

# Katelyn Johnson

Graduating in the Spring of 2022



## Honors Courses

- General Sociology
- English Composition II
- Gender Studies
- Public Speaking
- Dissent and Protest

**Section 1:** In what ways did the Program help you “demonstrate engagement,” “cultivate curiosity,” and “explore perspectives” (community, curiosity, and diversity)?

My college journey started later than it does for most, and as a non-traditional student I was unsure at first whether the Honors Program would be for me. Initially, I was apprehensive about joining because I had not traditionally been an over-achiever or anything like that in my high school experience, I was also a little worried about being the oldest person in the room. Looking back on these fears I feel so glad that I ultimately did not let them keep me from experiencing some of the best moments from my time here at NWACC. For me, one of the best parts about being in the Honors Program, as well as NWACC in general, has been my involvement in various Service Learning initiatives.

While Service Learning is not necessarily an Honors requirement, I was certainly encouraged to participate through my different honors courses. All of the projects I had the pleasure and privilege of working on helped me to get more involved in my local community both in and outside of campus. These experiences have led me to take on more active roles in organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters and various environmental improvement groups in Fayetteville. The influence that the Honors Program has had on me has been so positive. More than just getting me involved in my community, it has given me the confidence necessary to pursue my educational and career dreams. The Honors Program has without a doubt given new life to my already curious spirit in terms of seeking out and uplifting different perspectives and experiences. I also had the opportunity to work alongside many students that I most likely would have known otherwise, and these friendships will continue to work positively in my life for years to come, I know.



o **Section 2:** How did this program prepare you for a university (or for a workplace, if you aren't transferring at this point)? What hard or soft skills will you take with you?

Being a part of the Honors Program has encouraged me to further many practical skills that are useful in the workplace and beyond. I will be transferring to the University of Arkansas in the Fall of 2020, and I know that I will be able to put all of the skills I have cultivated here at NWACC to good use. Having the ability to work effectively with others during group assignments as well as communicating and coordinating diverse schedules are critical skills for many environments. In my experience this is something that sounds easy but usually proves to be very difficult. Shelled within this skill is another skill of importance, which is the ability to pivot from one plan to another while maintaining composure and respect for your groupmates. Thanks to my many Honors obligations I have become a more focused time manager in order to get everything done that is required of me and still be able to have my own free time outside of school and work. Honestly, I have already started to see how improving my time management skills has helped out in other areas of my life outside of school. Because our time is one of our most valuable resources, it is so important to learn how to prioritize the things that matter most to you. This is a skill that almost feels like magic because when you can manage your time wisely, it feels as though you have more of it and that is truly a gift that will keep on giving. In addition to these skills, something else I have been practicing is the ability to say 'No' to things. This is a more difficult lesson to learn than it seems because

I think that as a society we are conditioned to always say ‘Yes’ and expected to take on loads of responsibilities all the time, I feel this is especially true as a woman in this society. However, sometimes it is important to realize when you are at your limit and be able to gracefully decline certain engagements in order to safeguard your mental, physical, or emotional health. I believe that all of these skills will serve me well as I move forward with my education and continue to develop my career goals.

o **Section 3:** What is one experience you had while a member that you’d like to share?

In the Fall of 2021, I was a part of the Human Rights Service Learning project, this was a project which involved building and then distributing beds to families in need in Northwest Arkansas. Over the course of the semester, my involvement with this program become more than just a requirement for my class and it helped to nurture my inner desire to help others in need. I became very acquainted with one family in particular and as I got to know more about this mother, her children, and their situation I found myself wanting to do more for them outside of what the Sleep in Heavenly Peace organization was already doing. From that moment on I started to brainstorm on ways that I could be useful to them and how I could provide something meaningful to them. I know that I put to use many of my learned skills for this because I immediately thought to turn to my community for support. This was a few weeks before Christmas and I wanted to be able to do something for them that would help make their holiday a little brighter, so I took to my social media and asked for donations from folks in my community. I was joyously overwhelmed by the outpouring of support I saw from others, and I was thrilled when I was able to deliver to this family dozens of gifts and clothing donations, as well as monetary donations from some folks. I know that this was only a small thing that I could do for them, but it is often a small act of kindness that can have a lasting impact on someone’s life. I still keep in touch with this mother from time to time and this relationship has turned out to be both emotionally and spiritually rewarding. An experience that I certainly would not have had if I wasn’t encouraged to take part in Service Learning as an Honors student.

o **Section 4:** Considering all you have written for the above, what advice do you have for new members? This answer should be “short and sweet.”

My advice to anyone who is new to the Honors Program is to take advantage of all the wonderful resources and opportunities that Honors has to offer. I know that there were many things that I would not have experienced or been able to participate in if I was not in the Honors Program. Being a member helped me to feel more connected to NWACC and that connection kept me motivated to stick with things I might have otherwise passed on.