

# *With* HONORS

*A Magazine of the Youngstown State University Sokolov Honors College*



MALAINA  
CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITY



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From left, honors students **Jasmine Black**, **Mackenzie Goodin** and **Harmony Black** talk with fellow honors students about ways to get engaged at the involvement fair held at Fok Hall.

*This issue's cover photo features students at MALAINA carnival, an event designed to celebrate cultures from around the world. The MALAINA initiative seeks to unify and empower students of diverse backgrounds within the Honors College. Read more about MALAINA on pages 6-7.*

*With Honors* is a yearly publication of the Youngstown State University Sokolov Honors College for alumni, students, faculty and staff, parents, and friends.

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## Mission Statement

Inspiring a love of learning  
through opportunity, community and family

# DEAN'S LETTER

## Collaboration proves key to new initiatives

The Sokolov Honors College at Youngstown State University built upon the foundation to expand opportunities for our students. Collaboration between students, staff, alumni, faculty and community partners resulted in the development of a strategic plan and implementation of new seminar and service initiatives. Providing support for growing differentiating initiatives was further made possible by the naming of the college. The generosity of Rick and Susan Sokolov provides support for student development and success in the areas of civic engagement, financial literacy, research and scholarship.

The Sokolov Honors College continues to enroll more than 1,200 students. Student-led and faculty/staff contributions included the launch of the Spanish version of the Honors College website. The Community Fellows, a student program to connect community partners to campus, kicked off in the fall of 2021. Fellows were assigned to United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, OH WOW! The Roger & Gloria Jones Children's Center for Science & Technology and the Penguin Pen Pal Project, a partnership with local elementary schools. Collaborative efforts were also recognized for their quality by external organizations. *With Honors* was awarded the top magazine of the year by the National Collegiate Honors Council. Student leadership was also recognized externally with awards by NCHC and Ohio Campus Compact.

Honors welcomed new staff members to support growing initiatives – Dr. Alicia Prieto Langarica joined honors to focus on the development of research seminars, community college connections, and provide support to students with the YSU-BaccMed curriculum. Presley Bowser, Honors College graduate (2020), will provide oversight and development of the undergraduate teaching assistants, student retention, persistence and graduation. Dr. Karen Becker came out of retirement to lead MCAT test prep sessions for our pre-med and YSU-BaccMed students. We are grateful for their contributions and look forward to their continued engagement.

The last year has demonstrated how much we learn and gain through shared experiences. When diversity of disciplines, talents and strengths are brought together through collaborative initiatives, student learning and lives are enhanced and enriched. We continue to appreciate the selfless gifts of time, talent and treasure by our alumni, donors and community partners. The stories you will read in this magazine illustrate collaborative efforts and outcomes to inspire a love of learning.

With honors,



Amy Cossentino, Dean



Johnny Ware and YSU-BaccMed students gather for a mixer at Fok Hall.

# Sokolov Honors College brings home two top awards from NCHC

A delegation of students from the Sokolov Honors College took home two top awards from the National Collegiate Honors Council conference held in Orlando, Florida, October 27-31.

The NCHC conference brings together students, faculty and administrators from across the world to collaborate and inspire new ideas and energy into honors education. YSU students have been attending the conference since 2008. Attendance at NCHC supports the Honors College pillars of academics and research, interdisciplinary perspectives and global citizenship.

**Julie Centofanti**, a sophomore Biology major in the BaccMed program, received the John J. Hanigan Scholarship for her work on developing a meaningful way for students to serve the community together through transcribing.

"The Transcribing Club has given me a sense of purpose. I have met students of diverse majors and made friends that I could have never made otherwise. We work together to achieve a common goal, despite

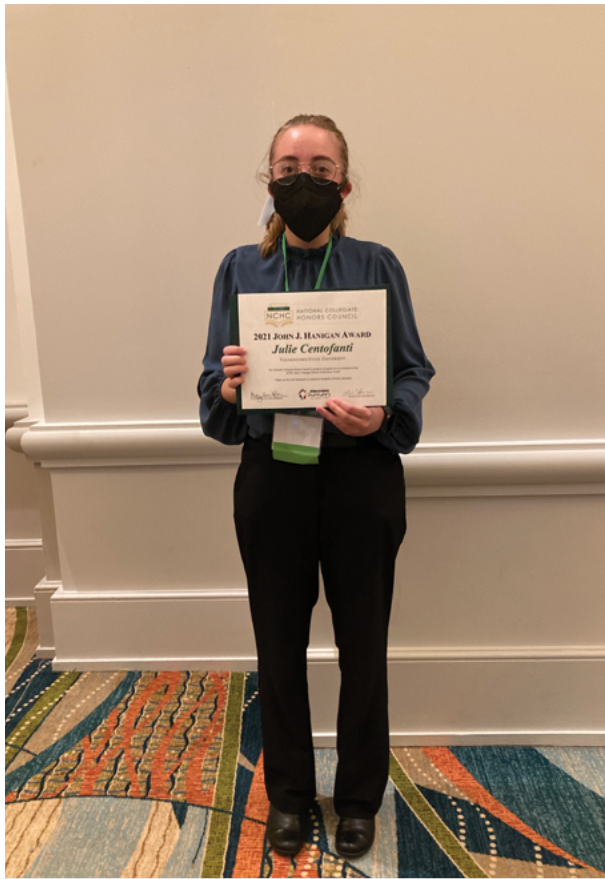
the pandemic limitations," Centofanti said.

