



## **Stephanie Palacios**

Class of Fall 2022

### **Honors Courses:**

Honors English Composition II

Honors General Psychology

Honors College Chemistry

Bioethics

### **Section 1: How the program help me “demonstrate engagement,” “cultivate curiosity,” and “explore perspectives.”**

Going to college during a pandemic is definitely a very isolating experience. The beginning of the honors program for me in 2021 was quite slow. Many of my classes were online and honor student engagement was very minimal due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the slow transition back onto campus life. During this isolating time, honors students did have

minimal engagement virtually through zoom for Honors Student Association meetings and virtual game nights. By early 2022 campus life and in person engagement began to increase and get back into the normal way of things. During the spring of 2022 I took Honors College Chemistry I with Dr. Chun; the experience I had in this honors class is a great example of how being a part of the honors program demonstrate engagement, cultivate curiosity, and explore perspectives. In Honors college chemistry with Dr. Chun honors students had to complete an extra project in comparison to the non-honors student chemistry class. The topic was to be of a community impacting issue and was of the student's choice. We were to research the topic together as a group to then present the class with a research paper. My topic was on the chemical components of an e-cigarette and how this new fad is affecting our younger population. For this project I was actively engaged with my classmates outside of class. We were able to take our own curiosity into a topic of our choice to study within the subject of Chemistry. We were also able to explore different perspectives as we surveyed campus students and different members of our community for our research. Community, Curiosity, and diversity was a part of every honors class experience I had at NWACC and made it easy for me to become a more involved and curious member of society.

## **Section 2: How this program helped prepare me for a university and the workplace.**

It can be easy to get lost in the crowd in a large university and even in a community college when a large majority of students now take classes online. Clubs and programs at NWACC such as the Honors program are a great way to set you apart from other students and gain skills to take with you into the workplace or as a transfer student at a large university. Throughout the two years I spent at NWACC as an honors student I gained many skills I would not have attained had I not decided to join the honors program. Although like many I hesitated at applying for the honors program, I would soon realize I would never regret the favorable decision I made to join. I was a very introverted student coming into NWACC with very little self-esteem especially when it came to academics. Through honors classes offered every semester and the opportunity to be a part of the Honors Student Association as an honors student helped me develop skills networking with others and collaborating in a group with other honors students for projects and HSA club planning and events. This experience gave me more confidence in group settings that I will be able to take with me to university as I transfer in the coming year. Not all skills and experiences were a benefit to me



academically, some were a big benefit in my personal life. I gained confidence as an individual, to believe in myself and the changes that I can make when I work towards a goal and a passion or even just a curiosity. Being a part of the honors program also taught me to always use the resources available to you. The honors program offers various resources exclusive to honors students that could really be beneficial to you or set you apart academically. Overall, the honors program really teaches you to

explore your curiosity in education and gives you the confidence to do so. I can now transfer into a larger university more curious and confident that my questions and curiosity could create a conversation for deeper exploration into a subject and build long term relationships with classmates and professors.

**Section 3: An experience I had as a member I'd like to share.**

All experiences as an honors student were an enjoyable part of my time at NWACC. 2021 was a slower first year for me as students made the transition from a remote college experience back onto campus. 2022 was a quicker start to a more community involved experience as an honors student. In the Spring of 2022, I became Vice president of the Honors Student Association and attended the first annual Arkansas College Campus Hunger Summit in Little Rock with our Honors Student Association Sponsor and another honors student. This Summit highlighted food insecurity on college campuses. Many students from several different campus around Arkansas gathered to discuss their campus issues and the resources they currently had available for students suffering with food insecurity, including access to college campus food pantries. I worked on a service-learning project for this summit to Present a poster at this summit showcasing information about our campus food pantry at NWACC. My attendance and participation at the summit earned the NWACC food pantry a \$1,000 grant. This experience not only gave me a realization of the impact my small actions can make but also earned me a Service-Learning award and Scholarship for \$1,500. This Arkansas summit was an exclusive opportunity available to honors students, so taking advantage of those extra things can be extremely beneficial in the long run. This was the beginning of a flame started in me for making an impact in my community. Soon after this event I decided to take a bigger leadership role as President of HSA at NWACC and take a role with AmeriCorps as a Volunteer in Service to America to work Farm to Institution projects in the local Arkansas area and target research that can benefit local poverty. Being a federal volunteer through AmeriCorps is giving me so much insight in the local food industry, local poverty, research, and will also be offering me over \$6,500 in education awards toward my college education upon completion of my one-year term with them. I will be able to take with me all of these experiences and skills when I transfer into a university and also later into my career. The honors program offers opportunities not just experiences. I am proof of that.





#### **Section 4: Advice I have for a new member**

Many will hesitate at the thought of becoming an honors student. I promise you if you think “It’s not for me” it really can be for you. There are so many different types of experiences that can be had as an honors student at NWACC. If you are already considering the program, consider these two points of advice: one, realize your worth and the impact you can make early on so that you can enjoy your time as an honors student and make an impact on your community college campus in the short two years you have here. The doubt that you can make an impact is nonexistent, all it takes is the belief that you can. Two, take all the extra opportunities granted to you as an honors student. These experiences can really set you apart academically from other students and can become even greater opportunities in the long run.