

Walsh University Honors Program Presents

# Honorable Mention

Spring 2026 Volume 9: Issue 2

Congratulations Senior Honors Students!



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# Honors Students Serve their Community

by: Grace Tabellion

This spring, Walsh University Honors Program students have been busy giving back to the community. Through a variety of service projects, students have made a meaningful impact on campus and in the surrounding community while representing the Honors Program and supporting the values of Walsh University.

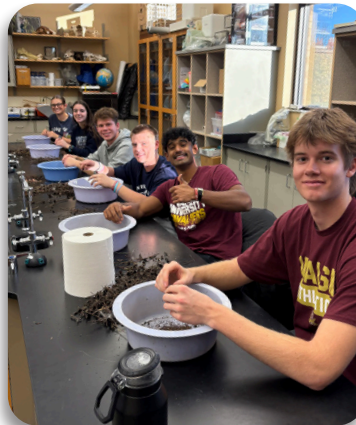
One highlight of this semester was the Honors Scholarship Day on February 7th, when admitted Honors students competed for the prestigious Presidential and Founders Scholarships. Current Honors students played an essential role in the success of the day, volunteering throughout the event, assisting with interviews alongside faculty, and helping create a welcoming and supportive environment for both future students and their families. Students also participated in a student panel for parents, offering a firsthand perspective on life in the Honors Program and answering questions about academic expectations, campus involvement, and the overall Honors experience. Participants and their families also had the opportunity to meet with President Collins and Vice President Dunphy, who shared insights about the university and encouraged students to continue pursuing excellence. The day was not only a chance to evaluate scholarship candidates but also an opportunity to form connections, celebrate student achievement, and welcome the next generation of Honors scholars to the Walsh community.

Another impactful project this academic year was the seed cleaning event led by Dr. Clevinger, in partnership with Stark Parks, that took place on November 17th. Each fall, Stark Parks collects native wildflower seeds from prairies across Stark County,



**Students speaking on a panel for parents at Honors Scholarship Day**

but before these seeds can be planted, they require careful cleaning and preparation. Honors students helped separate the seeds from flowerheads and stems, ensuring that they could be successfully used to restore natural areas this spring. These seeds are particularly important because they come from local land, allowing Stark Parks to support native ecosystems without purchasing seeds from outside sources. The cleaned seeds will be planted this spring in areas that were once farm fields or lawns, helping to restore fields and create vibrant, thriving natural habitats.



**Student seed cleaning**

Honors students participated in various other service opportunities this semester. Twenty students contributed to the MLK Day of Service on January 19th. During this event, one group of Honors students spent the day sorting food at the North Canton Cares Pantry. A second group of students assisted at EN-RICH-MENT Arts Education Center, a program offering year-round fine and performing arts classes for youth.

Additionally, several times throughout the semester, students volunteered at Refuge of Hope, assisting with meal setup, service, and cleanup. Honors students also continued the tradition of partnering with Professor Megan Pellegrino for history outreach at St. Paul's Elementary School on February 27th, leading hands-on activities that brought local history lessons to life for third graders.

By volunteering their time and talents, Honors students have made a real difference in the lives of those they served and within the community as a whole. Thank you to all the students who dedicated themselves this year to service and leadership. ●

# Alumni Spotlight: Mathew Bagatta

by: Molly Durkin

After a hiatus, the Honors Alumni Spotlight returns to Honorable Mention with recent graduate Mathew Bagatta, who earned his degree in Digital Marketing and Analytics in May of 2025. Drawn to the Honors Program for its high academic standards and the opportunity to complete independent research through the Thesis process, Mathew appreciated the program's structure from the start. With a high school background that emphasized similar rigor, he felt prepared for the challenge. What he did not expect, however, was how deeply the Honors experience would shape his friendships. Many of his closest friends today are people he met in Honors classes, including his freshman year roommate, now also in graduate school, whom he still sees regularly. He often finds himself reminiscing about shared memories when reconnecting with former classmates.