The Honors College also earned a first-place award in the print division for the *With Honors* magazine and a third place award in the electronic division for the honors family newsletter.

"Having this publication recognized through this competitive process provides recognition for the student magazine team and the significant time and effort they have invested," said professional staff editor Mollie Hartup.

Sophomore **Alessandra Montanez**, a Business Administration major, served as a student moderator for several conference sessions at the event. She also recorded videos throughout NCHC.

"My experience with NCHC was so inspiring and it made me want to pursue my own research again. I loved it, and I had such a great time. I hope that other students take advantage of the opportunity to go and experience the same," Montanez said.



Julie Centofanti

## Student Presenters

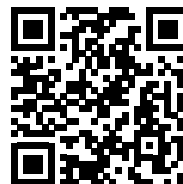
**Julie Centofanti**, sophomore Biology major in the BaccMed program, "Presenting Serving through Transcribing - Preserving History while Building Community"

**Tek Chhetri**, senior majoring in Electrical Engineering, presenting "Self-Driving Car" research poster

**Bronson DeAngelo**, sophomore majoring in Psychology, and **Taylor Sebastiano**, sophomore majoring in Biology/Pre-Medicine, presenting "Honors Helping Future Scholars - And Their Schools."

**Alessandra Montanez**, sophomore Business Administration major, serving as student moderator to several sessions

**Lauren Rager**, senior majoring in Anthropology, presenting "A Student-Centered Approach to Curating Content for Publications" and "The Impact of Man-Made Bird Boxes on the Reproduction of Cavity Nesting Birds" research poster



Scan the QR code to watch more about the 2021 NCHC experience.

# Meeting my mentor, a fellow lemur

By Lauren Rager, HC26

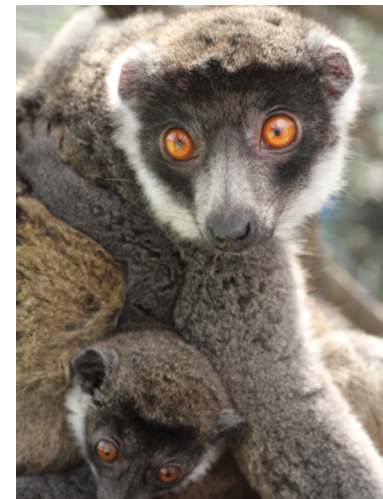
I always have had a huge fascination with icons of the animal world, like Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey. My interest in Primatology (the study of non-human primates), specifically, has grown since interning at the Lemur Conservation Foundation during the summer of 2021. I never imagined that, through a conference with the Sokolov Honors College, I would get to meet the world-renowned primatologist, Mireya Mayor.

Mayor has made an incredible impact in research and conservation, from working with National Geographic as an explorer, to being on the team that discovered the smallest species of lemur in the world known as the Mouse Lemur. She is also a primatologist for the show "Finding Bigfoot."

I was shocked when I discovered Mayor was a speaker for the NCHC 2021 conference. Honestly, I was super nervous about what to say when I would see her! In fact, the first time I caught a glimpse of Mayor was on the escalators before her speech. I remember thinking "she is real and standing on an escalator right there..." By the time I gathered my wits, she was gone.

When the actual session was beginning, my honors peers were making sure my nerves did not discourage me from talking to Mayor this time around. They encouraged me to sit right in front of Mayor while she spoke, and it was very clear that I was a fangirl. She even referenced some of my rigorous nodding in agreement while she was presenting, much to my embarrassment. Following her session, I was able to speak in person with Mayor and receive an autographed book from her to treasure the experience. I also got a picture with her just to remind myself it wasn't a dream!

My favorite part of Mayor's story was when she talked about anything and everything lemur related, from the conservation of the rare Silky Sifaka's to the identification and tagging of the new Mouse Lemurs. I was able to connect with the work she achieved on a spiritual level because I, too, had personal interactions with the lemurs I've worked with at LCF. When I spoke to her, it



felt refreshing to be in the presence of someone else who has held a connection with primates because it is a special relationship not many people get to form or understand unless they have been amongst the animals themselves.



Lexi Rager, Taylor Sebastiano, Bronson DeAngelo

## Serving and presenting: the NCHC experience

By Taylor Sebastiano, HC28

In the wake of the pandemic last year, myself and **Bronson DeAngelo**, fellow honors student staff member, created a virtual tutoring program for families in local areas. The program, Honors Helping Future Scholars (HHFS), allows honors students to volunteer hours to help K-12 children get the academic support they need. We were accepted to present about the HHFS experience at NCHC, which was a surreal experience.

