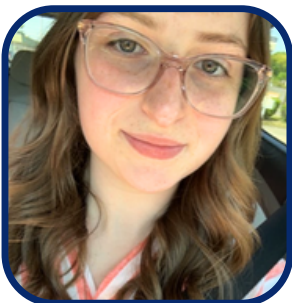
EMAIL: honors@wcsu.edu, KH House 102E



Andrea Mandujano - Honors Assistant

Andrea is a junior majoring in Nursing and minoring in Psychology. She is the lead on tracking honors engagement approvals and sharing engagement opportunities. Outside of the Honors House, Andrea enjoys baking, listening to music, and playing with her dog, Max. After graduating, she hopes to pass the NCLEX and become a Pediatric nurse.

EMAIL: honors@wcsu.edu, KH House 102E



Madison Schilling - Honors Assistant

Maddie is a sophomore Music Education major with voice as her primary focus. She assists with Honors events and social media marketing. Outside of school, she enjoys nature, music, theater, and hanging out with her pets.

EMAIL: honors@wcsu.edu, KH House 102E

Honors Success Story

KATHWARI HONORS STUDENT GABRIELLA DANE CONDUCTS RESEARCH AT CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

This summer, Gabriella Dane, senior Biology major and Kathwari Honors student, conducted research at Carnegie Mellon University funded by the National Science Foundation REU program. Working in a molecular microbiology wet lab, Dane and her colleagues studied the bacteria *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and its evolution in adapting to low nutrient environments.

For Dane, this was an impactful experience. "Being in a lab and working with real researchers at such a well-funded university was really cool." The highlight of her summer was the poster session, where students had a chance to showcase their work, presenting professional posters to communicate their findings.

This experience helped Dane prepare for her future career plans in scientific research. "I love research, and I think it's a really great field to exercise your mind." Dane also credits the Honors Program with developing her professional skills. In her role as Honors assistant, Dane hosts events for fellow students, which has given her the chance to practice public speaking. "It has helped me come out of my shell and be a better presenter," she says. This was an essential skill for sharing her research at the poster session this summer.

Read the full story [here](#).



Honors Course Spotlight

HON 298 - "CONVERSING WITH THE DEVIL" EXPLORES HISTORICAL NARRATIVES IN SALEM, MA

Dr. Leslie Lindenauer, Honors Faculty member, teaches a new honors course, HON 298 – Conversing with the Devil, centered on the Salem Witch Trials as well as the evolution of the historical narratives surrounding them. On September 13th, Kathwari Honors Program students enrolled in the course traveled to Salem, Massachusetts to examine how the city tells the story of the trials.

The field study is essential to the course, and students complete a project based on their experience. Salem is a popular fall destination, with over one million visitors each October. Dr. Lindenauer invites students to consider the question, "What does 'hard history' look like when it's shared and displayed in public, in a place that depends on tourism as a major contributor to its economic health?"

"At a time when we are being discouraged from confronting some of the darkest history in the American past in favor of a sanitized celebration of our American heritage, what responsibility do we have to face the complexity of the past as a way of understanding who we are today?"

Read the full story [here](#).



September Snapshot

HONORS VOLUNTEERS AT WESTCONN DAY OF SERVICE

The Kathwari Honors Program had 6 volunteer groups for WCSU's Day of Service serving at various sites throughout greater Danbury. Honors groups supported the Housatonic Habitat for Humanity ReStore by cleaning outdoor areas and reorganizing storage. Groups also completed beautiful projects at the Pembroke Elementary School and read aloud to kindergarten and first-grade classes at Western CT Academy for International Studies. Groups also assisted with garden cleanup at the Jane Goodall Permaculture Garden on the Midtown campus and planted bulbs at Wooster Street Cemetery.



CARAMEL APPLE EVENT

Honors students bonded while making caramel apples with a variety of toppings. This annual event is a great way to get into the fall spirit and connect with fellow honors students outside of class.



Upcoming Events

OCTOBER
6-7
 MONDAY,
 TUESDAY

DAY OF KINDNESS PREPARATION

HONORS STUDENTS: Join us at the Honors House to help us prepare for our first-annual Honors Day of Kindness! On prep days, we will be preparing individually-wrapped cookies, flowers, motivational giveaways and more with Honors Day of Kindness tags that have kind, motivational and joyful messages on them to be given out to the WestConn community on October 8th to spread kindness and smiles.

Monday 11 - 1 or 3 - 5 or Tuesday from 11 - 1, 3 - 5 or 8-10pm.

Earn one engagement point for each day.

OCTOBER
8th
 WEDNESDAY

HONORS DAY OF KINDNESS

HONORS STUDENTS: Join us to distribute kind and joyful gifts, prepared by Honors students, to the entire WCSU community for our Honors Day of Kindness. Our goal is to spread kindness and smiles across campus. Meet at the Kathwari Honors House at **11 or 2 to help distribute** and be part of this movement! *Earn one engagement point.*

OCTOBER
11th
 SATURDAY

HONORS TRIP: STORM KING ART CENTER

HONORS STUDENTS: Storm King Art Center is an outdoor sculpture museum in New York, about one hour from Danbury, with beautiful grounds, an indoor gallery, walking trails, and biking. We will cover the cost of your ticket, provide lunch, and arrange a private bus there and back. Bus departs from the Honors House at 10am. *Earn one engagement point.*

SPOTS ARE FULL - [JOIN THE WAITLIST HERE](#)

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!

Earn one engagement point.

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 have any questions. Join us in the Honors House for a late-night gathering with games, food and fun from **10:30 PM - 12:30 AM.** *Earn one engagement point.*

10.8.25



HEY WESTCONN!

**RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS COMING YOUR WAY...
STAY TUNED!**