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Claire Allen

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GWU Honors Student Association adjusts to new protocols for fall semester



GWU HONORS STUDENT ASSOCIATION ADJUSTS TO NEW PROTOCOLS FOR FALL 2020 SEMESTER



By Claire Allen

As Covid-19 remains, clubs and organizations on campus continue to be affected in unexpected ways. The Honors Student Association is no exception.

As a large and very social organization, events and gatherings have proven to be a challenge. According to Dr. Tom Jones, the head of the Honors Student Association, trying to function as close as possible to how things were before the pandemic, which is the goal, has been a tedious process. He said that the organization has managed, and is lucky, to do more than most in the past months, but having a limited capacity and trying to get students off campus safely makes events difficult.

“We have a lot more freshmen involved this year.” Dr. Jones continued, “We try to stay within the bubble but stretch the sides of the bubble,” said Casey Almond, president of the Honors, referring to the University’s idea of a “bubble” around campus that limits exposure in hopes of keeping numbers of cases down.

So far this year, the organization has been able to hold multiple events while still being safe, including their tie-dye event, the Big Sweep at the Broad River trail, and the Fall Colors trip. They are looking forward to their upcoming events, such as the Murder Mystery dinner, blood drives, and the Enchanted Forest event.

In an attempt to keep people safe but still hold events and have fun, the Honors have been holding events outside more often, have set up seating to keep people 6 feet apart, have not held fundraisers, and have followed

restrictions and guidelines amid the pandemic.

According to Jones and Almond, a positive aspect of today's current situation with Covid-19 has been making meetings more accessible. By holding their first major meeting of the year on Zoom, the Honors had its largest turnout for a meeting in a long time.

With the wellbeing and stress of students on their mind, the Honors Association has edited Honors courses. They have preparations in place for fully online classes, there are multiple sections of courses, and a packed first half of the semester means that the latter half can remain with a lighter course load.

"The progress looks good. A fair number of them have already written a large part. By the time they get here in the Spring, they are going to be ready to go," said Jones, when asked about seniors in the honors program.

Jones said that overall, as an extroverted person, he greatly misses the occasional and random interactions with students on a daily basis. He stated that he and many other teachers draw energy from their students. He greatly misses taking students to conferences and providing them the opportunity to meet and interact with other people from around the country.

Casey encourages people to come to events and to be involved, as Honors events are not limited to Honors students. Anyone who attends is welcome.