The first night, we checked into the conference and indicated our comfort level with social distancing with red, yellow or green stickers for our name tags, which was a really nice touch. The second day presentations began and we supported our fellow students presenting while also being able to attend other sessions and gain some networking opportunities. Through talking to others, I was able to exchange some great ideas related to the honors experience from test taking to teaching assistant strategies and website building. The third day was my time to present with Lexi Rager, honors assistant director, who mentored us through coordinating HHFS. Being able to share what we have done and get feedback from the audience was an enlightening experience. Then, as if the day were not amazing enough, NCHC gave all attendees tickets to the Epcot Food and Wine Festival where we ate the most amazing food under those iconic fireworks.

Overall, the NCHC Conference was unforgettable in the best way! I learned so much and was able to offer some of what we here at YSU are doing to help other honors colleges around the country. The Sokolov Honors College has given me the most amazing opportunities and offered me so many priceless lessons that will last a lifetime.



Mireya Mayor & Lauren Rager

# Campus Community Partnerships – strengthening the first year in honors

By Elsa Khan, HC28

Campus Community Partnerships is a service-oriented seminar required for first-year honors students. When looking at the pillars that are the foundation of the Sokolov Honors College, this seminar essentially covers them all. From leadership and engagement to volunteerism and service learning, the seminar allows first-year students to finish the year as well-rounded individuals. The course opens with lessons regarding service, from what it means to serve to methods students can use to impact their community in various manners. As the semester progresses and a solid foundation for service and leadership is in place, the students form groups to analyze the community around them and create a project or direct an effort to better the world. By looking at the community through a new lens of compassion and humility, students are able to better comprehend the gravity of this project.

Projects can range from helping the homeless to saving the environment and spreading love to veterans and hospital patients. The process for identifying a community need begins with research. The journey led many to look at federal grants and fill out a mock application to better understand the gravity of people's needs. After thorough research is completed, students are quick to get to work on their service project. My group in particular crocheted mats out of plastic grocery bags to donate to the Rescue Mission, a shelter that serves the needs of many. This project accomplished several goals, such as promoting the reuse of a common item that easily goes to landfills. After the mats were crocheted, they served three purposes: either as a mat, a blanket, and when rolled up, a pillow. Completing this project at the end of the semester provided valuable lessons, such as the idea that there is no limit on how to better the community. The world will always benefit from a little kindness and compassion.

Although I completed the course last spring, I am excited to see how my future students will grow as servant leaders. Looking back, I am grateful that I was able to go through this process with the Honors College. I was able to challenge and change my perspective while checking my privileges. Now, I am able to watch my students find a service niche that they are passionate about, and hopefully grow in a similar way as I did. Once

students finish their first year with honors, they can feel secure in their place in the community. They become leaders who pride themselves on service and humility. Campus Community Partnerships is a course that truly develops leaders for a better tomorrow.



*Spring 2021 marked the first semester in which Campus Community Partnerships became a required seminar for first-year honors students. The course, which focuses heavily on service, allowed the Honors College to remain connected with freshmen for their entire first year of college, thus providing a deeper connection to honors and stronger foundation for serving the community. Elsa Khan, an Honors College teaching assistant who took the class last Spring, provides her perspective on the value of the seminar. Through her reflection, she touches on the importance of service and compassion on growing as an individual.*



Freshman **Morgan McCluskey** cleans animal dishes while helping with day-to-day operations at New Lease on Life in Struthers as part of the class project.

# Community connections strengthened by community fellows program

By Gabriella Gensamer, HC28

Through the generosity of the Sokolov family, honors has a new name and new opportunities for its students. The Sokolov Honors College Community Fellows Program enhances connections between honors and community partners and advances student engagement in the community. The fellows program was established to bolster the volunteerism & service learning pillar, allowing YSU to strengthen its relationship with the community while providing opportunities for the student fellows to build essential life skills. Currently, there are three community fellows who work with United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, OH WOW! The Roger & Gloria Jones Children's Center for Science & Technology and the Penguin Pen Pals program.

Senior **Macey Redmond** has regularly volunteered for United Way through programs such as Success After 6, an after school program that provides extra nourishment and cultural enrichment to children attending Youngstown City Schools, and Satur-Day of Caring, a program that packages food and drink staples and delivers them to those shut-in during the pandemic. Along with Hello Vello!, a virtual reading buddy program for elementary school children, she continues to help these programs but now can provide more than participation. She acts as a liaison between YSU and United Way, communicating opportunities to students and acting as a resource for those with questions.

Youngstown State and OH WOW! have had a relationship since the museum's opening. However, to continue encouraging STEM exploration to local children, they need volunteers to assist with community events, compile at-home learning packages, and contribute to upcoming projects. **David Gessler**, a longtime volunteer at OH WOW!, expressed that being involved in the coordination is rewarding and enjoyable because it supports the program's original goal of building leadership and critical thinking skills. "Even though there was a previous relationship, the Community Fellows program strengthens it, allowing for regular communication and increased opportunity to YSU students," Gessler said.

Senior **Mackenzie Goodin** and freshman **Natalie Dando** serve as fellows for the Honors College Pen Pals Program, which currently partners with local elementary schools Harding Elementary School and Girard Intermediate School. Honors students are paired up with elementary students and communicate through a shared notebook. Those involved talk to the students about their classes and interests through written pages. This form of conversation strengthens vocabulary and writing skills. The duo corresponds with the school, checks that the honors students are fulfilling their writing obligations, and ensures that the journals travel safely between the schools.