**Photo of Mathew Bagatta**

One of Mathew's most impactful academic experiences came in HON 121: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition with Dr. Dabney, whom he describes as energetic, engaging, and one of his favorite professors. At a time when he was still adjusting to college life, the course helped him encounter his faith in a deeper and more meaningful way. Throughout the program, Mathew says, "Honors challenged me to think outside the box, especially during the thesis process, where students are encouraged to explore uncharted territory and push intellectual boundaries." Professionally and academically, he feels the Honors program pushed him to be the best he could be. Beyond academics, the program strengthened his faith as well. Many classmates he met in Honors were also involved in campus ministry, creating a sense of community that extended beyond the classroom. For Mathew, it often felt like lessons learned in class connected directly to his personal and spiritual growth.

After graduating, Mathew chose to stay at Walsh to complete his master's degree through the 4+1 MBA program. Through relationships he built on campus, he was offered a position in Admissions, an opportunity he describes as a full-circle moment. Now working behind the scenes of events like the Honors Scholarship Competition, he enjoys encouraging prospective students to pursue opportunities such as the Presidential Scholarship. In his day-to-day role, Mathew works closely with students and families, visiting high schools, building relationships, and serving as a face of the university. He helps prospective students see the wide range of opportunities available at Walsh, from academic programs like Blouins and Honors to athletics and student organizations. The collaborative environment within Admissions has further fueled his interest in strategy and relationship-building.

In the future, Mathew hopes to one day own his own marketing and media buying firm, combining his passion for strategy, collaboration, and measurable success. For now, he sees his role in Admissions as an important step toward that goal. His advice to current Honors students is simple: don't let the word "Honors" intimidate you. "It's not as scary as you think," he says. While the program can feel tough at times, the support system is strong, and the growth is worth it. He reminds students that failure is inevitable, but echoing Dr. Collins' encouragement to "get back up," Mathew reminds students that the only person who can truly hold them back is themselves. In the end, he says, the Honors experience is not just challenging; it is unforgettable, formative, and fun! ●

# Course Spotlight:

## Honors Seminar Discusses the Intricate Balance of Faith and Reason

by: Alyssa Cociola

Is there continuity between faith and reason, or is there conflict? This question has found a way to resurrect itself in debates between scientists and theologians for years. For most of the world, this debate has lasted centuries. However, for students involved in an Honors seminar this semester, this very complex debate can be explored in just an eight-week timeline.

HON 321: Theology & Science: Continuity or Conflict Between Science and Faith is a team-taught seminar by Dr. Timothy Smith, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, and Dr. Cary Dabney, Assistant Professor of Theology. The seminar aims to raise the theological and philosophical issues many scientists and people of faith face when asserting the notion of a continuity of faith and science.

“Every Honors course I have been in with this team-taught atmosphere has been a night and day experience compared to my major or minor classes,” said Abi Walsh, a junior in the Honors program. “I believe every team is able to pull different perspectives and opinions from each other and learn a different way of approaching a problem.”

According to Dr. Dabney, the aim of the course is to demonstrate how science and faith can work together to reveal a comprehensive understanding of the world. “If faith and science are seen as contrary to each other, it actually damages both,” said Dr. Dabney. “You need both to work in continuity with each other to get a deeper truth to the topic. If they are set apart from one another, both actually hurt.” Each week, students are introduced to different controversial topics relating to faith and reason.

Andrew Temelkoff, an Honors student in his sophomore year at Walsh, discussed the impact of the team-taught atmosphere in the course. “I love hearing Dr. Dabney share the ideas of

theology with topics like Galileo and the tension in the church. Additionally, it is nice to have Dr. Smith inform us about ideas like the Big Bang theory from a scientific perspective. I enjoy the class having extensive dialogue back and forth, and it brings great participation and ideas together,” he said.

