

HSA Happenings

As we find ourselves diving well into the second semester of the 2016-2017 Academic Year, I am excited to offer to you the January/February issue of HSA Happenings. What we have in store for you in these next few hallowed pages are stories of the Date Auction, a Murder Mystery straight out of the South, and a tale of Genetics and rising fame. We also have a brief piece by our very own Dr. Kevin Dean. I hope you enjoy!

—Max James, Editor



Pricey Dates, Cheap Rates

By Ashley Martindale

February 13th marked HSA's sixth annual Date Auction, a Valentine's Day themed event in which male college students from different clubs and organizations across campus participated. People in the audience had the opportunity to bid for a date with one of these gentlemen, and all proceeds went to Aid to South Africa.

This year, the event was hosted by Erika Flanick and Joshua Dandridge, and along with the dates, there were baked goods and raffles in order to raise more money. In total, the event raised \$1367, with Matt Penecale from the WCU Basketball team raising the most money at \$235.

Some students raised concerns on the general idea of the Date Auction,

stating ideals against the idea of buying dates. Despite these recurrent concerns, the event was a success, raising more money than ever for Aid to South Africa.

Michael Moriarty, a Communications Major and Senior in the Honors Seminar program, had this to say on the Date Auction.

"[It] was a blast. I had the chance to go to South Africa this past summer through Honors. Being able to experience the culture and the needs of others was both stunning and deeply impactful. When I was given the chance to participate I knew regardless of the number I earned—it would make a difference. I was happy and honored to serve even if that meant I had to put on a suit and tie."





A West Chester Western

By Max James

I looked to my left and saw my friend adorned with a cowboy hat and elegant boots, and then looked to my right to see a man-possibly around the age of fifty-clasping a finely aged whiskey drink and a nametag labelled "Al A. Bama". This could very well have been the premise of a strange and unfortunate Halloween party, but fear not: this was West Chester University's Murder Mystery for the Alumni Association.

Created by West Chester's University Theatre, and supported by the Alumni association of WCU, the Murder Mystery is held every year for any alumni interested to participate. This

was my second year in attendance, and I had the honor of playing Clay Coldwell, a no-nonsense gambler and cowboy-extraordinaire. In short, the theme of this year was a Western (which I, personally, had much more fun with than the previous year: 2016's murder mystery was based off a Prom in the 80's where I had to play an evil math teacher).

While not seeking any sort of charitable or monetary gain, the Murder Mystery is a chance for alumni of West Chester University to simply enjoy themselves, and get to know the current students of the campus-albeit between a few layers

of thick Southern accents and various costumes.

Students and members of HSA had the opportunity to participate in this event, and even some of the alum faculty joined in on the fun: in particular, it was quite enjoyable to see renowned professor Dr. Helion joining in a classic Cowboy line dance.

While no plans for next year's Murder Mystery have been formed, there is no doubt this event was an absolute success and they will be continuing the tradition well into next year.

Sisterhood of the Traveling Genes

By Doménica Castro

Who knew that the DNA project a group of Honors Freshmen were assigned back in the Fall Semester of 2016 would attract so much attention from the media on a national and global scale. Washington Post, NPR Radio Station, BBC radio station, and Channel 3 News all



have done coverage on an Honors Self Awareness project that has evolved into a significant socio-political study of ethnicity and race in West Chester's Honors College students. Dr. Anita Foeman, a Communications Professor at West Chester University, co-taught Honors 100 Self Awareness this past Fall Semester 2016, a class which involved open discussions of what each person's cultural narrative meant to them. As part of the class, a majority of Dr. Foeman's students ordered DNA kits, which they then opened up and sent their genetic code (via spit in vials) to a laboratory associated with Ancestry.com. After a considerable number of weeks, results were returned to participants online, and the findings were shocking.

As one of the students in Dr. Foeman's class, I can personally vouch and say that my DNA composition surprised my family members just as much as me. According to my results, I'm a solid

16% British, which had me scratching my head, for I grew up in a household where I was told I was mostly Spanish and Italian. My DNA percentages wove a different tale: my genetic composition registered me as being approximately 12% Spanish, which left my father rather confused, since he was born in Colombia.

I was not the only student baffled at the outcome of the DNA test. One of my peers, Cassie Carabello, discovered she was 41% Native American, when she had previously identified solely as Mexican and Puerto Rican. As a first year in the Honors College, I was delighted to take this class and experience such an introspective learning environment. In a time when there is much political turmoil surrounding immigration and the acceptance of refugees, this DNA experiment is an inspiring way of discovering that everyone is more or less a mutt of interweaving ethnicities, leading to a more diverse and aware

America.

An email went out earlier this month inviting West Chester students to take part in the DNA Discussion Project, with support from the Colleges of Health and Arts & Humanities. Though the deadline for the pre-survey has passed, the

hope now is that eventually all West Chester Students will have access to these DNA cases, at possible a lower cost than initially advertised. If given the opportunity, I would definitely recommend participating in this study. It is a wonderful way to connect to others and feel more tied to your familial and ethnic roots. For more information, visit www.wcupa.edu/DNADiscussion/.