Lexi Rager, who oversees volunteerism in the Honors College, manages about 1200 honors students, each with a 60-hour yearly volunteerism requirement. "A lot of behind-the-scenes work happens when coordinating with the community," Rager said. The addition of the fellows allows her to devote more time and energy to other areas. Her favorite part of the program is watching the community fellows grow.



Senior **David Gessler** serves as community fellow for OH WOW! and corresponds with the head of activities and assists with volunteer organization for any event needed.



Freshman **Natalie Dando** organizes the Pen Pal bins as she prepares the journals for honors students to write to their Pen Pals.

# Celebrating our Diversity

# MALAINA



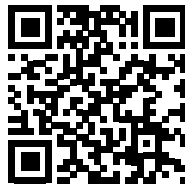
By Elsa Khan, HC28

The Sokolov Honors College is committed to celebrating diversity in all forms. Read on as three members of the honors family explore their collegiate journey to self-discovery and embracing their authentic selves. Scan the QR codes for each person to hear more of their story in their own words.

## MYA BLANCO

**Mya Blanco**, HC28, a

Cuban-American student, shares her experience at YSU and within honors as she finishes her Biology Pre-Dental degree. Using the powerful support from her family, who always push her to do well in school, Blanco realized that she knew she wanted to help others build their confidence, specifically with their smiles. She plans to pursue dental school upon graduation. Her grandparents, who emigrated from Cuba, and her father, all serve as an inspiration to her through their demonstration of the power of hard work. Blanco also serves as vice president for MALAINA, an honors initiative that celebrates students of diverse backgrounds.



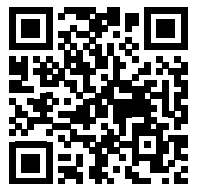
*"I love MALAINA. I think it is really great, and it builds a really great community. It is a great organization to not only get to know other Hispanics as YSU, but also to learn about different identities that I necessarily did not learn about in high school."* - Mya Blanco

*"I had to be okay with being an individual and taking pride in that I am someone who will succeed on this field, and I do not have to change myself and I could still be Avery Howard unapologetically. I am hoping that someone of color sees that and realizes that I can find my place."* - Avery Howard

*"It's big to me for people to exemplify love and humility. No matter who you are, no matter what you have done, whatever it is, I am going to love you."* - Torrian Price

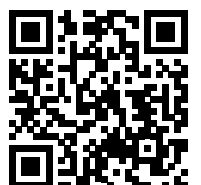
## TORRIAN PACE

**Torrian Pace**, HC17, provided a unique perspective from being both an honors student and an athlete on campus. Pace highlighted how he was able to meet people with different backgrounds, which impacted his perspective and motivated him to learn as much as he could about his classmates. His goal outside of academics was to get to know other people. Pace highlighted how diversity is what makes unity, and diversity is what makes life so beautiful. As a leader on campus who celebrated his own identity, he also was a role model for others so that they could also learn to love their differences and similarities. He mentioned that all humans are complex beings and we all should strive to create an environment that is inclusive to people of all



## AVERY HOWARD

**Avery Howard**, HC25, reflected on his time within honors which he describes as "a family within a family, a home within a home." For Howard, this familial environment provides the foundation that helped him to find his place. He feels his identity as a Black man who identifies with the LGBT+ community presented its own challenges. Howard is grateful for his roots within honors and that he felt his individuality was celebrated rather than being seen as a label.







# Students celebrate culture through MALAINA carnival

By Annabelle Himes, HC28

Students no longer have to travel far to experience an international festival of food and dance. This fall, the front lawn of Fok Hall was transformed into the MALAINA carnival, an event which celebrates cultures from around the world. MALAINA, which stands for Middle East, African American/Black, Latino/Latina, Asian/Pacific Islander, International, and Native American, is an initiative of the Sokolov Honors College which aims to educate, unify and empower students of all cultures and backgrounds. During the carnival, students were invited to learn about the initiative, try new foods, and learn different cultural dances.

More than ten countries were showcased at the festival, including Egypt, Yemen, Turkey, Nigeria, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Vietnam, India and Pakistan. Students represented their countries by sharing information and experiences with fellow honors students while wearing their cultural attire. Additionally, students in MALAINA prepared food to share with everyone in attendance. There were many cuisines to sample, including butter chicken from India, Spanish rice, pastelitos, flan, falafel, fried rice and baklava.

“The exposure and new awareness of what else is out there might be the biggest takeaway of the event. Now that I know what I did not know, I have a richer life experience,” MALAINA leader and event organizer **Oluwatuminiu Adeeko** said.

“Students participating shared that it was great to experience a new culture and be part of something they never thought they would be part of,” coordinator for student enrichment and diversity programs Johnny Ware said.



Scan the QR code for an inside glimpse into the event, complete with culture song and dance.



