

# HONORS PROGRAM NEWS

Hunger Summit \* Model UN \* Alumni \* Faculty Spotlight \* Great Plains \* Awards Gala

## Model UN

Honors students Connor Odom, Britney Jenkins, and Tarun Eisen worked as team captains on the NWACC Model UN team that competed at Midwest Model UN Conference in St Louis from Feb. 23-26 against 20 other colleges and universities from around the country.

The team represented Eritrea and Iraq on several UN committees and won an honorable mention for the Eritrean delegation. Other NWACC students on the team include Xanterra Burkes (Honors Student), Malcolm Garcia, Weston Penny, and Callista Scott. NWACC faculty Matt Evans, Curt Sullivan, and Summer Woehr work as co-advisors for the team. The NWACC team competes next at the Arkansas Model UN Conference, hosted at NWACC, in November.

Speaking on his goals as a part of Model UN, Connor Odom says, "My goals do tie into what I am learning through Model UN in a sense that we are creating solutions to very complex problems and working with a large group of people to do so."

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## Arkansas College Hunger Summit

ON APRIL 14TH, Honors Program Director Sabrina Chesne, along with two Honors students, Leo Hill and Stephanie Palacios, traveled to Little Rock for the Arkansas College Hunger Summit. The first ever Summit took place on the Heifer International Campus and invited Honors Programs from over 30 Arkansas colleges to present information about their food pantries and the issue of food scarcity.

During the presentations, panelists discussed food insecurity, specifically among college students, and how to target problems like unawareness of food pantries and erasing stigmas associated with receiving groceries from food pantries.



Attendees were also given valuable information on how to receive donations for their food pantries for both food and packaging materials. "This experience really showed the power students have to make a change," Palacios says, "when you come together and share ideas."

Hill and Palacios produced and presented a poster detailing information about NWACC's own food pantry, including

*(Model UN cont.)*

Odom continues, "I love collaborating with people in an almost hostile or tense situation that most tend to shy away from, and Model UN has improved my ability to navigate them."

Britney Jenkins, President of SGA, speaking on the values of having a Model UN, says it is "an amazing program that requires you to research and think on your feet. I love the team aspect, you do a lot of solo work, but there's a ton of collaboration about a plethora of unique issues that pertain to the country you're representing. I, along with other Honors Students, represented the nation of Eritrea, and through Model UN we were able to delve into a nation that many of us have never heard of!" \*



demographics, current provisions, and future needs. They each received Service Learning Awards, as well as a \$1000 donation from the Garcia Family Arkansas Fund and a year membership in the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. \*

## Alumni Interviews

ALUMNUS ROB LEE ('12, pictured below) is an NWACC Honors Program Graduate and current attorney with Midwest Environmental Advocates in Madison, Wisconsin. We had the opportunity to ask him some questions about his life after NWACC.

### *When did you graduate from NWACC?*

December 2012 with an Associate of Arts.

### *How was your experience transferring to UA?*

The Honors Program set me up to be competitive for a transfer scholarship to the University of Arkansas, which I received. My Honors credits were also transferable, which allowed me to transfer into UA's Departmental Honors Program and ultimately receive a bachelor's degree with honors.



### *How did you get interested in law?*

When I first started attending NWACC, my goal was to become a high school history teacher. But as part of my coursework at NWACC and then at UA, I was also exposed to

political science and, in turn, the law. Ultimately, I received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with minors in History and Legal Studies. After taking several undergraduate legal courses at UA (e.g., Constitutional Law, Agricultural Law) and talking with several friends who had already completed their undergrad degrees and were working on their law degrees, I decided that I wanted to give law school a try. Even then, I did not have a great idea of what area I wanted to specialize in. It was not until my 1L year at Notre Dame Law, when I organized a volunteer trip to Flint, Michigan, during its highly publicized lead contamination crisis, that I decided I wanted to practice Environmental Law.

### *What is your favorite memory from the Honors Program?*

My favorite memory from the Honors Program is of a classmate named Jesse Greenhill ('12) who'd written and performed a song in Sabrina Chesne's Honors World Literature course about all the books we had read and discussed over the previous year. Not only was it well done, but the experience also continues to serve as a good reminder that the learning process can, and perhaps often should, be fun and creative.

### *Favorite class or instructor?*

Honors Biology with Professor Ellen Turner because I was terrible at biology in high school and anxious about how I would do. Professor Turner finally made the subject make sense.

### *What did the Honors Program offer you?*

As a non-traditional student, I wasn't quite sure what to expect getting back into the classroom after a seven-year hiatus. I eased myself into it; the Honors Program was not on my radar. But Dr. April Brown, the Honors Program Director at the time, taught my American History course, recognized my potential, and encouraged me to join the Honors Program. The Honors Program offered me the opportunity to take on more challenging course work, and I realized my full potential through sustained success over time. I'm not sure if they still have it, but I also can't discount access the Honors Program Study fridge!

