



HONORS COLLEGE NEWS

September 2023

*By Helen Yousaf,
Honors College Intern*



Dr. Barbara Andrew

Message from the Dean of the Honors College

Honors has a long history at William Paterson. Stand-alone Honors research tracks began in the mid-1970s. The tracks encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration and research. Those research tracks came together as an

Honors program, and then developed into an Honors College in the 2006-2007 academic year. The Honors College now houses eleven research and creative performance tracks with students in all majors.

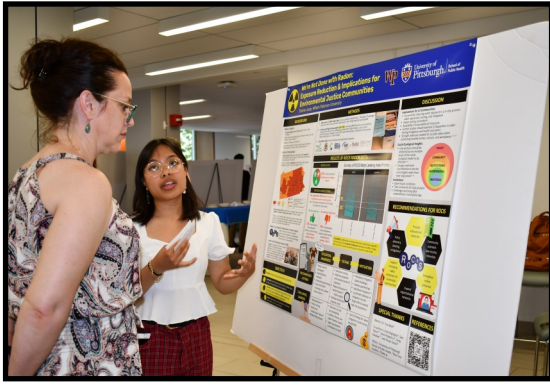
In this edition of the newsletter, we spotlight some of the more extensive research programs that two of our students participated in over the summer. And, you will learn more about Dr. Diamond and the honors track he leads.

The WP Honors College aims to provide students with opportunities that change students' lives, their careers, and that change the world around us. I hope you enjoy this window into a few of our wonderful students' summer projects.

Exciting Honors News

We welcome Dr. John Malindretos as the new Business Honors Track Director and Dr. Danielle Wallace as the new Social Sciences Honors Track Director. Dr. Martha Witt will rejoin us as the Performing and Literary Arts Honors Track Director. We are excited to work with them!

Keep an eye out for emails and announcements from the Honors College about exciting civic engagement opportunities, fun events, and important meetings coming up in the Fall 2023 semester.



Shaina Lacap '23 presenting her research at the CDC Headquarters in Atlanta, GA

New Graduate Attends Research Scholars Program

Within a few days of graduating with her **BSN in Nursing**, **Shaina Lacap '23**, started the 8-week **Public Health Undergraduate Scholars Program at the University of Pittsburgh**. The goal of the program is to increase the number of historically underserved college students in public health careers. Shaina had the opportunity to attend lectures, participate in group activities, listen to guest speakers and receive mentorship from faculty, staff, and other students, while staying at the University of Pittsburgh host campus. At

the end of the program, Shaina and the other scholars presented their research at the **CDC headquarters in Atlanta, GA**. For her 8 week research project, Shaina partnered with Reducing Outdoor Contaminants in Indoor Spaces (RODIS), a Pennsylvania based organization. With them, she consolidated **radon data and analyzed the responses and current measures to address radon levels in the community**. She is looking forward to using both her knowledge



The 2023 cohort of Public Health Undergraduate Scholars Program at the University of Pittsburgh

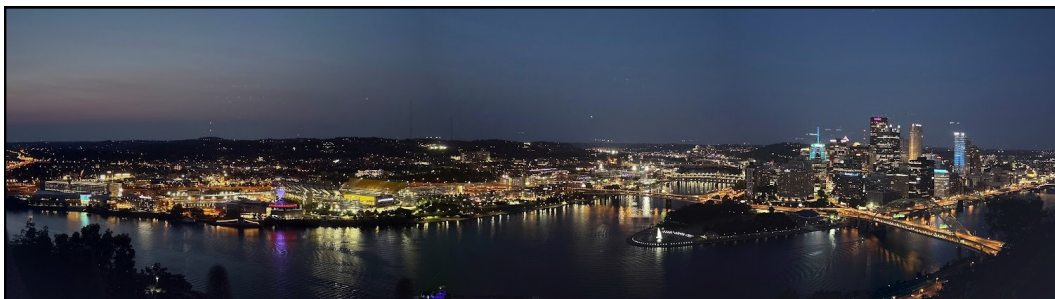


Shaina at the CDC Headquarters in Atlanta, GA

in public health and nursing as she pursues future

opportunities. Shaina is grateful to **Dr. Sullivan, Professor of Public Health and Director of the Global Public Health Honors Track** for recommending her for this program and believes her role as an Undergraduate Researcher for Dr. Sullivan in **Environmental Health** made her application competitive. She also thanks **Dr. Yen-Tyng Chen, former WP Professor** for her guidance in Shaina's educational journey. Her advice to other students is 'just do it'. She says, "Use your time in college to discover your passion and pursue

different opportunities!" As she is getting ready to start her professional career as a nurse, Shaina reflected on her experience and called her time in the program "**memorable**" and "**engaging**." She came out of the program more knowledgeable about a variety of issues like HIV/AIDS, disaster response and tribal health, to name a few. In addition, she is more experienced in public health research methodologies including data collection and biostatistics, health education, and community-based participatory research. She made lifelong connections and is definitely going to miss riding the rollercoasters at Kennywood!



A photo of Pittsburgh's city skyline at night taken by Shaina

Meet Dr. Bruce Diamond

Professor of Psychology, and Director of the Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology Honors Track

We had the opportunity to catch up with Dr. Bruce Diamond, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology Honors Track. During our interview, he reflected on his experience mentoring students, the impact of his own mentors on his career and life, and more! He also shared some advice for students considering joining the track.

