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Link to original story: <https://www.uwosh.edu/today/124376/uwo-honors-college-enrollment-surges-res-hall-community-ready-for-fall-24/>

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zumjEQVmXJo>

UWO Honors College enrollment surges, res hall community ready for fall ‘24

Written by News Bureau, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

The Honors College at UW Oshkosh is primed for a student surge this fall while continuing to augment academic offerings and experiences, including launch of a new Honors College residence hall community.

UWO’s academic home for some of its highest performing students is ready to welcome approximately 167 students this fall, up from 117 in fall 2023, a 30 percent increase, said Honors College Dean Laurence Carlin.

And the college will also open its new “Honors Living and Learning Community” in Evans Hall this fall, Carlin said.

“It provides a great opportunity to live with other Honors students in a supportive environment that fosters academic success,” Carlin said. “Students here take classes together, eat together, help each other study and form lifelong friendships. We’re planning to do some programming there too: Pizza with Professors, research presentations and other events.”

The college boasted nearly 500 students overall in fall 2023. The average high school GPA of first-year students that fall was 3.85. Students in the college pursued 54 different UWO majors.

Dominik Dempsey of Kimberly is one of them, and he’s thrilled with the richness of his experience.

“Without a doubt can I say that joining the UWO Honors College is the absolute best decision I could have made in my college career and in my young adult life,” Dempsey said.

“I can truly say that the Honors College is devoted to student success. No matter what you are dealing with, even if it does not directly pertain to the Honors College, there is always an amazing team of professors and advisors ready to help… With this also comes how the Honors classes are set up. You don’t see class sizes larger than 30 people, allowing you to make those meaningful connections with professors. It allows you to really get to know everyone in your class, further building connections and creating a learning environment like no other.”

The Honors College was born in fall 2017, evolving from UWO’s former honors program. The college format provided opportunities for additional, high-impact classroom and off-campus experiences.

Carlin said the goal over the next two years is to sustain the college’s enrollment and, as possible, keep growing smartly, continuing a collaboration with UWO Admissions, with a strong focus on retention.

UWO Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Ed Martini cited renewed focus and collaboration to enhancing the program.

“These are some of the latest efforts to enrich and grow the Honors College experience for current and future students and we’re pleased that our department chairs and deans found creative, affordable solutions to make it happen within the ongoing academic restructuring at UWO,” Martini said.

Carlin said fall 2024 also brings a spectrum of new first-year course seminars with themes including Satire and Society; Justice and the Environment; Memory and Storytelling; International Conflict; and Mediated Lives, an interdisciplinary examination of modern media’s effects on humans’ experience.

The college also continues its commitment to study abroad experiences which Dempsey said has involved his “most memorable experience thus far.”

“Nothing is better than being able to take a city as beautiful as Paris and turn it into your classroom (in my case it was Paris, but any destination offered would be just as amazing),” he said. “The trip offered endless opportunities to learn and gain experience and experience a totally foreign culture surrounded by amazing friends and fellow students. It also taught me the most valuable lessons of world history and how to navigate a world outside of the United States as I move into my adult life.”

Carlin said it’s that kind of impact that continues to drive efforts to build the Honors College’s enrollment and deliver on the promise of a rigorous, enriching student experience.

“We want to identify high achieving applicants to UWO and put in front of them all the opportunities and benefits of the Honors College—the transformative, life changing things we offer… We also want to make it clear to them, only a certain percentage of their classes will be Honors classes. We want our Honors students out there experiencing all that the university has to offer.”