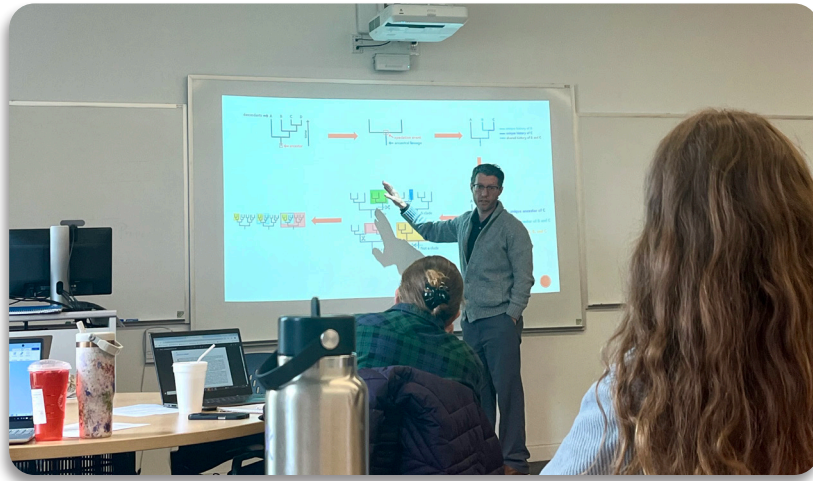
The seminar itself has been in the rotation of Honors course offerings for years. However, this is the first year that Dr. Smith is teaching an Honors course. In year’s past, the course ran in the style of a debate.

“There are two ways you could do this class. You could do it back and forth, where he and I argue with each other. I think that’s disingenuous. I’m not Richard Dawkins,” Dr. Smith said. “I am born Catholic and raised Catholic. I have my own belief in terms of the Catholic belief and how things are, but I’m also a scientist. I told [Dr. Dabney] that it would be better to present these issues in a way that highlights both.”

As a result, this semester, the course is framed a discussion between the continuity of faith and reason with both Dr. Dabney and Dr. Smith. Dr. Dabney expressed his excitement to approach the discussion format.



**Dr. Dabney, Assistant Professor of Theology**



**Dr. Smith discusses genetics and evolution from a scientific perspective to Honors students.**

“Most of the time, you’re in the classroom, and we’re teaching you guys abstract ideas and theories. This is what we’re doing in this class, except you’re also seeing concretely, we’re embodying what we’re saying,” Dr. Dabney said. “The class is about the continuity of faith and science—you’ve got a theologian and a scientist in front of you. You’re visually seeing what we are trying to express in the course. Without us even planting it, it’s organically going to happen.”

Despite this, the debate aspect of the course is still be present. Students are encouraged to identify areas of tension for in-class conversation each week. This encourages them to find gaps and holes in arguments and utilize critical thinking skills.

“Let’s be honest, close to 50% of scientists are atheists. It’s a reality, so I’ve had quite a few conversations that have been both pleasant and, also, not so pleasant. I think another interesting point we can bring to students is on where these areas of conflict may arise and how to approach these areas of conflict from the Catholic perspective, which is what our school’s mission is about,” Dr. Smith explained. “It allows for a better dialogue to be created as opposed to two people yelling. That doesn’t get anywhere. I think that’s a big part of an Honors course, is to get students to think, learn how to think, learn how to discuss, and learn how to debate in a way that is constructive, not deconstructive.”

This way of thinking resonated with many students. Andrew, for example, identified how these

concepts often challenge each other, and how this challenge allows scientists and theologians alike to gain a deeper understanding of the world.

“One main way that faith was challenged by science was through the concept of Hell,” Andrew said. “Theologians used to believe that Hell was a place found in Earth, but through scientific discovery, they realized that science contradicted this idea of theology. Science will continue to challenge ideas in theology; however, truth is only found in the continuity of both faith and science.”

