

## Honors Reflection 2025 Maximus Gibbon

**Name:** Maximus Gibbon

**Major:** Food Science with a concentration in Culinary Arts

**Transferring:** University of Arkansas

**Honors Courses:**

- (ARHS 1003 H) Art Appreciation
- (HONR 2902H) Special Topics Health and Wellness
- (MUSI 1003H) Music Appreciation
- (PHIL 2003H) Introduction to Philosophy
- (ENGL 1023H) English Composition II
- (CHEM 1104H) College Chemistry I

**Graduation Date:** May 13th, 2025



### Community, Curiosity, and Diversity

Engaging in the NWACC Honors Program has been an incredibly transformative experience that has shaped me academically, socially, and personally. When I enrolled in English Composition II, my first honors course, I was unsure of what to expect. My experiences with high school honors courses had left me feeling slightly apprehensive, it seemed as though honors courses might be rigid and overwhelming. However, this class, taught by the honors director Sabrina Chesnee, shattered all those preconceived notions.

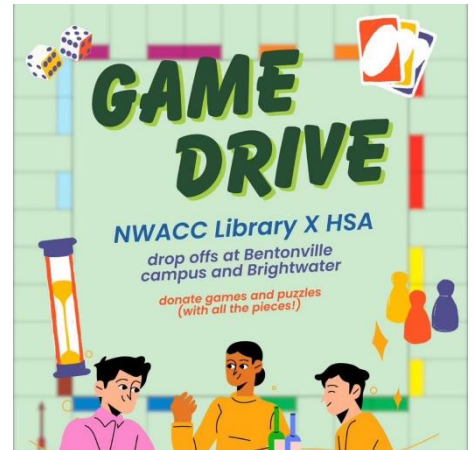


From the first day, I found myself immersed in engaging discussions and thought provoking assignments that encouraged collaboration and creativity. This course wasn't just about improving my writing skills; it was about learning how to connect ideas, challenge perspectives, and build relationships with likeminded peers who shared a passion for learning. The environment Sabrina created was warm and welcoming, and for the first

time, I felt a genuine sense of belonging within an academic setting. These connections and conversations laid the foundation for my honors journey.

Beyond the classroom, the Honors Program offered countless opportunities to cultivate curiosity, embrace diverse perspectives, and engage meaningfully with my community. In Art Appreciation, we explored various artistic movements, sharing how art

works and discussing their historical and cultural significance. These discussions not only deepened my creativity but also broadened my understanding of how art reflects and influences societies and history. Special Topics Health and Wellness was another standout course that encouraged me to think critically about both personal and community wellbeing. This class inspired meaningful discussions about topics such as mental health, lifestyle habits, and strategies for creating a healthier society. These conversations which most had carried over into real life projects and initiatives by the speakers, reminded me of the importance of applying what I learn to make a tangible impact on the world around me.



One of the most memorable aspects of my Honors experience was organizing and taking part in cultural events. Leading Dia de Muertos celebrations, for instance, allowed me to connect with traditions I hadn't previously explored and share these with others. From coordinating decorations to explaining the cultural significance of the altar and offerings, it was an opportunity to celebrate diversity and foster understanding from both



culture and the honor students who had taken part in the tradition. These moments taught me to appreciate the beauty in cultural traditions and highlighted the importance of honoring perspectives that differ from my own. Another highlight of my journey was organizing and easing game nights for fellow

Honors students. These gatherings were much more than just fun evenings of board games and snacks, they were opportunities to strengthen the bonds of our community. Planning these events taught me valuable skills in coordination, leadership, and teamwork. More importantly, they allowed me to see the camaraderie that defines our honors community, as students from diverse backgrounds came together to laugh, strategize, and connect.

Civic engagement played a key role in my Honors experience as well. Participating in street cleanup projects alongside fellow students was a meaningful way to do something for the community. These initiatives emphasized the value of collective action and instilled a sense of pride in contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment. Knowing that efforts, however small, were part of something bigger was incredibly fulfilling. Throughout my time in the Honors Program, I also prioritized supporting my peers. Whether it was aiding with event setup, offering advice on assignments, or simply lending a listening ear, I valued every opportunity to collaborate and uplift those around me. These moments

underscored the importance of mutual support and reminded me that success is best achieved when we work together.

### Honors Program to Professional Lifestyle

The Honors Program has played a pivotal role in shaping not only my academic achievements but also my professional aspirations and personal growth. As I am preparing to transfer to the University of Arkansas to pursue a career in Food Science with a concentration in Culinary Arts, I am carrying forward a wealth of skills and experiences that will serve me well in the next chapter of my journey. Through organizing events such as Dia de Muertos celebrations, game nights, and street cleanup projects, I learned invaluable lessons about teamwork, adaptability, and inclusivity. These experiences taught me how to collaborate effectively with others, manage coordination, and create welcoming environments where people feel valued and included. These skills are essential in the food and hospitality industry, where creativity and collaboration are key to success.



Courses such as College Chemistry I honed my analytical thinking and problem solving abilities, equipping me to approach scientific inquiry and innovation with confidence. This is particularly important in the culinary arts, where understanding the science behind food is crucial for creating new recipes, improving food safety, and perfecting production processes. Art and Music Appreciation classes enriched my creativity and broadened my perspective, inspiring me to think creatively and approach challenges with an open mind. These qualities align seamlessly with the demands of the culinary world, where the ability to innovate and adapt is paramount.

Public speaking opportunities, whether through classroom presentations or event leadership, have been instrumental in building my confidence and communication skills. These experiences taught me how to articulate my thoughts clearly and persuasively, preparing me for leadership roles that require effective communication and collaboration. Reflecting on my journey, I am reminded of Anthony Bourdain's words: "Skills can be taught. Character you either have or you don't." This quote resonates deeply with me as I think about the lessons I've learned through the Honors Program.

The skills I've gained critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration are accompanied by a character shaped by the challenges I've faced, the friendships I've built, and the



incredible community I've been part of. The Honors Program has not only prepared me for the demands of my future career but also instilled in me the confidence to pursue my dreams with courage and determination.

### **Special Thanks To**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the faculty and members of the NWACC Honors Program who have made this journey so memorable. Special thanks to Sabrina Chesnee, whose guidance and encouragement made my transition into honors both seamless and inspiring. Her dedication to creating an engaging and supportive learning environment has been instrumental in my success. I am also profoundly grateful to my fellow Honors students, whose camaraderie and encouragement have been invaluable. From group projects to late night study sessions, the friendships I've built within this community have been a source of strength and inspiration. Together, we've created a network of support that I will carry with me long after graduation. On a personal note, I want to thank my mother, a NWACC Honors graduate, whose footsteps I am proudly following. Visiting the campus with her years ago instilled a deep connection to NWACC and its honors community, a connection that has only grown stronger through my experiences here. I also want to thank close friends like Yullyana Laguna, Avi Vadlamani, and Taryn Settle, whose support and friendship have enriched my honors journey in countless ways.



### **Advice for New Members**



Remember that in both academics and life, we're all in this together. Take pride in your contributions, big or small, and don't hesitate to lend a hand to your peers, it makes the journey richer for everyone. As Anthony Bourdain said, Skills can be taught. Character you either have or you don't. Bring your authentic self to the program, embrace every opportunity to gain experience, and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. The connections you build and the moments you share will shape not only your academic success but also your character and future.