# HONORS STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE AS STUDENT TRUSTEES

By Kirsten Moore, HC28

Honors students have a long history of serving the university as student members of the YSU Board of Trustees. Of the 23 YSU students who have served as student trustee since 2000, 15 have also been a part of the Sokolov Honors College, including the two sitting trustees, sophomores **Elsa Khan** and **Galena Lopuchovsky**. Every year, the Ohio governor appoints university students to serve in this capacity. These students are charged with bringing the perspectives of YSU students into board meetings. "I wanted to become a student trustee because I wanted to be a voice for students during an ever-changing time, where higher education has found itself evolving faster than ever. It has granted me opportunities to learn extensively about the operations of higher education institutions," Lopuchovsky said. Student trustees have many duties, including attending all YSU Board of Trustee meetings and representing the voice of all students.

"My campus employment, involvement in various student organizations, and experiences that have come as a result of these opportunities have allowed me to immerse myself in a diverse pool of students in each area. This has allowed me to hear the concerns and successes of many students from a variety of backgrounds," Lopuchovsky said.

Two past honors students who served as student trustees

recall their board service as a learning experience that prepared them for their professional roles today. **Daniel DeMaiolo** served from 2008 to 2010, and **Melissa Wasser** served from 2012 to 2014.

"During my tenure as a student trustee, I was primarily responsible for providing a student perspective on a wide range of topics facing the Board of Trustees. These topics dealt with a wide range of governance, [including] reviewing budgets, participating in union negotiations, providing recognition and honors, approving campus infrastructure plans, and serving on the presidential search committee for YSU's seventh president," DeMaiolo said.

Currently, DeMaiolo works in the field of user experience design at PNC Financial Services. He is responsible for designing the user experience for the front office and middle office staff. This includes gathering requirements, creating journeymaps and personas, storyboarding, prototyping, developing user research plans and iterating. "Serving as a student trustee requires critical thinking and decision-making skills as well as the ability to challenge the current status quo, which is essential to good design I still practice many of the skills I gained from my many mentors on the Board of Trustees," DeMaiolo said.



Honors sophomores Elsa Khan (left) and Galena Lopuchovsky currently serve as student members of the YSU Board of Trustees.

During her time as a student trustee, Wasser read reports, listened to presentations, gave input on student body issues and voted on items in committee. "I wanted an opportunity to give back to Youngstown State while I was still a student. I also wanted a more in-depth experience representing my fellow students and giving them a stringer voice and representation on the Board," Wasser said.



***"My term as a student trustee was one of the highlights during my time at YSU"***

~Daniel DeMaiolo

Wasser currently works as policy counsel at the Project on Government Oversight, which is a federal government watchdog in Washington D.C. In this position, Wasser handles whistleblower reform, Freedom of Information Act reform, court access and Office of Legal Counsel transparency issues. She works to strengthen whistleblower protections for both federal employees and whistleblowers while also ensuring that the Supreme Court of the United States continues to provide live audio of oral arguments. "I always knew I wanted to go to law school after graduation and my student trustee experience prepared me for that environment. Being a student trustee gave me a better understanding of how my decisions impact others and what to expect in a professional environment, helped me prepare for joining my next board, board of directors at The Ohio State University Alumni Association, and set me up for success in my career as a lawyer," Wasser said.

## HONORS STUDENTS WHO HAVE SERVED AS STUDENT TRUSTEE

Mollie (McGovern) Hartup	2000-02
Jeffrey Parks	2001-03
Paul Walker	2004-06
Louise Popio	2005-07
Stephen Foley	2007-09
Daniel DeMaiolo	2008-10
Ryan Meditz	2010-12
Melissa Wasser	2012-14
Eric Shehadi	2013-15
Samantha Anderson	2015-17
Allan Metz	2016-18
Lexi Rager	2017-19
Victoria Woods	2019-21
Galatiani Lopuchovsky	2020-22
Elsa Khan	2021-23



# Honors provides dual layers of support to student athletes

By Christina Corturillo, HC27

Being an honors student in athletics can be difficult when trying to juggle homework, studying, and volunteering while still having a social life. Student-athletes have to be able to handle all of the normal stresses along with the commitments their sport demands.

Honors alum **Torrian Pace**, now a PhD candidate at the University of Florida, played football in college and credits that experience with teaching him teamwork, perseverance, self-discipline, and communication.

"These skills are essential in life, grad school, and in every day interaction when meeting new people and building relationships," said Pace. "There have been times where I've had to improve upon these skills. It stems from the unselfish and sacrificial nature that makes us uncomfortable, but I have come to understand that we do and who we are has to go beyond us. We have to think about who are we and how do we impact others and how can we serve someone other than ourselves."

There are currently 59 students in the Sokolov Honors College who participate in sports including bowling, football, swimming, track and field and soccer.

Here are a few of their stories.

## Kirsten Moore



Sophomore English major **Kirsten Moore** is a member of YSU's women's bowling team. She will graduate in May of 2023 with the goal of being a book editor. She uses a planner to balance her schedule and use her time wisely. She makes a plan of what she wants to do every day for her classes and writes down practice times. While planning her work, she figures out times that she can be by herself to relax and release some stress. She explained that honors has been very supportive when she needs help.