Contact the DNA Discussion Project

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West Chester, PA 19382

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Phone: 610.436.2283



A Bouquet for Barclay

By Kathleen Shultz

At the February 2nd HSA meeting, members made mini-bouquets for Barclay Friends to celebrate Valentine's Day. Students put together the mini-bouquets themselves and then wrote some short, meaningful messages to tie onto the bouquets. The Traveling Across Generations committee distributed the bouquets at the Barclay Center on February 3rd.

This event showcases the importance of service in the Honors Student Association. Since HSA is a collection of so many dedicated members who enjoy service, it has the power to make an impact on the community. By

receiving the bouquets, the residents of the Barclay Center feel the care others have for them. From such a small act of service, the HSA members have touched the lives of Barclay Friends.

Barclay Friends
A KENDAL AFFILIATE | Together, transforming the experience of aging.®

Upcoming events

- Red Cross blood drive: 3:00pm - 8:00pm
- Brandywine Hall: March 1
- Allegheny Hall: March 2
- Killinger Hall: March 27
- Goshen Hall: March 28
- Students' March for Public Education: March 3, 2:00pm - 4:30pm, Academic Quad
- Unite for Her fundraiser: 12:45pm - 3pm
 - March 11: Sturzebecker HSC, Gym 6
 - March 18: Hollinger Field House
- HSA Involvement Fair: March 21, 6:00pm - 7:00pm, Sykes Student Union

Director's Corner – "Alternative Facts" about Honors Education

By Dr. Kevin W. Dean

The concept of "alternative facts" has become a contested argument in recent political discourse. I quickly thought to my elementary school days and the Think-and-Do workbooks accompanying our Dick, Jane and Sally readers. For those who have no idea what I'm talking about, ask your 50-something relatives, or Google it! For those culturally challenged, let me quickly summarize: siblings Dick, Jane and Sally constitute a trio of adventure seeking children who dominated the market of elementary readers from the 1930s through the 1970s.



One exercise told of the challenges when two individuals with bias witness the same event. This particular case involved the statements of two news reporters, one who liked dogs and one who did not, who witnessed the interaction of Dick's dog Spot, with an elderly woman. The first write penned, "Spot, the playful pup who belonged to a high energy boy named Dick, scampered into Mrs. Smith's yard. Surprised by him Mrs. Smith put her hands into the air and said, 'oh my.'" Reporting on the same encounter the second journalist wrote: "Spot, the mangy mutt who belongs to Dick, a boy who clearly does not know how to train his pet, tore into Mrs. Smith's yard. Scaring her nearly to death, Mrs. Smith through up her hands and yelled, "OH

MY!". Alternative Facts.

We in the WCU Honors College community find ourselves in the exciting time of engaging prospective students with the hopes of welcoming them into WCU and Honors in fall 2017.

Many of these students, like most of our current members, have multiple offers... good offers... from which to choose. For many this period harkens the words of Dickens, "It was the best of times and the worst of times." What a privilege to have choices, but choices can become overwhelming. A common method of discernment involves looking at "facts" about the various options and "facts" about Honors education.

Boldly I tell you, expect to confront "alternative facts" about Honors education; one size does not fit all. My nearly twenty years in working with Honors demonstrates most come to our campus anticipating the "fact" Honors classes hold similarity with high school AP classes where content is "harder" and students go "deeper" into a given subject. A true "fact" is many collegiate honors programs utilize this model of education where students take a range of traditional general education classes where they do one more experiment in a science class, read one more novel in English, and deliver a 10 minute vs. 5 minute presentation in French.

The "fact"...and reality... of Honors education at WCU is our commitment to an alternative model. We see the "college AP" approach as promoting division where students within a given discipline find excitement so long as they remain comfortably in their majors, yet experience anxiety or outright rejection of stretching beyond their academic comfort zone.

The "fact"... and reality... of Honors education at WCU is our embrace of interdisciplinary learning. We foster a community of learners, representing a wide diversity of academic interests, who come together to help each other discern their strengths and gifts as leaders and to challenge each other to use those gifts in service to others through civic engagement. We prize development of strong communication skills, understanding the utilization and value of quantitative measures to back a claim, critical thinking, and decisions made on ethical principles. We celebrate diversity on all levels and utilize this richness in collaborative group work, designed to identify unmet needs in our environment, educational systems, local and global communities, the fine arts, and in the lives of those who seek social justice.

A fact, to which no alternative exists: WCU Honors proudly stands on our motto, **to be honorable is to serve**. We welcome all in conversation who wish to learn more about what we offer.

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7th Floor Allegheny Hall RAs

<i>Mikaila Barba</i>	<i>Cameron Cooper</i>
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HSA Happenings is a student-produced monthly newsletter created and distributed by the Honors Student Association. Its purpose is to supplement the West Chester University community's knowledge of the Honors Student Association's activities and endeavors.

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