

Honors Outlook

Honors Field Trip: Cherry Blossom Festival

By: Ezra Carper, Class of 2027

Spring has sprung, and the Honors Program had the chance to go to Washington D.C. for the Cherry Blossom Festival. While the trees had not yet reached peak bloom, enough flowers were open to make it a pretty sight, and the pleasant weather made a walk around the Tidal Basin appealing.

Before we split off into small groups to walk, the whole group was treated to some fun facts about the Tidal Basin, the festival, and the cherry trees themselves. The Tidal Basin was built in 1882 to control the frequent flooding the capital was experiencing; the flooding had even been so bad that in 1881, congressmen were transported to the Capitol in boats. A story I found particularly intriguing was that of the Cherry Tree Rebellion. In 1938, when the government was going to build the Jefferson Memorial, a group of women did not like the idea that trees would be moved and chained themselves to the trees. FDR, the president at the time, said he would just move the trees with the women attached, and the women finally relented.

Once we'd been regaled with some facts, we were given the opportunity to walk around the basin our-

selves. I split off in a group with two others, and we took a leisurely walk around the area, stopping for photos of particularly interesting trees. A portion of the basin on the far side of the Jefferson Memorial was under construction to repair the walls, which had been operated and maintained in the same way since the initial construction of the Tidal Basin. It took about an hour to make our way around the two-mile loop — an hour well-spent.

All in all, the Honors Program's trip to the Cherry Blossom Festival was an enjoyable experience, and one I hope others can experience in the future. With the knowledge the climate has been changing when the cherry trees bloom, posing a risk should they bloom too early for pollinators, I hope the festival can continue for many years to come.



HONORS PROGRAM STAFF

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“Video Games for Homework?!”

By: Sarah Tyree-Herrmann, Class of 2027 &
Olivia Buchanan, Class of 2026

Games and Culture (ENGL 253) is an Honors-designated course that allows us to explore a relatively new form of media in innovative and compelling ways. Many of our reflections and projects are unique from other classes because they are not just writing papers or making slideshows. From memes to video essays, Games and Culture brings what are widely considered “casual” mediums into academia, which makes sense because we are learning about something that is widely considered a “casual” topic: video games.

The field trip to [Reclaim Arcade](#) was the biggest highlight of this class. It was a one-of-a-kind experience to step into that dimly lit room of neon signs and blaring noises, especially in an academic context, and we were so excited to play the retro games that we had been studying firsthand. To help us reflect on experiences like these, we made memes and posted

GIFs that do anything from relating our thoughts on class content in a funny way to merely adding a silly image to the discussion. We share these memes and GIFs with one another on Discord – a social media platform typically used by gamers – which is a fitting online chat room for a class of students like us.

Throughout the semester, we have worked on a variety of projects. Our advertisements of retro video games ranged from lively animations to TikTok style formats, and our video essays featured our own gameplay and narration on a game of our choice. As we are writing this article, we are working in groups to design and build our own video games, a form of academic output that we have not seen in any other course. With each project, we consider one main question: why is this video game important to our culture? Often, the answer is that games are simply a form of entertainment and serve as an escape from the stresses of the real world. Moreover, they can even bring people together. However, sometimes, the answer is more complicated, and through the use of “casual” means like memes and video essays, that question is what Games and Culture seeks to explore.