## Alayna Cuevas

**Alayna Cuevas**, who participates in track and field, is a Mechanical Engineering major who hopes to graduate in 2025. She would like to work as a mechanical engineer and ultimately become an entrepreneur. As stressful and overwhelming as her sport and classes can be, she can still find a balance between productivity and relaxation. She also works hard during the week and uses weekends to recover. She has received an extensive amount of guidance and advice from honors not only for academics but also on a personal level. To quote Alayna, "If you put your mind to it, you can achieve anything through hard work."

# Nicholas Winsen

Freshman **Nicholas Winsen**, a football player, is a computer science major who plans to graduate in 2025. He hopes to find a job that will allow him to live a comfortable and happy life. His approach to balancing life and work is reserving weekends to recuperate and weekdays solely for his sport and academics. He has learned how to manage his time by making daily goals and deadlines for himself. He is most proud of his mental strength, which helps him dedicate himself to his demanding sport and major. He says, "Honors has created a second world of community for me outside of athletics. I am glad to be a part of both communities that are so supportive of their students."



# Jillian Jakse



**Jillian Jakse**, a sophomore Civil Engineering major, is not only a member of the Sokolov Honors College, but a member of YSU's softball team. During her freshman season alone, Jakse was named Horizon League Freshman of the Year and All-horizon League First-Team due to her impressive performance both on and off the field. She appeared and started in 51 games. While managing a busy schedule, Jakse makes time to serve her community by participating in the Honors College Pen Pal Program and donating her time to support the Lady Pioneers softball team.

Jakse believes that education is an extremely valuable part of one's life and feels that the Honors College embraces a community of academic excellence. In the future, Jakse wishes to pursue growth both academically and personally and she feels that the Sokolov Honors College can help her to reach her goals.

# Hailey Zelinsky



Junior **Hailey Zelinsky**, who is involved with track and field, is a Communication and Geography major who plans to graduate in the spring of 2023. Her goal is to become an urban planner when she graduates. She admits that it is challenging to fit everything into her schedule; However, keeping a planner has helped. She writes all of her due dates, practices and events. Honors and athletics have helped her by improving her time management skills and to become even more determined and passionate.



*Athletes involved with the Honors College certainly need to dedicate more time and energy than most students. The five students featured have shown that it is very possible to balance both honors and a sport. Honors and their teams are there to help them and provide dual layers of support throughout their journey here at Youngstown State University.*

# Injured athlete embraces road to recovery

By Macey Redmond, HC26

After multiple surgeries to recover from a serious car accident, sophomore **Daniel Minenok** is back in the classroom and on the football field as a coach. In January of last year, Minenok was involved in a head on collision with a garbage truck on his way to football practice. His only memory of the accident is gaining consciousness in the car, being in a lot of pain and not knowing what was going on. Immediately after the accident he was rushed to the hospital, and his recovery required seven emergency surgeries. Later, the hardware in his hip failed and he received an additional surgery for the refracture. Now, as a student assistant on the YSU football staff, he has had the opportunity to work with his brother, Patrick, who also plays on the team. Minenok was also a student athlete at his alma mater New Castle High School. There, he played basketball and football with dreams to continue his career on the gridiron at YSU. Despite the accident ending his collegiate athletic career, Minenok is enjoying his time coaching and is thankful for the opportunity.

"I love every second of working for the YSU football staff. It's everything I've dreamed of ever since I was in kindergarten. I knew that I wanted to play college football at a really young age, but unfortunately my playing days ended sooner than I had hoped. I knew that I wanted to get into coaching as soon as possible. Luckily, the coaching staff here let me get involved and I haven't looked back since," Minenok said.

The idea of everything coming full circle when facing adversity came to life during Minenok's experience. "When I was at St Elizabeth's, from the hospital room and the acute rehab floor, I could look out and see Stambaugh Stadium. Now, where our linebacker position group does our drills, I can look behind the big side of the Stadium and see where I was at in the hospital. So whenever I have time at practice to reflect, embrace, and appreciate where I am now and everything I've been through, it's awesome," Minenok said.

Throughout his recovery, Minenok received a humbling response from the community. The Sokolov Honors College coordinated a T-shirt fundraiser with proceeds going towards Minenok's medical expenses. Students and staff also put together a video sending Minenok their best wishes last spring. Students and staff also put together a video sending Minenok their best wishes last spring.



Scan the QR code to hear more from Daniel.



"When I initially saw the video put together by the Honors College, it brought me to tears. I was so surprised. I'm grateful to be a part of a college where it's bigger than just school and academics. The Honors College is really a family. Youngstown State, the faculty and students here, are like a family and it meant the world to me," Minenok said.

Minenok began attending school full-time during the fall 2021 semester. He said that he is now fully realizing all of the help the Honors College gives to students and that he enjoys every second of being an Honors College student. Within his own family, Minenok is the middle child of four siblings. He said that his siblings and parents helped him tremendously through the process of recovery and that this accident helped him learn the importance of family.

