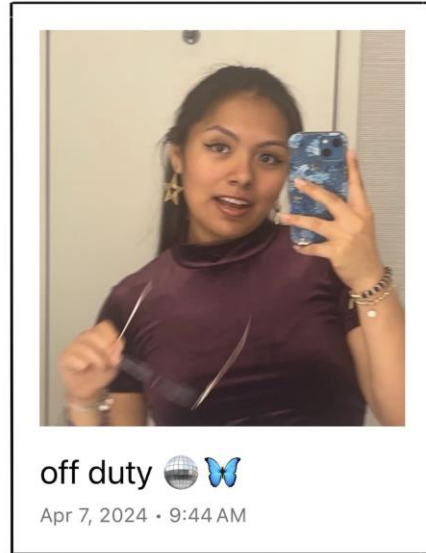


## *Yullyana Laguna*



### *Class of 2023-2024*

Associate of Science, Liberal Arts and Sciences in Global Studies; Associate of Arts

Distinguished Golden Eagle recipient 2023-2024

### *Honors Courses:*

World Civ From 1500

American National Government

Intro to Comparative Politics

Introduction to International Relations

Introduction to the United Nation

I'm writing this in the Honors Hub where I'm surrounded by all my friends, some doing homework, some talking about the most random things ever, but all of us appreciating each other's company. I have met the best of friends here in the honors hub, and it all started when Dr. Gallo invited me into the Honors Program. Truth be told, I was intimidated by the idea of honors in college! It all seemed like it was going to be overwhelming, and I just wanted to get through my classes. However, Dr. Gallo thought I had excellent writing skills and would make a great fit for the Honors Program since I was already in her World Civ From 1500 Honors course.

## Section 1:

### Demonstrate Engagement



(Figure 1)



(Figure 2)



(Figure 3)



(Figure 4)

Before I knew of the Honors Program, I was basically a ghost on campus. All I'd do is go to my normal classes, go to work, and go home; there was nothing that really gave me the spark to participate in school. It wasn't till I joined HSA that I went from a quiet caterpillar to a social butterfly seeking the answers to the world! I was an officer from Fall 22'-Spring 23', in which I was one of the 3 leaders of the "The Food Picture: Hunger in NWA." I got the pleasure to present our research about food insecurity within NWACC alongside Thanai Hill and Ally Davidson (Figure 1), and during the Spring Arts and Culture Festival we got the chance to present with Cathy May, Jennie Popp, and Daniel Smith. The NWACC focused data revolved around how our campus felt about food prices increasing, accessibility to food and resources, and overall, who were the ones taking the strongest hit to the falling economy? Throughout the semester there were of course other HSA related projects such as "Blind Date with a Book" (Figure 2), "Game Nights" (Figure 3), and our "J-Street Clean-Up" (Figure 4). Over time, even though I gave up my officer position, I was still active within HSA and was a helping hand whenever I got the chance to do so! Although there were other programs that I participated in that brought me out of my little world, HSA was a step forward in engaging more with the school and in general with my community.

Aside from HSA, I also participated in the Latinx on The Rise Mentorship Program dedicated to giving Latino students the opportunity to be mentored by another fellow Latino who is already the industry they are wanting to work in. I did this program with my good friend and fellow Honors student Rosa Aldana and Dani E.Q. as we participated in networking and learning events (picture on the left). These ranged from the DECA Annual Gala to the 2023 Inaugural Civic Engagement Trip where we got to visit: the William J. Clinton Library and Museum, Clinton School of Public Service, Little Rock Central High School Museum, and Arkansas Capital. This was during the time the Mega-Bill (the



Learn's Act) was being passed, and I got to engage in healthy conversations about the questions I had about the Act with an Arkansas Representative. Not only that, but we met lobbyist Mireya Reith who is the first Hispanic woman on the Arkansas Board of Education and is now the head of the non-profit *Arkansas United*, whose goal is to help educate the immigrants of Arkansas on resources available to them (picture on the right). My mentor Marina Narvaez gave me a lot of wisdom when it comes to networking with people, which was a big factor as to why interacting with all different types of people comes easily to me. I'd like to think that this also gave me the chance to participate in a lot of side quests, like being the youngest judge for the Bentonville 2023 Wild West Invitational Debate Competition with no Debate experience but tons of MUN tools under my belt like those used in Debate. Although this isn't sponsored by the Honors Program, I was still highly encouraged to join by honors professors and peers.

