



Minnesota State University, Mankato  
**Cornerstone: A Collection of  
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Mankato**

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Honors Capstone Portfolios

Honors Program at Minnesota State University,  
Mankato

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12-2015

## Anna Rice Honors Portfolio

Anna Grace Rice

*Minnesota State University - Mankato*

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## Welcome!

Hello everyone! My name is Anna Rice and I am a senior attending Minnesota State University Mankato. I am majoring in Biomedical Sciences and minoring in Spanish and Chemistry. I am interested in pursuing a career in medicine as a Physician, and plan to apply to medical school after I complete my undergraduate degree. I am currently taking classes to fulfill my degree and plan to graduate Spring of 2016. On campus I am involved with the Honors Program, a member of Pre-Med club, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, intramural sports and can also be found volunteering throughout the community. Thank you for taking the time to look at my site!



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## A little about Myself

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- Family and friends are a very important part of my life and are always there to support and cheer me on.
- I love to travel and believe it is one of the best ways to learn about different cultures. I have traveled to a few places and learned more in those few weeks than I would in an entire semester of class.
- I believe being active is a vital part of life not only for the health of your body but also to teach discipline and leadership.
- I am very committed to my education and look forward to where it will take me.

## Goals

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The goals I have now will most likely change in the future but for now the main ones are focused on academic, career, and personal aspirations I hope to fulfill.

- Complete my undergraduate degree with a 3.70 GPA or higher.
- Be accepted and complete medical school and become a physician.
- Further my Spanish speaking skills so I can use them in my career.
- Complete a half marathon.
- Travel the world and back pack across Europe.
- Travel to a third world country to administer medical help.

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## Mitchell High School

I attended Mitchell High School and graduated in 2012. I was involved in Varsity soccer and hockey all four years of high school and was Senior captain of both teams. I was actively involved in Student Council, National Honor Society, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes at MHS. These activities gave me volunteer opportunities and a chance to better myself as well as the community. I graduated from MHS in May of 2012 with 3.90 GPA. My high school years helped me in so many ways and I am very grateful they prepared me to succeed in college.

[Mitchell High School](#)[Minnesota State University, Mankato](#)

## Minnesota State University Mankato

In the fall of 2012 I attended Minnesota State University Mankato as a freshman. I decided to major in the Biology field and later specified it as Biomedical Sciences. I am also minoring in Spanish. On campus I am involved in the Honors Program, Pre-med Club, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and intramural sports. These clubs and programs have given me many valuable experiences and opportunities. MSU has definitely been the right place for me to grow and thrive in a university setting.

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## Honors Program

[The Honors program at Minnesota State Mankato](#) is an accelerated program centralizing on three competencies. Leadership, Research and Global Citizenship are the main focuses and the program helps develop the skills of its' students in each of these areas. Selective and smaller classes help the students to fulfill the competencies while growing academically and socially. The Honors program also gives students unique opportunities to prepare themselves for a career after college.

Below is an excerpt from the Minnesota State University Honors Website :

The mission of the Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato is to create future leaders, researchers and global citizens by providing high ability and motivated students with exceptional learning opportunities, mentoring relationships, and a community of scholars that foster their development as future leaders in a global society.

Attached to this page is a deeper look into my experiences with Leadership, Research, and Global Citizenship.

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## Leadership

Since the beginning of my undergraduate career, I have been compiling experiences that have formed a base of my leadership philosophy through leadership based coursework and community involvement. My experiences during my time at MSU have provided me with valuable skills that I will use as I work towards becoming an effective leader. I have arrived at a leadership philosophy that is based upon self-reflection, effective communication, and understanding individual differences.

My leadership journey began my first undergraduate semester with the understanding that leadership is not black and white. There are many effective styles of leading that depend on the individual holding the position, and the situation in which they are placed. By finding my [strengths and weakness](#), I was able to narrow the type of effective leader I hoped to be. My experience as the [Honors Junior Class Representative](#) helped me to recognize the ways in which I was an effective leader, but also the ways I failed to be an effective leader. My personal strength of being an achiever assisted my determination to search for a leadership style that suited me but was also going to be accepted positively by my peers. Being able to reflect upon my successes and shortcomings I was able to help form a style of leadership that mirrors the ideals that I believe make a valuable leader. Self-reflection is vital in terms of understanding how strengths and weaknesses aide in the type of leader I will become.

Being a leader brings to light the importance of communication. Communication is not only verbal, but can be through body language, tone of voice, facial expressions etc. Communication is one of the biggest downfalls when it comes to group work or leadership roles; often times a simple shift in the approach of communication can influence the group dynamic for the better. Through my employment with the [Mankato Clinic](#) and volunteering at the [Mayo Clinic](#) I have expanded my methods of communication. I have advanced my skills in observing a situation and reacting with an appropriate form of communication that will guide everyone to a common goal. Evaluating situations and responding with suitable and effective forms of communication is essential when working with a diverse group of individuals.