What about your work and research in psychology excites you the most?

I specialize in two primary areas: assessment and neuro-rehabilitation. So, I work with people who have had strokes, traumatic brain injuries, or depression, for example. And I like using the tools - whether behavioral, physiological, or even technological, to develop rehabilitation strategies that are effective. Essentially, I try to help people get better; whether they are dealing with depression, anxiety, or information processing. And I don't like just doing research and walking away from it. It has to help people by letting them live their life more effectively, go to work, or go back home.

You mentioned wanting your research to have an impact on someone's life. How does the Clinical Psychology and Neuropsychology track emulate that goal? In other words, what are the real-life benefits for students who complete the track?

Students in the track come from different backgrounds and experiences—I have had students come from biology, psychology, and even philosophy. And many use

the track to enhance their knowledge in their fields. And the benefit of the track is that it is not just knowledge based, it also emphasizes practical skills.

Many students do go on to Master's and Doctoral programs. My advice is that even if you don't go on to specialize in clinical psychology, it pays to know what multiple sclerosis is and how it affects people.

Are there any memorable student thesis projects?

Some students do clinical analysis of real-life cases and that is very sophisticated, especially as an undergraduate student.

And actually there is a student who was in the Track and is now in the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program here at WP. She is building off of her work from the track and thesis where she did a case study with someone with Alzheimer's and she used music as a pathway to uncover and stimulate memory. Right now we are working on developing an early Alzheimer's assessment scale for friends or family who are non-professionals. This could help serve as an early indicator of Alzheimer's disease. And actually this is great example of someone building on her work as an Honors student in the track.

As a mentor yourself, can you reflect on the role of your own mentors in your career?

I have had exceptional mentors who were also exceptional researchers.



Dr. Bruce Diamond

They were very important in my development. And I think when I work with my students, they are not hearing my voice and advice but the voices of my past mentors through me. My mentors were very demanding of me and rigorous and I appreciate that!

What would be your advice to students who are looking to join an Honors Track or who are already in one?

Work hard and don't give up! But also have fun and enjoy what you are doing. Being in the track is a commitment. You should find something that you will enjoy, that you will learn something from, and that you know is feasible.

And I would always recommend speaking to the track directors and talking through your ideas. You may have a great idea, but it may not be feasible. And that's ok. We have a lot of great tracks with very capable professors. It is worth running your ideas by them and seeing what advice they can provide.

It will be a commitment, but it will be worth it, whether you apply for a graduate program or apply for a job.

Thank you to Dr. Diamond for his time and advice for our Honors students!



Alexandra Quintero at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

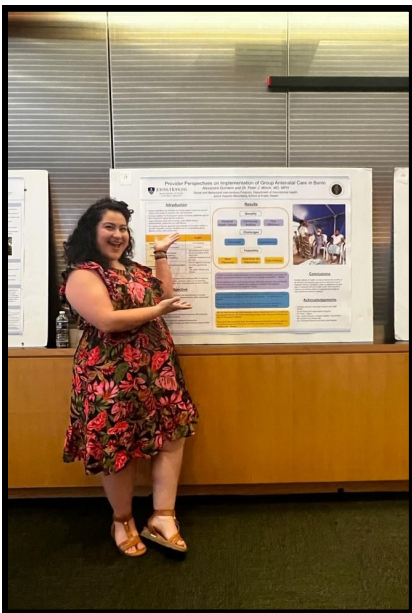
Public Health Student Interns at Johns Hopkins University

“Life-changing” - that’s how **Alexandra Quintero** would describe her experience at **Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**. The **Public Health and Women and Gender Studies double major** was part of this year’s cohort of 31 students who participated in the **Diversity Summer Internship Program**. During the program, Alexandra had the opportunity to collaborate with Johns Hopkins professors as a research intern and work on an individual research project which she presented at the **Leadership Alliance National Symposium**, which took place in Connecticut at the end of the 8-week program. She first learned about the Program from **Anthropology Professor Lilian Milanés** and is grateful for the foundation the **Global Public Health Honors Track**, which is headed by **Professor Marianne Sullivan** provided her. The experience has reinforced Alex’s interest in public health and encourages her to apply for graduate programs related to maternal health.

Her research focused on **provider perspectives on antenatal care in Benin** and built on her previous interest of maternal and child health. In addition to presenting at the Leadership conference, which Dr. Milanés was able to attend, her findings were presented to the rest of the cohort in an oral and a poster presentation. In our conversation, Alex described ‘a day in her life’ while at Johns Hopkins.

“In the morning we would have meetings with our group and our mentors. We would then have the opportunity to do some individual and group work on our own projects and the faculty assignment given to us. The work was both qualitative and quantitative. For example, I would do transcript analysis and literature reviews. But the entire program was so much more than just research work. We attended guest lectures, cover letter and resume workshops, and went on educational trips!”

Her advice to other students: “Just apply! The life-long friends, connections, and memories you make are far too great to miss out on!!!”



Alexandra giving a poster presentation of her research on provider perspectives on antenatal care in Benin

New Honors Students

We are excited for the new class of Honors students joining us this fall. More than **100 first-year students, 10 incoming transfer students** and **12 Excel scholar** students joined us.



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