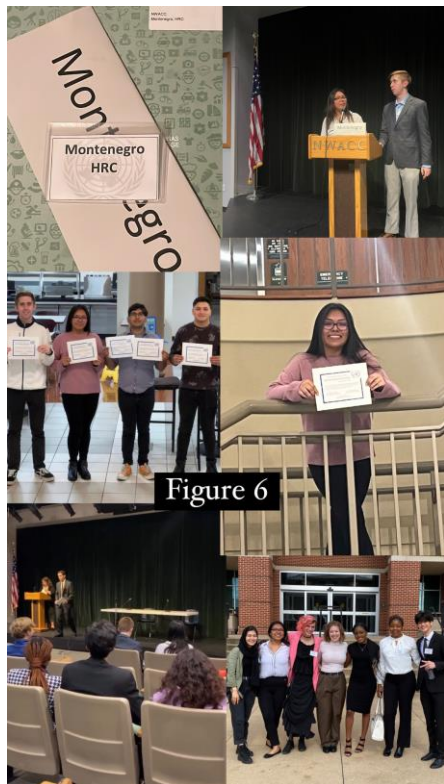
## Explore Perspectives:



This was a spontaneous decision I made to join the group that Professor Chesne created to participate in the Great Plains Honors Conference at OSU (Figure 5), giving us all an opportunity to learn about different subjects and arguments. The presentation types varied from poster boards to official presentations; within our group we decided to do an oral presentation over the different projects Honors Students have done that extended outside the classroom. These included things such as the Hunger Project we did with HSA, the Voting Project done by Braiden Burton, all as we brushed on the concept of what Honors Arkansas is. All of this while we were hearing about different poster board presentations and academic oral presentations on different topics ranging from U.S. Military and War to Cross Cultural Perspectives. Not only that but we also had a couple of guest speakers like Tyler Thrasher who spoke over his passion of crystallization of insects as he navigated the world as a freelance artist, and creating a path for yourself when nobody has done what you're doing. We also heard some insightful knowledge from Dr. Laura Arata who focused on the uplifting of Stillwater and the importance of uplifting not only your community but yourself. We were able to debrief all of this on our way to the Tulsa Aquarium in which we heard all different types of conversations and stories from people all over the country.

Though this was a short trip, it proved that everyone has diverse ideas, almost as diverse as the sea creatures we saw during that trip!

## Cultivate Curiosity:



Thanks to Dr. Gallo's class, I started to become more curious about the world, and learning about different history and cultures became fun as her class was taught through the lens of food! Her history course was truly the first class that truly challenged what I already knew and allowed me to grow as a writer/thinker. She invited me to join the Honors Program during Spring 22', and as I kept getting emails from Sabrina, I caved in and officially joined Fall 22'. From there, Dr. Matt Evans introduced me to Model UN Fall 2022 (Figure 6), and honestly, I had no idea how the United Nations worked before I joined the club or took his Intro to Gov class. I had won an award my first conference, and ever since I've had the fuel to continue from Spring 2023-Spring 2024 as Captain and President of the Model UN Team. With every conference we attended, I became more curious about what different worldly perspectives were like and cultures. I got the chance to represent Montenegro (in which I got an Honorable Mention within HRC), Singapore (I got Honorable Mention Delegation at MMUN 63' om Figure 7), Bolivia at ACMUN 2023 conference (Figure 8), and Cabo Verde at MMUN 64' (in which I got Outstanding Position Paper and Honorable Mention Delegation in Figure 9) and National MUN. I've gotten to represent nations from different continents, allowing me to explore diverse ways of thinking as I immerse myself into the character of being a



delegate for said country. Most if not all the Poli-Sci classes I took with Dr. Evans contributed to the knowledge I had of how different systems worked, allowing me to get ahead in Model UN.



