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Honors Student Association Vice President Fall 2022

Honors Student Association President Spring 2023

Spring 2023 Graduate with Associate of Science

Public Speaking Honors

World Civilization to 1500 Honors

Programming Logic I Honors

Chemistry I Honors

## Section 1: Community, Curiosity, and Diversity

When I first started taking courses at NWACC, I was an awkward unsocial 13-year-old kid. With the age difference, I felt like I didn't fit in with the other students. My only goal at NWACC at the time was to take my classes, get good grades, and come back home. I made few friends and wasn't involved in many campus activities. With the COVID pandemic, it was even more difficult to find motivation to do more at NWACC outside of classes. As in person classes started back up again, I decided to try to be involved and do more at college. The only problem was I had no idea where to start.

One day I received an email that would completely change my life at NWACC. It was an invitation to take an honors class and join the Honors Program. I decided to do both, not realizing how much it would enhance my college experience.

My first time doing anything with the Honors Program was at one of the J Street garbage cleanups. Here I met many other honors students for the first time. As we picked up trash and became acquainted with each other, I learned more about the Honors Program and its members. They talked about the projects they were passionate about, all the things they did together as a group, and I began to learn



*J Street Cleanup*

about their values. I had just met a big family of hard working, smart, and fun people. Picking up all this trash didn't feel like a chore with the honors students, I felt like I was making a meaningful contribution to the community. I started to feel like I belonged to something at NWACC. After this garbage cleanup alone, I started to feel motivated to do more as a student and realized how much I could contribute as an Honors Program member.

With my newfound motivation, I saw an opportunity to go to Little Rock for the Arkansas College Hunger Summit and took it. Another student that I had met at the garbage cleanup, Stephanie Palacios, and I made a poster to present at the summit that had information about the NWACC Food Pantry. Prior to hearing about the poster project, both Stephanie and I didn't know that NWACC had a food pantry. When we went down to the summit one of the main problems that the speakers discussed was that many students were unaware that their colleges had food pantries. As we listened to the speakers, we learned more about food insecurity on college campuses and realized how little we knew about this problem in general. There was a diversity of

speakers discussing potential solutions, statistics among Arkansas college campuses, and what people could do about food insecurity on their college campuses. After the presentations, we received \$1000 for the NWACC food pantry for coming to the summit and presenting our poster. I started to discover how much more I could do as a student for the NWACC community. With the new information we had just learned about food insecurity, Stephanie Palacios, Sabrina Chesne, and I grew more curious about food insecurity at NWACC. How big of a problem was it and what could we do about it? On the drive back from Little Rock we brainstormed ideas for projects we could do at NWACC concerning food insecurity.



*Receiving \$1000 at Arkansas Hunger Summit*



*Holiday Hangout with Honors Program*

Over the course of the next two semesters, I became more involved with the Honors Program and at NWACC. I made lifelong friends with the other Honors Program members and grew as a student and person because of them. I joined the Honors Student Association and became vice president and then the president. NWACC became more than just classes and grades, it became a place where I could make a change in the world by doing projects with the people I liked.

In my time as an honors student, many of the projects I worked on were influenced by the Arkansas Hunger Summit trip and

food insecurity. One of these projects was a food insecurity survey that would be sent all over NWACC campus. With the statistics gathered from the survey we could learn about the food insecurity picture on campus and how we could improve it. Yullyana Laguna, Allyson Davidson, and I did a presentation with the information we received from the survey. With the presentation, we hoped to make people curious about what they could do for their community concerning hunger on college campuses.



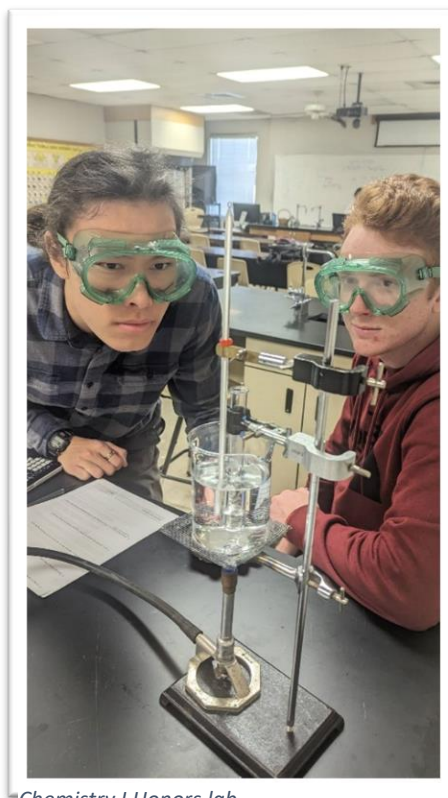
*Food Insecurity Presentation*

Being a part of the Honors Program made me change for the better as a person. I was able to make contributions to the NWACC community with honors projects. I learned from a diversity of honors students and educators that opened my mind to new ideas. I became curious and inspired to put ideas into action for something greater than myself. I made great friendships and found passion within the Honors Program. I learned to value community, curiosity, and diversity.

## **Section 2: Skills**

Before the Honors Program, I wasn't very social and didn't have much experience working in groups. I had no leadership skills and the COVID pandemic was not helpful at all in this regard. Being with the Honors Program gave me the opportunity to improve in those areas. Going to the honors hub everyday and hanging out with students made me slowly acclimate to feeling natural around people. As I talked with students in the honors hub, I learned to make better conversation. With the Honors Program projects I learned to work with other people and communicate to make our work more effective. As a president, I improved my leadership skills with gathering groups of people together to accomplish a goal.

One of the most important skills I learned as an honors student was thinking out of the box. In my honors classes I learned to look at a subject from a unique perspective. In my World Civilization to 1500 Honors class, we examined history through the lens of food. We gained a new perspective through taste, and it gave us a new understanding of the people in the periods we were studying.



*Chemistry I Honors lab*

### Section 3: Valuable Memory

One of my favorite memories as an honors student was when the Honors Program prepared books for a Valentine's Day event called Blind Date with a Book. The idea was that people would come and receive a wrapped book with a little description of the book on it. They had no clue to what the book was about other than the clues on the wrapping paper. So, it was a "blind date with a book". Yullyana Laguna, Kelly Smothers, Sabrina Chesne, Adeola Abe, and Melody Lopez were the people who came to prepare books. I remember laughing at all the hilarious book clues we put on the wrapping paper and just having fun in general doing this little project. We talked about all sorts of different topics and had a great time. The Honors Program isn't always about being serious and hardworking, it's also about having fun and feeling comfortable with your friends. When I think back to this memory, it makes me glad I joined the Honors Program and met all these amazing people.



*Preparing books for Blind Date with a Book*

### **Section 4: Parting words**

Talk to people! Talk to your professors and fellow students, there is so much you can learn from other people's experiences. I grew and learned so much as a person by engaging in conversation with the people around me.

Have fun! Enjoy and find passion in the things you do at NWACC. Life isn't all about being serious. I found much of my enjoyment by doing things with friends.

The Honors Program is a place filled with amazing opportunities and people. You'll find yourself on an awesome journey filled with lots of fun and life-changing experiences. You can make amazing contributions to the world as an honors student. Use your potential to the fullest and make an impact, take a challenge, think out of the box, and go the extra mile as a student!



*Thanai Hill being goofy with honors merchandise*