Abi also believed this course aided her in debating these topics. “I believe faith cannot exist without reason and vice versa, but I struggle to explain that to a non-religious person. This class is teaching me how to articulate what I believe to others and also giving me more evidence to back up my claims,” Abi explained. Combining both science and faith into one, students are able to experience a comprehensive view of complex topics and understand how the two interact.

“As a scientist, especially for these students who are scientists, there are those of us who have faith, and that’s okay,” Dr. Smith concluded. “We can have both. You don’t have to choose one or the other, or in some areas of science, you almost feel like you have to...It’s not that simple. There is much more nuance, so I hope I can give them that perspective.” ●

# Attending the MEHA Conference

by: Nate Borman



**(Above) Photo of Honors faculty and students who attended MEHA**

On April 17th, Dr. Jennifer Clevinger, Dr. Nina Rytwinski, Dr. Carey Dabney, and seven Walsh Honors students (Shareen Awadallah, Brianna Birkle, Hannah Blawas, Olivia Huzyak, Haruki Imanishi, Ellie Radis, Meklit Tofu) attended the Mid-East Honors Association (MEHA) Conference at Indiana University South Bend. This year marked the largest group in the Honors Program's recent history.

While at the conference, Dr. Clevinger and Dr. Rytwinski presented a panel on community building, specifically how a strong sense of community is essential to fostering student growth, well-being, and retention within honors programs. The students who attended presented their research

to other honors students and faculty members from around the Midwest. Of these seven presentations, four were oral, and three were poster-based.

Olivia Huzyak was the first presenter of the group. She spoke about her extensive efforts to develop a digital educational program with Dr. Cary Dabney to enhance spiritual literacy in nursing education for palliative care. Olivia most appreciated how the conference pushed her to think more broadly. She also enjoyed being surrounded by other honors students from all over the region, finding that learning about their ideas, passions, and disciplines was very interesting.

Meklit Tofu is a cybersecurity major at Walsh University who based her thesis around her future career. She worked with Jennifer Loudiana to research the best ways to properly educate young adults about cybersecurity, without losing their attention. This led Meklit to eventually create a website called CyberAware that targets this vulnerable demographic. The website's goal is to educate young people on internet safety in an engaging way.

Brianna Birkle, a double major in Museum Studies and Visual Arts with a double minor in Chemistry and History, presented next. Her thesis combined all of her broad academic interests. She worked with Dr. Peter Tandler to evaluate the chemical suitability of digitally printed textiles



**(Above) Photo of Haruki, Hannah, & Shareen presenting to attendees**

with objects of cultural heritage. Her thesis contributes to research measuring the effect that digitally printed textiles have on museum artifacts kept in close proximity to these fabrics.

Ellie Radis is an aspiring physician's assistant who dissected the functional attributes of Sox12 proteins for her thesis. She worked with Dr. Adam Underwood to test the proteins' ability to activate specific genes. She enjoyed presenting at the conference, making new friends, and observing in-depth discussions on other topics.

Shareen Awadallah worked alongside Professor Tammie Davis in studying the impact of awareness of gender-specific differences in women's cardiovascular health. Shareen noted that she loved hearing other presentations and meeting honors students from all over the region, saying that learning about their ideas and career paths was eye-opening. Shareen also noted that spending time with her own Honors cohort and the Honors directors was a bittersweet moment as the seniors prepare to step into the next chapter of their lives.

Hannah Blawas worked with Dr. Adam Underwood to determine the functional effectiveness of SOX7-A379V proteins in transcription. She explored how a change in the SOX7 protein affects its ability to regulate gene expression. She found that a change in this protein makes it more active, contributing to research on genetic diseases.

The last presenter was Haruki Imanishi, who worked with Dr. Jackie Novak to use clustering and decision-tree-based models to rank the top Formula One drivers in the sport's history. He analyzed race data such as average points and performance gaps to create a reliable ranking system. Using this numerical system, he found a way to rank drivers without bias.