Origami Night

By: Bryar Laine, Class of 2028

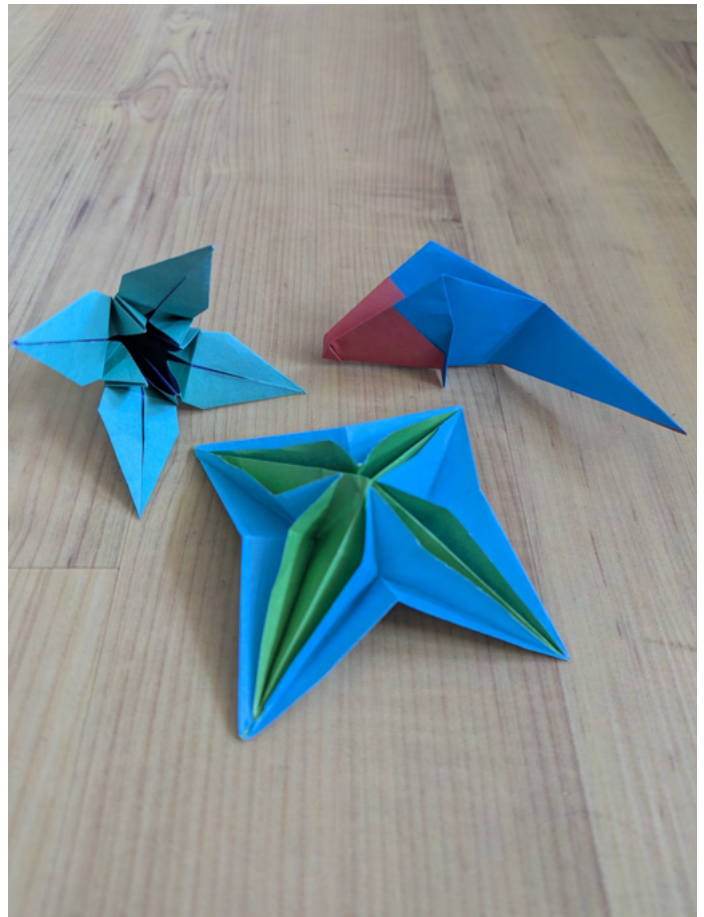
I am Bryar Laine, a freshman in the Honors Program who is still learning the lay of the land. Because of this, branching out to do activities I likely would not have done in high school is important to me and will help me be a more successful student. Co-curricular events provide a broad range of opportunities for Honors students to experiment with topics outside of their intended majors. Dr. Wells hosted an origami night on March 20 to provide an opportunity for students – not exclusively in the Honors Program – to try something new and outside of their comfort zone. As a Biochemistry major, origami night isn't exactly a major requirement; however, I attended this night to try a new art form that I hadn't previously experienced, and it was very rewarding.

The origami night included instruction by Dr. Wells on various folding techniques to create different structures, including a mouse, a four-pointed star, and a water lily. Dr. Wells displayed a video on the history of origami, including two famous origami artists and the origin of the word "origami". After discussing and demonstrating different folding techniques, Dr. Wells moved on to specific instruction for creating figures. I stayed at the event for one hour and created three objects, mentioned above, at various difficulty levels. The water lily was the most difficult for me, especially considering I had not had much origami experience in the past, but thanks to Dr. Wells's clear and guided instruction, I was able to successfully make the flower.

Learning about the history of origami helped me become more culturally well-rounded. I had only a very basic understanding of the 1000 paper crane project before the event, knowing only the very basics of it. The project helped me to reflect on the cruelty with which the United States has treated other countries in the past, bombarding them with nuclear weapons, but also the overwhelming push for peace by the US and global citizens through the 1000 paper cranes project. Being culturally well-

rounded and empathetic in life is very important to me, so I am grateful for this opportunity to expand on both of those areas.

I learned a lot about origami at this event, an art in which my only other experience had been folding paper airplanes and fortune tellers in elementary school. As I plan to attend dental school after UMW, I need to work on my manual dexterity, and origami will help me refine those skills. In addition to learning, I was helping my future career. The Honors Program provides opportunities to explore and experience things you may not have considered in the past. As an avid learner, I love to take advantage of these opportunities through creative co-curriculars.



Congratulations to the Honors Graduates from Summer 2024 to Spring 2025

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts



Meg Paulson

Women and Gender Studies & English

I will be attending George Mason University for post-graduate studies, for an MA in English with a concentration in Literature! Honors has given me so many opportunities, including leadership through City as Text and volunteer service with the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, which is just one branch of work I am considering pursuing later in life.

Morgan Lewellen

International Affairs & Women and Gender Studies

I have been accepted to the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University to pursue a M.A. in International Affairs!

I also plan to develop my specialty on gender policy and East Asia as concentrations while attending. The Honors Program has definitely contributed to consistent critical thinking and the opportunity to develop my academics further with meaningful research for both of my majors (Int. Affairs and WGST). Perhaps I will keep the capstone to use for graduate study!



Zoey Young

English & Women and Gender Studies

I will be looking for writing and research-related work after graduation, spending some time to figure out what I want most. The Honors Program has given me countless opportunities to engage with academia at a higher level, including my trip to the Virginia Collegiate Honors Conference, which motivated me to pursue more conference appearances. In a few years, I'll be applying to graduate programs in English Literature and Gender Studies, and continuing to engage with academia in the way I so enjoy!