The Honors Program also gave me the opportunity to learn outside the classroom. As part of my Honors Biology course, I completed a Service Learning project on advances in stem cell research and was able to visit the Arkansas Umbilical Cord Blood Bank at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, where I met with the director of the program and toured the facilities. That experience certainly improved my understanding of the relevant issues and significantly improved my work product as a result. ✨

**ALUMNA MINOAH MILAM ('19, pictured right) is an NWACC Honors Program Graduate and on her way to law school at the University of Arkansas. We caught up with her to discuss how the Honors Program affected her and what she's up to now.**

### *When did you graduate?*

I graduated from NWACC in May 2019 with an Associate of Science - Liberal Arts and Sciences and an Associate of Science - Business Transfer to WCOB (Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas).

### *What was the transfer from NWACC to UA like?*

The transition to UA was intimidating at first. I went to a very small high school and NWACC was a lot bigger in comparison. Going to NWACC first made the transition so much easier. All of my teachers prepared me very well. After I got settled into classes at UA, it felt just like NWACC.



### *How did you get interested in law school? What are your plans for the future, after law school?*

I will be attending law school from August 2022 through May 2025. I have always had a business mindset, which led me to my major in accounting. I have also always had a drive to fight for people. You can't always change the world for everyone, but for one person, you can change their world. That's my end goal. I want to help people. I am not sure where I want to go with my law degree. I'm thinking corporate law or possibly work on a team for a business or a tax attorney.

### *What is your favorite memory from the Honors Program?*

My favorite memory from the Honors Program was getting to go to Crystal Bridges for my Honors World Literature class with Professor Megan Looney-Hollingsworth. Myself and two other honors students got to see the exhibit *Men of Steel, Women of Wonder*. It was interesting to see how others interpret the superhero's through time.

### *What was your favorite class and/or instructor?*

My favorite class and instructor were one in the same; Honors Composition II with Professor Laughton. His class got me ready for Law School in a professional way. He taught us professional emails and resumes. The resume I did in his class was the exact resume (but updated) that I turned in with my law school application. He made such an influence on me that I asked him to write me a letter of recommendation. With the care he gave towards my education, he definitely was an influence in my acceptance into law school. I am very grateful to have made a strong connection with a professor as I did with him.

### *What do you feel the Honors Program gave you?*

The Honors Program did a lot for me during my time at NWACC. I enjoyed most of my professors, but the Honors professors definitely took extra care and attention. It was extremely easy to talk to them if you had an issue. I also made a lot of friends through the Program. We would all meet to play games, and it was nice being around people my age. The Honors Program and NWACC have a lot of advantages. I got to experience smaller class sizes, a cheaper education, and a sense of community, without decreasing my educational value. Though I went to a community college my first two years, I was given an exceptional education that prepared me for my future. \*

## **2022 Great Plains Honors Conference**

Honors Director Sabrina Chesne, along with Honors students Maria Tapia, Tarun Eisen, and Connor Odom attended the annual Great Plains Honors Council Conference on March 18-20. This year's conference was hosted in Wichita, Kansas, by Hutchinson Community College and Wichita State University.

Maria Tapia earned the John Britt Poster Award for Humanities.



### *Why did you decide to submit to the GPHCC?*

I had never heard of the GPHCC before so I thought it would be a great opportunity. I was also excited to meet people from other schools and see their projects and presentations.

### *What made it a good experience?*

I was expecting the conference to be a more professional setting but...

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## Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Chris Huggard



History professor Dr. Chris Huggard will be assigning Clint Smith's award-winning *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* (2021) in Honors History of the American People to 1877 this fall. This book is an examination of historic sites, parks, and events relating to the history of slavery, the way that slavery is often presented to the public, and how the author's own family history reveals the need for a greater reckoning with this part of the country's past and present.

In Spring 2021, Dr. Huggard published an essay, "Rock Van Winkle: Black Builder of Northwest Arkansas" with colleague Jerry Moore, a sociology professor at NWACC, in the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* Vol.80, #1, which they presented at the Bella Vista Historical Museum. Currently, Huggard is in the process of completing a manuscript, *On Pea Ridge: Civil War, Community Memory, and the Making of a National Park* (link below).

### *How do all these interests feature in your Honors teaching?*

My publications in mining history and the history of Northwest Arkansas have been very useful in allowing me to offer deep insights in my Honors classes concerning the rights of Hispanic workers, African Americans before and after slavery, the environmental issues of history, and the experiences of post-Civil War Americans through the local lens. I am able to offer an interpretation that places our local place in the context of state, regional, national, and global perspective. Furthermore, my extensive publishing experience allows for me to advise students on how to do research and how to discern between publications that are refereed and thoroughly evaluated academically and uncritical, unevaluated trash that appears all over the internet. The local history research I've completed also allows for me to share intimate historical details and experiences that enhance student's historical knowledge in the larger context of a survey history course.