Not only is the MEHA conference a great opportunity for learning, but it is also a place where inspiring relationships are built. All attendees of the conference worked together on a service project, creating over 100 literacy bags and school supplies for children with the organization La Casa de Amistad. The Walsh group also visited the Potawatomi Zoo and toured Notre Dame's campus. This year's MEHA conference proved memorable, due to the efforts of the students who attended and the Honors directors. Congratulations to all involved! ●



**(Above) Photo of students at University of Notre Dame**



**(Above) Photo of Olivia Huzyak presenting her work**

# Student Spotlight: Sophia Rosa

by: Bella Stuhldreher



Sophia Rosa

Sophia Rosa is a senior who will graduate with a Nursing degree in May. For the past 2 years, Sophia has served as an Honors Student Assistant, helping the Honors directors plan social and service events. For her thesis, she engaged in hands-on scientific research alongside Dr. Jennifer Clevinger that allowed her to use her academic interests to create a meaningful impact on the world. She completed her Thesis at the Stark Parks Wildlife Conservation Center in Massillon, Ohio, where she examined how removing diet additives affects the Virginia opossum and evaluated alternative charting practices for managing metabolic bone disease (MBD). Through this work, Sophia strengthened her research skills, deepened her understanding of wildlife rehabilitation, and gained valuable experience in animal care and data collection.

Beyond her Thesis, the Honors Program became a defining part of Sophia's Walsh experience. She reflects that Honors courses challenged her academically and broadened her education in unexpected ways. One standout memory is the HON 320: Atlantic Revolutions seminar taught by Dr. Constance, a subject unfamiliar to her as a nursing major. "I knew this class was pretty far out of my comfort zone," she shares, "[but] this class ended up being very interesting to me and offered a unique perspective into how history was shaped." Experiences like this helped her grow not only as a student, but as a person more open to new ideas and possibilities.

After graduation, Sophia plans to begin her career at Akron Children's Hospital as a Registered Nurse in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. Looking back on her Honors journey, she encourages incoming and current students to embrace the opportunities the program offers. "The education experience is purely what you make of it," she says. "The Honors Program provides courses that make your education well-rounded, diverse, and ultimately prepare you for the Thesis process." ●

# Student Spotlight: Brianna Birkle

by: Bella Stuhldreher



**Brianna Birkle**

Brianna Birkle is a senior studying both Museum Studies and Visual & Performing Arts. She recently received Outstanding Senior Award for her graduating class, as well as Outstanding Senior Award for the Honors Program. Brianna worked with Dr. Peter Tandler on her Thesis, which combines scientific analysis with the preservation of cultural heritage. Her research investigated whether digitally printed textiles release harmful chemicals known as “offgassing” that could damage delicate museum artifacts. Through laboratory testing, she evaluated whether these fabrics are safe to use in settings such as exhibit backdrops or repairs on historic garments, focusing on risks like fiber deterioration and metal corrosion. This work strengthened her technical skills and deepened her understanding of conservation science and the responsibilities involved in protecting historical materials.

Reflecting on her Honors experience, Brianna shares that the program allowed her to explore a wide range of topics at a deeper level. “It encouraged my innate sense of curiosity,” she notes, “and provided the opportunity to engage in laboratory research that is beyond what is typically offered to undergraduate students.” She credits the program with helping her stand out when applying to internships and graduate programs, giving her a competitive edge as she prepares for a career in art conservation. One of her favorite Honors memories is the HON 300: Grand Tour course with Dr. Constance during her 2023 study abroad trip. Experiencing historic sites firsthand, she says, was “one of the most interesting parts of my undergraduate years.”