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts



Grace Delaney

English

I have accepted a position as a deputy clerk for Spotsylvania District Court.



Logan Edwards

English

I am applying to jobs in the library so that I may continue working with librarians. I plan to eventually pursue my library science degree after at least two gap years. I have made many friends through the Honors Program at UMW, and I have had the opportunity to explore my passion for poetry and community through my Honors Capstone Project!



Bird Hanning

English: Creative Writing

I am looking to be an English teacher after graduation at the high school level. I've really loved my time at Mary Wash and the Honors Program has given me so many cool opportunities.



Elizabeth Killian

English

Post graduation I will be taking part in the University of Colorado Boulder's SLPP program to begin my steps to becoming a certified Speech-Language Pathologist. I hope to one day work as an SLP either in an educational or medical setting to help all ages embrace their speech. This past semester I completed my Honors capstone project and presented research on observed medical SLP practices within the adult Dysphagia and Aphasia. I am beyond grateful for the opportunities that UMW's Honors Program has provided me. Get dirty, go wash!

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts



Hayley Madden

Art History

I will be attending University College Cork in Ireland to earn my Master's in Modern and Contemporary Art History, with the goal to eventually earn my doctorate. I plan to join the UCC Irish Dance team and make lots of new friends!



Linnie Ulick

Religious Studies

Post-graduation, I will attend rabbinical school to be ordained as a rabbi. Throughout my time at UMW, the Honors Program has helped foster a passion in me of tapping into curiosity and learning in and outside of the classroom.



Michael Dye

International Affairs

I plan on working full-time in the Richmond area by the summer's end. I specifically plan on doing economic/business research or content creation with a private firm or a non-profit organization.



Rebecca Yee

Theatre

After graduation she will continue to live in Fredericksburg and do things she enjoys doing. She is looking at office administration jobs and is excited to continue honing her theatre skills in theatre companies around DC in her free time. The Honors Program helped her engage with classes outside of her major and allowed for the potential of jobs that are interesting and outside of the degree she earned.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts



Bella Molseed

English & Communication and Digital Studies

After graduation, Bella will be undertaking an internship with the Editorial Services at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and will be pursuing a career in editing. Her time in the Honors Program has allowed Bella to get involved in leadership opportunities and co-curricular activities that inspired her to pursue a field that would allow her to make use of her English major while constantly learning and developing her skills.



Layla McGovern

English & Communication and Digital Studies

After graduation, I plan to use my English and Communications & Digital Studies majors to pursue a career in digital marketing. Throughout my senior year I've maintained a social media and communications internship with Fredericksburg Main Street, a position I could not have obtained without the opportunities the Honors Program has given me. This internship has significantly inspired my future career goals, and I owe much of my preparedness for my future to the Honors Program.



Rylie Vann

Theatre & Communication and Digital Studies

Following graduation, I plan to remain in the Fredericksburg area and work as much as I can in the theatre! While building my career and waiting for theatre to become a full-time role, I'm hoping to work locally doing something communications related. UMW Honors has helped me build my project management and connectivity skills, and has made me realize how much I love building and creating experiences for others!



Ariana Adamek

Anthropology & Theatre

After graduation, I'm planning to continue looking for jobs in theatre and arts administration. The Honors Program taught me to appreciate every opportunity that I have to learn and try something new, which is something that I will definitely carry with me into any future endeavor.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts



Shadwick Yoder

Political Science

I plan on returning home to Pennsylvania where I will teach high school government and civics for the first few years as I enter local politics back in the Lehigh Valley. I am eager to pursue my passion of politics and get involved through volunteering and plan on eventually running for elected office. The diversity in education through the Honors Program and UMW as a whole make me feel confident in my ability to tackle a wide range of jobs and challenges once I walk across that stage.



Gabrielle Lyon

Political Science

I recently accepted a position as a full-time 3rd grade teacher at Highway Christian Academy. I am thrilled to work in this environment while I complete my Masters of Secondary Education with a social studies endorsement at UMW!



Merna Mousa

Political Science & Pre-Law

I hope to begin working in Richmond soon using my Political Science degree and then move to DC to work in the federal government.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts



Sarah Moore

Historic Preservation

My post graduation plans are to find a job in the historic preservation field, hopefully in a position that works with the public. Through coursework and internships at UMW, I have come to find that preservation education is very interesting to me. The Honors Program has helped me understand that assisting others in learning is rewarding.