### *What got you interested in mining?*

As far as mining history, I'd had an interest going back to the

### *(Conference cont.)*

...was relieved to know it was rather a very relaxed atmosphere. There was plenty of engagement from all attendees and overall a great ambiance.

### *What did you like about Wichita? About spending time with honors members in a new locale?*

It was great to meet and interact with Honors members and learn about the Honors Programs at their school. •

Tarun Eisen earned the John Britt Poster Award in Social Sciences.



### *Why was presenting this poster in the GPHCC meaningful to you?*

Three years of Model UN culminated in this poster, highlighting how food insecurity, terrorism, and global warming prevent African countries from making any recovery amid a pandemic. I also enjoyed discussing my poster as people gathered around. •

1980s, having spent quite a bit of time in Colorado where my family built a cabin in Schofield Park (near Crested Butte), which had been an old silver mining camp in the 1880s. From there, I began doing research, knowing that once I started my dissertation for my PhD at UNM that I'd look at the history of mining and the environment from some angle. My major professor guided me to Grant County, NM, which is highly mineralized and I did the dissertation on the economic and environmental impact of mining. I published numerous journal articles and book chapters before finally doing the book *Santa Rita del Cobre*. In the meantime, I published essays in the *New Mexico Historical Review*, *The Mining History Journal* (of which I was the chief editor from 1994-2001), the *Journal of the West*, and others. •

All of these professional activities inform his presentations in his classes and will help students work toward a greater understanding of American history, but with the "special flavor of bringing the history of Northwest Arkansas into the class discussions." Dr. Huggard has also been chosen as the 2022-2023 president of the Mining History Association.

Check out Dr. Huggard's *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* project [here](#). ✱

## Honors Awards Gala (April 28, 2022)

The annual Honors Awards Gala was finally back on the NWACC campus this year! The Gala honored outstanding students (chosen by faculty) and outstanding instructors (chosen by students), as well as Honors Program Graduates and Honors Program Distinguished students. Graduates were also awarded their Honors Program graduation medallions. The awards are as follows:

### Honors Program Graduates (medallions):

Scarlett Bobrowski (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Magna Cum Laude

Mikayla Ellender (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Magna Cum Laude

Shonna Enzo (AFA, Creative Writing) Magna Cum Laude

Rhonda Hazen (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Magna Cum Laude

Niala Hingoo (AA) Summa Cum Laude

Katelyn Johnson (AA) Summa Cum Laude

Shalene Miller (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences; AA;

Certificate of General Studies) Magna Cum Laude

Connor Odom (AA) Summa Cum Laude

Connor Odom presented his paper, "No Lights, No Camera, All Action" to a large audience on the Wichita State campus.



### Why did you decide to submit to the GPHCC?

I decided to submit to GPHCC to test the limits of what my research argumentative paper could become. What started out as a solid paper developed into a colorful, engaging 10-minute presentation. This transformation was challenging yet rewarding, resulting in a great representation of a real-world debate and its potential solutions.

### What did you like about spending time with honors members in a new locale?

Beyond enjoying the poster presentation and plenary speakers at the Century II Performing Arts Center, we got to engage with other Honors students from Texas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. I also got the opportunity to go to the Sedgwick County Zoo with Tarun Eisen and some students we met at the conference. I'd love to go back to Wichita. ✱

Pablo Portillo (AS, Business Administration) Magna Cum Laude  
 Nicole Salas (AAS, Construction Technology) Cum Laude  
 Alexandra Suarez (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Magna Cum Laude  
 Ashley Thomas (AA) Magna Cum Laude  
 Kade Walker (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Magna Cum Laude  
 Dana West (AS, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Summa Cum Laude

**Honors Program Distinction (medallions):**

Hannah Bond (AA, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Magna Cum Laude  
 Xanterra Burkes (AA, Liberal Arts and Sciences) Cum Laude

**Outstanding Awards:**

Connor Odom (Brown Chesne HP Award)  
 Niala Hingoo (Olivia & Benjamin Schaap HP Award)  
 Katelyn Johnson (Dodd Huggard HP Award)  
 Shonna Enzo (Fox Looney-Hollingsworth HP Award)  
 Pablo Portillo (Turner HP Award)  
 Dana West (Cooper HP Award)  
 Alexandra Suarez (Cooper HP Award)  
 Jim Laughton (Outstanding HP Instructor Award)  
 Matt Evans (Outstanding HP Instructor Award)  
 Bill Mandrell (Outstanding HP Instructor Award)