# Inspiring a love of learning through quality community and family

## Celebrating STUDENT SUCCESS



"Ted Talk" speakers pictured from left are Lauren Rager *Wild Tales of an Honors Student*, Wyatt Miller *Music: The Key to the Soul*, Julie Centofanti *Serving through Transcribing*, Alyssa Leone *Reaching for the Stars*, Scott Gregory *The Power of Video*, Tafadzwa Mapiki *Big Small Steps*, and Annabelle Himes, moderator. Not pictured: Balakrishna Brahmandam, Sophia Vemulapalli, Leo Puhalla *Our Journey to Medical School*.

## INSIDE THE SOKOLOV HONORS COLLEGE SHOWCASE

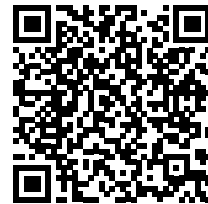
By Annabelle Himes, HC28

The inaugural Sokolov Honors College Showcase, held on Oct. 7, highlights a wide variety of scholarship and service completed by honors students. At the event, students are given the opportunity to showcase their achievements to fellow Honors College members, faculty and staff. This year students presented 17 poster projects and nine students presented "Ted Talks" on their opportunities and successes within the Honors College. Here, Annabelle Himes discusses her experience participating in the showcase.

I was asked to be both a poster presenter and the emcee for the showcase. I had a wonderful time presenting my poster on my small business, Heroes and Tiaras, which is a character entertainment company. We attend birthday parties, and a variety of community events as princess, superheroes, and several other additional characters. A portion of the proceeds from each party goes back to different organizations in the area such as The Rescue Mission. Additionally, we also visit these organizations frequently throughout the year. During my poster presentation, I shared how I started my small business and where it is today. Additionally,

I shared pictures of my performers and me at community events and parties. In addition to presenting my project, I learned an abundant amount of information from my fellow honors classmates' opportunities from their projects.

Having the opportunity to emcee this event was an honor. My job was to direct the flow of the showcase after the poster presentation session concluded. I was able to announce the students who prepared oral presentations about their college experiences for the showcase. From an international student sharing her journey of searching for colleges and coming to YSU, to a student who shared his love of music and how it changed his life, the showcase was memorable and enlightening for many honors freshmen who are still adjusting to college life.



Scan the QR code to watch the "Ted Talks" and student poster presentations.



# HONORS STUDENTS SPEND SUMMER

By Macey Redmond, HC26

*While some people look forward to taking vacation during summer break, many Sokolov Honors College students take advantage of this time to delve into their studies and build their resumes. Regardless of major, honors students explore some amazing opportunities in their fields that help them gain real world experiences. The honors college is built on five pillars of social and academic excellence, including research and scholarship, leadership and engagement, global citizenship, volunteerism and service learning, and interdisciplinary perspectives. These summer experiences enhance student learning across all five pillars of honors.*

**Ella Siembieda**, a sophomore Biology Pre-Medical major, had the opportunity this past summer to travel abroad to Tanzania with FutureDocs Abroad, a summer honors program for high school and undergraduate students who aspire to a career in the medical field. She got to participate in different rotations at Kairuki Hospital for two weeks. The rotations included labor and delivery, pediatrics, OB/GYN, surgery, dialysis, and more. Siembieda treated patients, drew blood from a nurse, anesthetically put a patient to sleep before surgery, and contracted a parasite and treated it herself. During her experience, she also got to go on an authentic African safari and take a taxi boat to a nearby island on the Indian ocean.

"This experience was truly an eye-opening experience. Medical exposure aside, I am truly humbled to see how very blessed we are in the United States. This trip was about what I believe the honors college mission is about. I had the opportunity to travel to a whole other country to learn about not only my future profession but also about another culture," Siembieda said.

**Ivan Bosnjak**, a junior Information Technology & Marketing major, took one information technology internship this past summer with Prodigal Media and is currently doing a marketing internship with 898 Marketing. While in this internship, Bosnjak is also working on building a personal brand for his business. He says the internships help him understand the importance of attitude in the workplace. By completing these internships, he was able to gain relevant experience in both of his major fields and work with multiple companies and clients.

"The love for learning is present in both experiences. I was able to work with multiple companies and clients," said Bosnjak.

**Prinshep Yadav**, a senior Mathematics major, worked with Deck of Dice Gaming remotely, a software gaming company in Cleveland. He interned in the analytics and QA department at Deck of Dice for 12 weeks. His main job was to report the data and create a new way for reporting audience performance and reaction and make a business model for the company. He also worked in the QA section during the internship, where



he used to play the game in the test version of the app and debug errors that users might experience while playing the game. At his internship, Yadav had access to many new analytical tools which he had not heard of and used before, including having access to google analytics. He also got access to apps flyer, which collects data from servers and gives a better understanding of the retention and economic status of the company. He also used Power BI, AWS, and Python to solve real world problems.

"Honestly, internships and jobs are great ways to get



# INTERNING AROUND COUNTRY, WORLD

experience. I learn so many things from classes but to apply the knowledge, get practical knowledge, and experience real-world challenges, internships are the perfect way to get that experience," said Yadav. "At my internship, I got access to many new analytical tools which I had not heard of and used before."