Erica Berger

Historic Preservation

Following graduation, I will be working before pursuing a master's degree in library and information science. My long term goal is to work in digital archival collections. I am grateful for the opportunities the Honors program has presented to me. Thanks to my service learning project, I was given an opportunity to work with the university archives and special collections as a volunteer and eventually as a student aide. This experience has shaped my long term career goals and helped me develop important skills in my field.



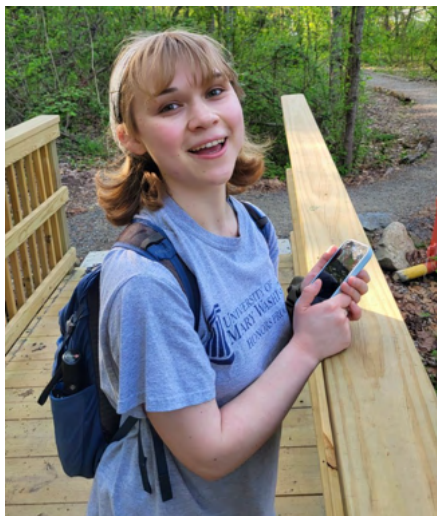
Elizabeth Breckenridge

German & Biomedical Studies

My post-graduate plans are to work as an ER Tech/EMT on the way to Physical Assistant/Associate School to work in the emergency department or addiction medicine. I hope to continue community service at home through healthcare and summer camp. Thank you to the Honors Program for the most amazing opportunities through Phage Hunters, City as Text, and HN Service Learning, and for teaching me some great leadership and academic skills that I will take in my future career. Finally, I credit the Honors Program not only for introducing me to the most amazing friends, but also some of the most passionate and intelligent people I know. I am excited to see where life takes me!

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Sasha Murphy

Biochemistry
American Chemical Society

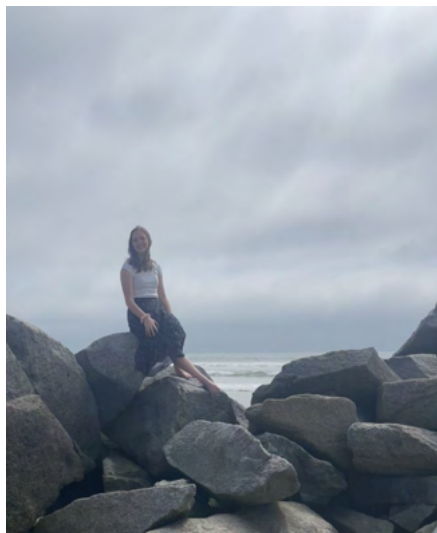
I plan to work as a lab technician for a few years before pursuing graduate studies in toxicology. Being part of the Honors community at UMW has allowed me to learn from inspiring people who have demonstrated the value of perseverance and dedication. I am deeply grateful for my time in this program!



Megan Baxter

Biochemistry

After graduation, I am applying to medical school and plan to work as a Medical Assistant over the summer. Looking back at the past four years, the Honors Program has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey, challenging me to think critically and push the boundaries in my research. From this, I have developed a deeper passion for problem-solving in the medical field. Apart from the academic benefits, the program has also involved me in the Fredericksburg community, offering several opportunities for volunteer work. The Program's emphasis on intellectual curiosity and scholarly rigor has not only prepared me for a future career in healthcare but has also developed a stronger appreciation for service.



Emma Goehner

Biochemistry

After graduation, I will begin graduate school at the University of Virginia in the Department of Chemistry. I am deeply grateful for the UMW Honors Program; it has been instrumental in getting me to this point and has allowed me to make meaningful and lasting connections with peers and faculty.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Morgan Hicok

Biology

After graduation I plan to be a lab tech for about a year until I can attend graduate school to earn a master's or PhD in biological sciences. The Honors Program at Mary Washington has helped shape my career aspirations by introducing me to new volunteer opportunities and connections that I would have otherwise missed.



Rachel Walker

Biomedical Sciences

Hi everyone, my name is Rachel, and I am a honors student graduating with a B.S. Biomedical Sciences and a minor in chemistry. I have enjoyed my time being a part of the UMW Honors Program because it has allowed me to build strong connections with professors as well as the Fredericksburg community. One of my favorite honors class allowed me to volunteer at Mary Washington Hospice, which has helped me grow and dip my feet into the healthcare field. I am planning to further my education in PA school to allow me to provide amazing healthcare like those who have already!



