

2015 College of Arts and Sciences Student Recognition Reception

On April 27, 2015, the College of Arts & Sciences held our annual Student Recognition Ceremony in the Sykes ballrooms. Over 200 people attended the event, bringing together faculty, staff, students, and parents in celebration of the scholarly accomplishments of our students during the 2014-2015 academic year. This year we also welcomed some of our 2015 incoming first-year students who have received academic scholarships for STEM-related disciplines.

The CAS Outstanding Student Award is always one of the great highlights of our annual ceremony. This year's recipients of a \$500 merit award were Felicia Orendorff and Angira Pettit-Pickens.

Before the award presentations, Dean Lori Vermeulen commended the students thus:

"Today we are pleased to recognize two exceptional West Chester University scholars as our Outstanding Students of the year. Each of these recipients' accomplishments reflects both the drive of the individual student as well as the commitment of this University, its staff, faculty, and administration, to encourage and support students' dreams. In one recipient's words, "WCU has provided the environment I needed to find my niche and discover what I'm passionate about." This is at the center of a meaningful education."

Of Felicia Orendorff's accomplishments:

"Felicia maintained a grade point average of 3.9 while completing two majors, one in Communication Studies and one in Women's and Gender Studies. She was on the Dean's list for six straight semesters. She is a member of the Lambda Pi Eta National Communication Association Honor Society. She received the Girl Scouts of America Gold Award as well as the Office of Multicultural Affairs Outstanding Academic Achievement Award. She is a member of The Association for Women's Empowerment and the American Association of University Women. She also earned a Merit Schock Foundation Scholarship.

In addition to her academic achievement, she had accomplishments beyond the classroom. She has spoken in front of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) about her experiences as a woman on WCU's campus. She helped coordinate the Race for Traditions 5K this April. She developed student programming for the Association for Women's Empowerment, for whom she served as President and in other

leadership roles. She also works with advertising, merchandising, and social media for Kampgrounds of America.

In her application essay, Felicia wrote, "Through community involvement and extra-curricular activities, I have learned more lessons than a classroom could ever provide. Coming to WCU has taught me several invaluable lessons, but the one that sticks out is to go out into the world to experience new things while making a difference. Without putting myself in classes/clubs/situations that were out of my comfort zone, I would have never discovered my true self."

Of Angira Pettit-Pickens' accomplishments:

"Angira came to West Chester University as a Board of Governors Scholar. As an English Literature major and a Journalism and Ethnic Studies minor, she is a member of the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society and a published author in the *Daedalus* Literary Arts Magazine of West Chester University, the *Quad* campus newspaper, as well as the publication *Profiles of Community Arts & Literacy Organizations in the City of Brotherly Love*, in which she published "Strokes of Hope: Paint Brushes Not Gentrification".

One faculty mentor wrote of Angira, "what sets her apart ... is her ability to blend her research, analytical and communication skills to show how her studies in English, Journalism and Ethic Studies can be applied toward solving, or at least better understanding, complicated issues in the workplace or in society."

In her application essay, Angira describes her college experience as "full of exponential growth. By way of community service, internships, profound classes, exchange programs, interactions with professors and students, and an array of extracurricular activities, I was able to grow into an inquisitive and well-rounded woman who is ready to contribute something important to this world."

Over time, Angira expanded her experience in a myriad of ways including participation in The National Student Exchange program at West Chester University in Hawaii and participation in the Bollywood Indian Student's club on campus. She provided service as President of Delta Xi Chapter of the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honors Society, and South Campus President of the Residence Hall Association.

Having traveled far and experienced much, Angira decided to "return to her roots in writing and African-American culture," understanding that, "the ability to write eloquently and speak one's opinion is true freedom." Her goal, to attain a teaching certificate, will allow her to share the freedom she has found. It is almost incidental to mention that her GPA is 3.8, although that is impressive. As Angira herself summed it

up best, “I’ve developed relationships at WCU and in related projects with people that I now consider “family”.

The College of Arts and Sciences is very proud to honor these outstanding students, as they have honored all of us by their sincerity and dedication to their undergraduate academic careers!