After graduation, Brianna plans to continue gaining hands-on experience in art conservation before applying to a competitive graduate program in her field. When offering advice to new Honors students, she emphasizes two key ideas: take advantage of every opportunity because even unexpected experiences can open doors, and focus your research on your future career. “If you orient your essays, presentations, and projects toward topics related to your field,” she explains, “you’ll graduate not only more knowledgeable, but with a strong portfolio to present to jobs or graduate programs.” ●

# Student Spotlight: Ava Dietz

by: Bella Stuhldreher



**Ava Dietz**

Senior Ava Dietz is a Middle Childhood Education and Intervention Specialist double major. She worked with Dr. Michelle Lenarz on her Thesis project, which blends research, creativity, and education to strengthen literacy in children from birth to age five. Her work centers on giving parents accessible, research-based tools that make literacy development both understandable and engaging. She created “Family Literacy Flips,” a set of interactive cards that introduce key literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. She also wrote an original children’s book, “Pip and Pmpkin,” which models these strategies within the story and includes guided reading questions for families. Ava’s resources are designed to encourage consistent reading habits at home, helping children enter school with strong vocabularies and a genuine enthusiasm for learning.

Considering her Honors experience as a whole, Ava acknowledges the rigor of the program and the dedication it requires. Even so, she shares, “I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to experience it. I chose a topic that I was passionate about, and in the end, I created a book and educational resource that I am extremely proud of.” She notes that the Honors Program strengthened her appreciation for community and service, values central to Walsh University’s mission. Some of her favorite memories include participating in Dr. Constance’s roleplaying classes and volunteering with Dr. Clevinger to help a group of third graders from Lake Schools who visited Walsh learn about science. She also fondly recalls giving campus tours and hearing new students shout “Swords Up!”

Looking ahead, Ava is considering a future in educational law after completing her undergraduate education. She hopes to take her teaching licensure exams and work in intervention as she pursues law. Her advice to new Honors students is simple but meaningful: choose a topic you truly care about and an advisor who will challenge and support you. “Two years is a long time to work on one project,” she says. “Take time at the beginning to set yourself up for success. You can do it!”

# Thesis Spotlights

by: Aliya Shine

This Spring, 31 Honors Program students presented their theses projects to friends, family, and faculty. The students who presented spent the past two years having conducted endless hours of research, analyzing of information, organizing their findings into a thorough scholarly article, and crafting a presentation of their final results. Through all of the hard work and dedication put forth in meeting the deadlines, these 31 students crossed the finish line of the Honors Program.

Congratulations, Honors Students!

**Shareen Awadallah | Nursing**



**Thesis:** "The Impact of Awareness of Gender-Specific Differences in Women's Cardiovascular Health"

**Future Plans:** After graduation, I will be working as a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit nurse at Akron Children's Hospital!

**Hannah Blawas | Biology - Pre-Professional**

**Thesis:** "The Functional Effectiveness of SOX7 A379V in Transcription"

**Future Plans:** In the fall, I will begin working for my PhD through the Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology Program at Ohio State University!



**Laure Bliese | Biology - Pre-Dentistry**

**Thesis:** "Effects of Natural Extracts on Dental Pellicle"

**Future Plans:** My plans for post graduation are attending dental school.



**Camryn Barker | Nursing**



**Thesis:** "Analysis of Caffeine Consumption & Caffeine Intoxication Among Walsh University Students & Student-Athletes"

**Future Plans:** I will be working as a nurse in the Medical ICU at Aultman Hospital.

**Abigail Bologna | Legal Studies, Minor in Art**

**Thesis:** "Where Does Medical Malpractice Meet Telemedicine? Constructing a National Framework to Unite Telehealth Services"

**Future Plans:** I plan on attending law school.



**Brianna Birkle | Museum Studies, Visual/Performing Arts, Minor in History & Chemistry**



**Thesis:** "Evaluating the Chemical Suitability of Digitally Printed Textiles with Objects of Cultural Heritage"

**Future Plans:** I will continue gaining experience in art conservation and collections care, then attend a graduate school program in art.