Delaney Humphrey

Biomedical Sciences

After graduation, I plan to work in a hospital to gain clinical experience, prepare for the MCAT, and apply to medical school. My ultimate goal is to become a doctor, where I can dedicate myself to lifelong learning and use my skills to improve the lives of those around me. The Honors Program played a significant role in shaping my academic journey by encouraging me to challenge myself, think critically, and seek learning experiences outside of my comfort zone. From engaging courses to valuable mentorship, the program has prepared me to pursue my aspirations with confidence and determination.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Molly Daw

Biomedical Sciences

After graduation, I plan on attending an accelerated nursing program beginning in the fall. I would like to work as a travel nurse for a few years and then go back to school to obtain my Doctor in Nursing Practice degree, as my goal is to become a nurse practitioner. The Honors Program has given me opportunities to obtain real-life experience in research and service learning, and I will use what I have learned from these experiences in my future academic and professional career.



Allison Fletcher

Biomedical Sciences

After graduation, I plan to either start working in a research setting or attend a master's program, followed by a graduate program for a PhD in Neuroscience or Pharmacology. I hope to work in the scientific research field with a focus on neurological disorders. I am immensely thankful to the UMW biological sciences department and the Honors program for molding my critical thinking and problem solving skills, and allowing me to be able to follow this career path.



Bonnie Butler

Biomedical Sciences

I will be attending the George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences. I was admitted to GW SMHS the summer after my sophomore year because of the early admittance program available to UMW Honors Program students!

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Lordina Agyekum

Biomedical Sciences

I plan on working and getting enough clinical hours to attend PA school in 2026. I also plan on volunteering and taking time to enjoy life after college.



Caroline Turner

Biomedical Sciences

I will be applying to PA school following graduation. The Honors Program has broadened my perspective of what it means to be student, and has shown me how many opportunities there are to learn in the world, both of which are things I'll carry into my career.



Christopher Anderson

Biomedical Sciences & Religious Studies

I am going through a medical masters program at Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS). Once I complete my masters degree I will apply for medical school admissions with my top choices being EVMS or UNC School of Medicine.



Alex Delano

*Psychology & Classics: Ancient
Mediterranean Studies*

I am applying to post-bac research positions in the field of cognitive neuroscience. I plan to apply to a Ph.D. program with the hopes of becoming a professor at a research university to provide the same mentoring I am grateful to have received at UMW. My research experience within my majors and in the Honors Program helped me realize I want to pursue a career in research.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Samantha Vaughan

Environmental Science

After graduation I plan to begin working in the field of environmental science. The Honors Program has taught me that every moment, no matter where you are or what you're doing, is a learning opportunity. I think that's something that's so important to remember, especially in my field.



Jacob Lohr

Environmental Science

I will be taking a graduation trip to Spain and Portugal over the summer to enjoy a vacation with my friends. I plan to work in the Environmental GIS field following my return. The Honors Program at UMW has been a positive influence on my experience at UMW by keeping me up to date on the going-ons around campus and by making the tools I need to succeed available to me.



Jessica Oberlies

Environmental Science & Spanish

Being in the Honors Program at UMW has encouraged me to pursue my interests in both language and science, and I've found that the two are more connected than I would have thought. Through my involvement in Dr. Grothe's research lab studying climate changes in the tropical Pacific, I have gained a greater appreciation for coral reefs and the important role they play in maintaining both a stable ecosystem and a livelihood for many people worldwide. After college, I will be heading to the Philippines with the Peace Corps to work as a Community Development Facilitator for Coastal Resource Management. I am excited for the opportunity to work in the field of conservation and to learn more about the language and culture of the Philippines! I hope to use the communication and critical thinking skills that I have developed here at UMW to build strong relationships within the community and work together to develop local strategies to protect marine resources.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Victoria Gallaway
*Geography & Certification in
Geographic Information Sciences*

My immediate plan is to put my GIS Certificate to use and work for the GIS division of a company called Fugro. I will be editing LiDAR data. I am grateful for the people I met and the memories I made during my time in the Honors Program.



David Nichols
Geology

I am currently planning to work for an engineering firm as a materials technician. My goal moving forward is to return to school for a masters degree in environmental engineering. Using my skills and degree, I plan to work in renewable energy engineering. Honors has opened many doors for me both academically and for my career.