**Mohammed Asad Khan**, a senior Civil Engineering major, interned at ECS Mid-Atlantic in Wexford, Pennsylvania where he worked on a variety of construction projects in the greater Pittsburgh area. Projects included schools, dams, utility lines, pavements, highways, parking lots, and historical buildings. Some of his duties at ECS required him to be in continuous communication with contractors, clients and his supervisor.

"Learning from books is great, but civil engineers work in the field most of the time and getting that practical knowledge is going to help me greatly in the future," said Khan. "I got to work with some really great people and did a



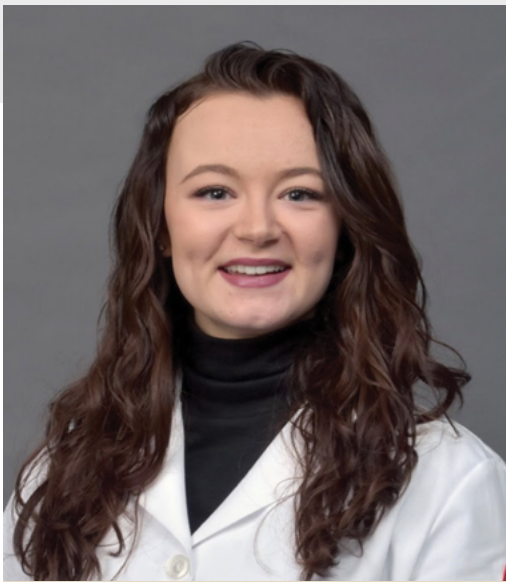
lot of networking."

**Naomi Herman**, a junior Chemical Engineering major, worked with Avient. During the first semester of her sophomore year, she decided to apply for an internship with the billion dollar corporation in the polymer field. Shortly after, she received one out of five spots as an intern with this company. Naomi took both the Spring and Fall 2021 semesters off and became a non-traditional full-time student, working 40 hours weekly through a project engineering internship. She has been placed at two different plants, one in Maine and one in Illinois. Her responsibilities during both rotations include day-to-day engineering tasks as well as a few larger capital projects, encompassing continuous improvement, LEAN Six Sigma principles, and efficiency boosting within the plant.

"My experiences were substantial and gave me the opportunity to learn a multitude of things that traditional college lectures and examinations cannot provide. Mainly, that knowledge of intricate process details was not necessarily the key to success in this position, but rather my frame of mind and resolve when confronted with a task," Herman said.

Herman shares that being a member of the Honors College and surrounding herself with like-minded people drives her desire to strive to be her best in academics, in her community, and in life itself. She says her love of learning and experiencing new concepts is what initially drew her to the Honors College.





## DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENT RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

Senior **Katie Clement** researched how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted infection control measures and personal protective equipment (PPE) in the dental hygiene profession. She found that the pandemic created a shift in health and safety guidelines of the profession, similar to changes that were made following the discovery of AIDS. Her research titled, "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Dental Hygiene Profession: Personal Protective Equipment and Infection Control Changes" was recognized at a national conference.

Clement was selected as the third place winner during the American Dental Hygienists' Association 2021 Annual Conference Undergraduate Research Poster Competition in Phoenix, Arizona in June 2021.

"It was a great honor receiving a national award," Clement said. "The Honors College pushed me above and beyond academically during my time as a gain as well as supported me financially."

## EDUCATION MAJOR SERVES AS TA/Writing FELLOW

Sophomore **Emily Vero**, Integrated Language Arts Education major, serves as a teaching assistant/writing fellow. As a TA, Vero's responsibilities are to assist students in understanding material, sit in on class to observe lectures, and to host Writing Center tutoring sessions with students during free time in class. This experience is incredibly meaningful according to Vero due to the fact that she wants to become an educator in the future. "Being a part of the Honors College means that it is my duty and passion to enact change on this campus. I am truly in love with YSU as a community, and the Honors College has given me the resources and tools to enact the sort of change that I would like to see," said Vero.

## PRE-MED STUDENT EARNS MCAT PREP AWARD

**Tafadzwa Mapiki** is a sophomore Honors College student who is majoring in Biology. Recently, Mapiki applied for an MCAT prep scholarship and was the recipient of this award. This scholarship is providing her with tuition for a Princeton Review MCAT prep class. After her time at YSU, Mapiki plans to attend medical school and become an orthopedic surgeon. She plans to take her MCAT exam in January of 2023.



## ADEEKO NAMED INTERN OF THE YEAR

Junior **Oluwatumininu Adeeko**, was recognized as the Cooperative Education & Internship Association (CEIA) 2022 Intern of the Year. Each year, this national award recognizes distinguished excellence for students in the field of Cooperative Education and Internships and aims to honor those who truly go above and beyond in their experimental education experiences. In honor of Adeeko's achievements, CEIA student award winners receive a plaque, \$500 monetary award, and formal recognition at the 2022 CEIA Annual Conference held in Alexandria, VA.

# HONORS PINNING CEREMONY



Anna Luu



Tafadzwa Mapiki



Morgan Scott, Rebecca Catlos, and Cassandra Snopik



David Hughley



Nathaniel Willison and Declan Sekol



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