**Caleigh Cheatham | Psychology - Pre-Occupational Therapy & Theology**

**Thesis:** "Teacher's Social and Emotional Observations of Current Fifth Grade Students Through the Lens of COVID-19"

**Future Plans:** I am going to go to Graduate School for Occupational Therapy at Walsh University.



## Honorable Mention

Katherine Corrigan | Nursing



**Thesis:** "Mental Health in Collegiate Student-Athletes: An Exploratory Study of Stress, Coping Mechanisms, and Social Support"

**Future Plans:** I will be working as a nurse at The James Cancer Hospital at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in the PCU.

Amelia Freeman | Finance, Minor in Data Analytics



**Thesis:** "The Relationship Between Emerging Adults' Experienced Family Stressors and Financial Management Behaviors."

**Future Plans:** Pursuing a career in data analytics.

Ava Dietz | Middle Childhood Education & Intervention Specialist, Minor in English



**Thesis:** "Introducing Children Ages 0-5 to Literacy"

**Future Plans:** After graduation, I plan on becoming an intervention specialist as I pursue higher education in law.

Lukas Graham | Accounting, Minor in Finance



**Thesis:** "Is Working from Home in the Accounting Industry Best for Business?"

**Future Plans:** I plan to find a job in public accounting and pursue a CPA license.

Colton Ferrucci | Finance



**Thesis:** "Social Security: Proposal for Privatization Plan"

**Future Plans:** I plan to work in the banking field

Katherine Harlan | Prek-5 Early Childhood Education and K-12 Intervention Specialist



**Thesis:** "The Impact of Parent Involvement on Student Success"

**Future Plans:** I plan to be an early childhood educator either in a general education setting or in a mild/moderate intervention setting.

Sarah Festi | Nursing



**Thesis:** "Nursing Education with Pediatric Heart Failure Patients and Their Families"

**Future Plans:** I have accepted a position as a nurse at Nationwide Children's Hospital on their hematology and oncology unit.

Olivia Huzyak | Nursing



**Thesis:** "Caring Beyond the Body: Developing a Digital Educational Program to Enhance Spiritual Literacy in Nursing Education for Palliative Care)"

**Future Plans:** I will be continuing Aultman Canton Hospital's Student Nurse Internship on Memorial 5 South, a neurosurgery step down unit and be enrolled in their nurse residency program.

Haruki Imanishi | Data Analytics



**Thesis:** "Using Clustering and Decision-Tree Based Models to Find the Greatest Formula One Driver of All Time"

**Future Plans:** Looking to work full-time as an Analyst.

Amelia Molitor | Psychology, Theology, Minors in Community & Nonprofit Leadership, & Business



**Thesis:** "The Relationship Between Different Child-Rearing Methods and Adult Children's Perception of God"

**Future Plans:** I plan on attending grad school and pursuing an MBA.

Maddox Kelly | Criminal Justice, Minors in Forensic Studies, Psychology, and History



**Thesis:** "Examining the Challenges in Forensic Investigation Processes and Procedures"

**Future Plans:** I will be completing an MSBA in Business Analytics through Georgetown University, and will be working during this program.

Ryan Moorhead | Computer Science - Cybersecurity, Programming, Minors in Business, Digital Marketing & Analytics



**Thesis:** "Developing a Chatbot to Reduce Tech Anxiety and Improve IT Issue Resolution"

**Future Plans:** I would like to pursue a field in web development or some other form of software development.

Ian Lehman | Nursing



**Thesis:** "Correlation Between Conscientiousness and Accuracy of Estimated Smartphone and Social Media Screen Time"

**Future Plans:** I plan to work at Cleveland Clinic Mercy as a nurse after graduation.

Antonio Paganelli | Business Management



**Thesis:** "Ethical AI Governance: A Framework for the Future"

**Future Plans:** Joining the workforce, doing sales & business development for a start-up company.

Troy Mazzei | Adolescent & Young Adult Education, Minors in Theology & Sacred Scripture