Carter Bussey
Geology & Applied Physics

After graduation, Carter plans on working for one to two years before returning to school for his Ph.D. in geology. He would like to thank the Honors Program for ensuring he takes courses that were more challenging, as he feels they gave him a more extensive education.



Kate Green
Conservation Biology

My plans are to go into conservation field work and research after graduation, and potentially go to graduate school after a few years. I would love to work with state governments or an NGO, and ideally doing something with birds, fish, or larger mammals.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Yonatan Asfaw

Computer Science

Post graduation, I will be working full time with the Department of Defense and I plan to pursue my masters degree as well. Being in the Honors Program has exposed me to new topics that otherwise I would not have thought about. It gave me a new perspective in regards to my surroundings and gave me a sense of honor while doing that.



Victor Rahman

Computer Science

My plan is to get into the officer training school for the Air Force after graduating. Right now I am studying for the Air Force officer qualifying test and getting into better shape to better increase my application chances.



Rain Wynes

Computer Science & Mathematics

After I graduate, I plan on continuing my internship and looking beyond to grad school. My plan is to pursue a Ph.D. after taking a gap year to expand my knowledge in the workforce. I believe that the Honors Program has done well in allowing me to explore other aspects of academia and culture, outside of the strict rigors of study inside my degree.



April Groce

Data Science

After graduation, I plan to attend North Carolina State University to pursue a Master of Science in Analytics. Upon completing the program, I hope to secure a position as a data scientist in a government agency. The Honors Program at UMW has played a key role in shaping my education, helping me develop strong problem-solving skills and a deeper understanding of my field through research. It has also inspired me to pursue a career that combines data science with meaningful societal impact, especially in the public sector.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Science



Katie Heyn

Mathematics & Computer Science

I plan on pursuing a job in software and algorithms. The Honors Program has taught me more than I could imagine and assisted with leadership and community service to help me grow as an individual.



Kaylie Curran

Applied Statistics

After graduation, I will be attending NC State University to pursue my master's degree in statistics. The Honors Program at UMW has played a key role in preparing me for this next step by allowing me to experience classes outside of my comfort zone and develop a broader academic perspective. It has also helped me grow in my academic abilities and prepare for the future.



Isabella Wilson

Psychology

My post-graduate plans are to work as an ER Tech/EMT on the way to Physical Assistant/Associate School to work in the emergency department or addiction medicine. I hope to continue community service at home through healthcare and summer camp. Thank you to the Honors Program for the most amazing opportunities through Phage Hunters, City as Text, and HN Service Learning for teaching me some great leadership and academic skills that I will take in my future career. Finally, I credit the Honors Program not only for introducing me to the most amazing friends, but also some of the most passionate and intelligent people I know. I am excited to see where life takes me!

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Business

Bachelor of Science



Burke Steifman
Business Administration

After graduation, I will be moving to New York City and working in banking. I had a great experience in the Honors Program and found it very helpful during my postgrad job search.



Emily Mousso
Business Administration

My post-graduation plans include pursuing my MBA here at Mary Washington. I am excited to continue my education, and it would not have been possible without the help and support of the faculty and my peers in the Honors Program!



Christina Oswalt
Business Administration & International Affairs

I look forward to going to law school and remodeling my room.



Katie Reif
Marketing & Communication and Digital Studies

I would love to know what my plans are. Trying to find a job, but where/what/when that will be is still a mystery.

Honors Program Graduates from the College of Education

Bachelor of Science in Education



Maria Werner
Elementary Education

After graduation I will be teaching in Fredericksburg City Public Schools at the elementary level. My time in the Honors Program has shown me the importance of hearing many people's perspectives, a practice I hope to carry into my future classrooms.



Emily Roets
Elementary Education

After graduating, I will be teaching kindergarten or first grade at Stafford Elementary School full-time. I am also contemplating completing a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction in a couple of years to further my education. My time at UMW has been enhanced by the Honors Program as I was given opportunities to build a community on the campus, complete a capstone relating to international education systems, and explore hobbies through co-curricular events. In the future, I want to continue to give back to my community and explore hobbies, so that I always continue learning.

We need you! The Honors Student Advisory Council is looking for members. HSAC serves as a liaison between the Honors student body and the Honors Program staff, and its members meet monthly to develop ideas for social events, field trips, and program improvements.

For more details please reach out to honorsprogram@umw.edu