Figure 7

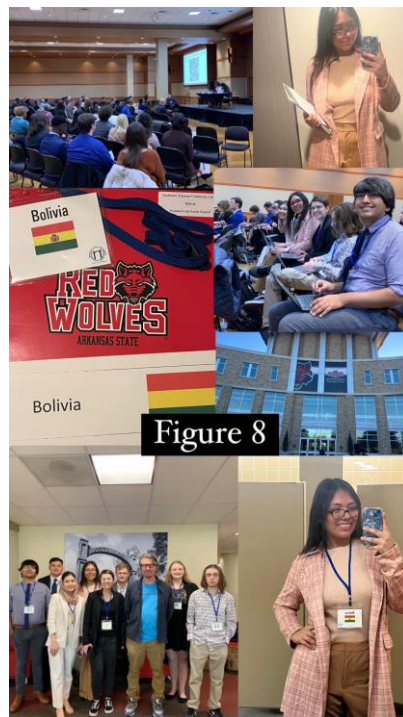


Figure 8

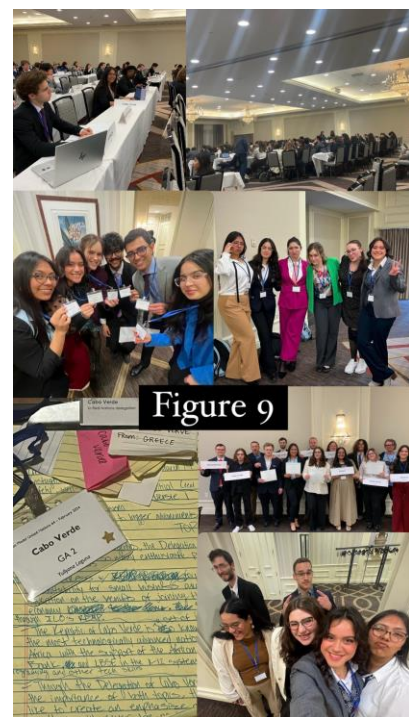


Figure 9

## Section 2:

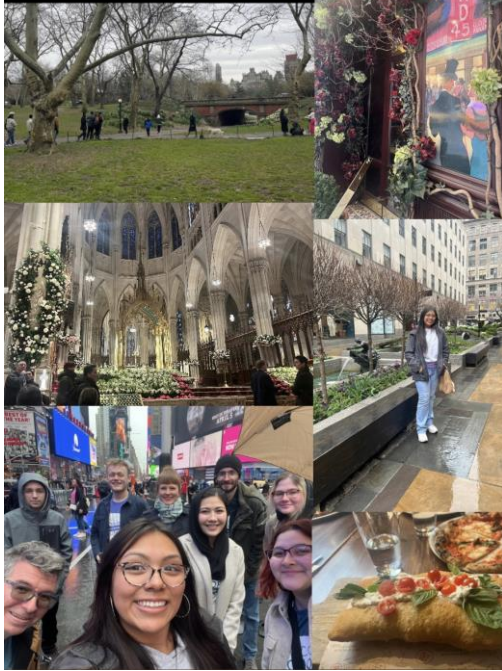


The thing about Honors is, there is not a cookie cutter “ideal” student for the program. There are people from all different types of background with different skills sets that allow you to understand how other people work. Whether you go into the workforce right after NWACC or transfer to a 4-year, everyone must know how to interact and work with diverse kinds of people! I’ve met people from all different walks of life and paths they want to take; from non-traditional students to Brightwater students all with the same ambition and goal of bettering themselves. Maximus Gibbon (left of me in this picture of HSA Spring 23’) is a Brightwater student aspiring to go into the Food

Manufacturing business while I’m going into Diplomacy with no idea how to cook a rare steak! No matter what our goals are for the world, you can catch all honors students working together on our homework and sharing networking contacts as we meet them along the way. The Honors community is one that has prepared me to push myself to get out there and meet all types of people!

## Section 3:

### NYC daytime exploration at NMUN



There have been so many memorable experiences within the Honors Program, but I will forever be grateful to the Intro to United Nations Class for giving us the opportunity to travel all the way to New York, becoming 1 out of only 6 community colleges in attendance. Throughout my Model UN career, I have been able to make friends with people all over the country and the world, but they were nothing compared to the experience I had at Model UN. I got to experience a lot of many firsts with a bunch of my friends and classmates, including flying! New York also allowed us to work at a different pace, giving us all the opportunity to decide whether we are cut out for a fast-paced work environment. Of course, who can forget the 99-cent pizza and iconic New York hotdogs? A huge shout out to fellow teammates Josh Kay and Becca Trammell who were the main navigators for us throughout the city. The hit of the gavel to commence NMUN gave me chills as we had just heard uplifting words from UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, encouraging us all to work diplomatically to reach the SDG goals we were tasked with. The closing ceremony was unforgettable! With 2,000 students filling the entire United Nations, we were listening to speakers such as Archie Young (Ambassador to the GA United Kingdom Mission to

the UN) and Maher Nasser (Director, Outreach Division UN Department of Global Communication).

My favorite quote out of the whole conference came from Archie Young who said, "I don't mind looking stupid to be smart". This truly embodies what the Honors Program is about! Even with all the what ifs of society, none of their opinions are going to matter when you are trying to better yourself; the best thing to do is to think about making your younger self proud. 3 years ago, I had no clue that I would have ended up in New York grabbing a bite with international students ranging from the Netherlands to Myanmar, all working to obtain the same goal which is to have fun as we embody the diplomat within us. At the end of most conferences there is a Delegate Dance where we can stop referring to each other as the name of the country we are representing and finally get to know the human behind the mask. I am telling you; I have met lifelong friends through this conference and get chills thinking about how different my life is now. Model UN changed the trajectory of where my career goals are for the better, so do not be afraid to venture out into the unknown. Although I was scared at first, I took my pink Busy Bee notebook and decided to take on the world!