**Thesis:** "Correlations between Caffeine Consumption, Social Media Use and Impulsivity among U.S. College Students."

**Future Plans:** To teach Theology in the Columbus area.

Daniel Palanceanu | Biology - Pre-Professional



**Thesis:** "The Biological Activity of a Non-Natural Epimer of Betulin"

**Future Plans:** I am dedicated to advancing my career in medicine by becoming a Physician Assistant.

## Honorable Mention

**Elizabeth Radis** | Biology - Pre-Professional,  
Minor in Chemistry



**Thesis:** "Dissecting the Functional Attributes of SOX12"

**Future Plans:** I plan on attending graduate school to become a physician assistant!

**Rachel Thompson** | Exercise Science - Pre-Physical  
Therapy



**Thesis:** "The Effects of Sport Specialization on Injury Prevalence and Physical Activity Levels and Sedentary Status on Retired Athletes"

**Future Plans:** Attending Walsh DPT Program in the Fall of 2026.

**Sophia Rosa** | Nursing

**Thesis:** "The Effect of the Removal of Four Diet Additives in Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) Diets at the Stark Parks Wildlife Conservation Center as it Relates to Chart Tracking and Treating of Metabolic Bone Disease"

**Future Plans:** I plan on starting as a registered nurse at Akron Children's Hospital in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.



**Gloria Tindana** | Nursing

**Thesis:** "Evaluating the Impact of Simplified Educational Material on UTI Knowledge and Prevention in Low-Income Postpartum Women."

**Future Plans:** After graduation, I plan to work as a registered nurse for one year at either Aultman Hospital or Summa Health.



**Meleah Sawastuk** | Biology - Pre-Physical Therapy



**Thesis:** "Patients' Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence Within Healthcare"

**Future Plans:** I will continue with my higher education by beginning the DPT (Physical Therapy) Graduate Program at Walsh University in Fall 2026.

**Meklit Tofu** | Computer Science - Programming  
& Cybersecurity

**Thesis:** "Cybersecurity Awareness Website for Young Adults"

**Future Plans:** I plan on working in the technology sector.



**Aliya Shine** | Visual Communication Design, Web  
Design, Minor in Digital Marketing & Analytics



**Thesis:** "Designing Social Media to Connect Students to College-Led Student Ministry Programs."

**Future Plans:** I plan to pursue a job in marketing and continuing my photography business!

**Madison Wagner** | Biology - Pre-Professional

**Thesis:** "Molecular Analysis of SOX3 Modification by Small Ubiquitin like Modifiers (SUMOylation)"

**Future Plans:** I am attending PA school at Mount Union after graduation.





# The Honors "Fridge"

A gallery of our Honors students having fun and serving their community. Proud-moments and fun memories that are worthy of being hung on the "fridge" for everyone to see.

Students at teaching kids at Hoover History Day



St. Patrick's Day Honors Party



Honors Students serving on MLK Day



Thank you for reading this edition of the Honorable Mention. We hope that it reveals a small piece of the work that the Honors Program students are doing to impact their lives and in the lives of those in the community.

Troy Mazzei  
Co-Editor

Dr. Nina Rytwinski  
Faculty Advisor

Aliya Shine  
Co-Editor

Special thank-you to our student writers:

Nate Borman  
Alyssa Cocchiola  
Molly Durkin  
Bella Stuhldreher  
Grace Tabellion

### Mission

The Walsh University Honors Program provides an enhanced, values-based educational experience to intellectually curious, academically talented, and highly motivated undergraduate students. The program's curriculum is innovative, diverse, and interdisciplinary; it supports a community of scholars that is equally diverse and innovative, as well as collaborative. The Honors Program experience develops leaders who pursue academic excellence, think critically, research independently, communicate effectively, and provide service to others.

For more information about the Honors Program, please contact Dr. Jennifer Clevinger or Dr. Nina Rytwinski at [honorsdirector@walsh.edu](mailto:honorsdirector@walsh.edu).



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