The infinite leadership opportunities at MSU have helped me practice my leadership philosophy of accepting individual differences in leadership. Encounters with diverse groups of people are inevitable whether it be a difference in background or a difference in opinion, a leader needs to be helpful and supportive of every person they are leading. As I previously stated, leadership is not black and white and there are many styles of effective leading. When choosing a style of leading, it is important to account for your audience. Many people have opposing reactions to different forms of leadership. What is effective for one person, may not be effective for a different individual that is working toward a common goal. Through multiple [volunteer opportunities](#) such as Pre-Med Club, Science Fair judging, and a volunteer for a learning event for hearing impaired children, I have learned that for each situation, a new form of leadership is required and encouraged. Reading the audience and planning accordingly is a skill that is invaluable to being a leader that is able to influence many walks of life.

My definition of leadership will continuously change as I further develop my mentorship skills throughout life. Even though there is no prevalent set of rules to being an effective leader, my philosophy will always revolve around self-reflection, effective communication, and understanding individual differences. As I further my education and leadership experience I am looking forward to the various ways I will utilize these abilities in the future.

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## Research

Research has been prevalent in numerous ways throughout my undergraduate career. I have participated in many research opportunities in and outside of the classroom that have contributed to my overall research competence. Research encompasses numerous subjects and definitions and is not limited to one type. I have had the opportunity to shape my research skills by reading literature, research while studying abroad, participating in classroom research, as well as research lab work. My participation in research spans multiple subjects, but all of the skills acquired during these experiences, have made me the researcher I am today.

For me, the first step that emerges when talking about research is literature. Through classes such as Genetics, Developmental Biology, and Individual Study, I began to sharpen my research skills through peer critiques from both fellow students and researchers in the field. Reading scientific papers and understanding their relevance could be considered research by itself because it can be difficult to understand what another research is trying to convey. Through reading and writing papers and critiques, on such topics as *C. elegans* to growth hormones in mice, I received a greater understanding of what it takes to put a research project together. My knowledge and opinion of research before these culminating experiences was next to nothing but it wasn't until after taking a closer look at the process, did I find research stimulating.

The next logical step for me on my research journey was to participate in a lab setting. Having had one experience in a lab before undergraduate studies, I had a narrow focus of what research meant. Between my junior and senior year of high school I was chosen to be a [Sanford PROMISE Intern](#) at the Sanford Research facility in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I worked with a humanities researcher on a project about Hutterite Colonies in the surrounding areas, so the majority of my time was spent in an office entering data into spreadsheets. After finishing my work as a Sanford intern, my thoughts on research were not positive. It took my first lab experience in college to change my opinion. Junior year of my undergraduate career, I started as a [lab assistant](#) in Dr. David Sharlin's research lab on campus. This experience exposed me to a new type of research, involving lab animals, which sparked my interest. Working with animals and observing procedures on rats exposed me to fresh and exciting ideas that did not involve sitting at a computer all day. It took this lab encounter to motivate and inspire what would turn into my future research career at MSU. The understanding of different between computer based and lab based research opened my eyes and allowed me to see where in the research field I wanted to spend my time.

As I am a Biomedical Science major, the majority of my research skills have grown from classroom and science lab experiences. Classes from Chemistry to [Genetics](#) have all contributed greatly to my expanding skills as a researcher. Experimenting and analyzing data not only requires intricate skills in the lab, but also involves understanding why the answers are relevant. How the conclusions are reached, and their importance is another skill I have accumulated from class lab sessions. Research is not always about finding the right answer; research is the excitement of the process and the way in which the answer is found. Researching in a classroom setting has been shaping my knowledge of research



processes from the beginning of my scientific interests.

Individual research has always been intimidating to me as a student. My first individual research project was a project on [German Architecture During World War II](#) that I conducted as a part of a study abroad trip to Germany in the Spring of 2014. This project let me get my toes wet in the expanding pool of research. I was able to form the project, conduct research, and create and present a poster. The research I completed was far from perfect but it allowed me to better understand the process of individual research. I learned the method of creating a project, and about the development of a poster presentation. From there I became more confident in research and am now participating in two ongoing research projects at MSU.

Research is not always about finding answers, but about understanding the journey. The excitement of the unknown is what drives scientists and researchers to always keep searching. Research will continuously be expanding and therefore fine-tuning my research skills over the span of my undergraduate career will be extremely beneficial in my current and future projects.

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## Global Citizenship

In present society, cultural understanding is a key component for communication around the world. The world is saturated with diversity and it continues to expand, so being a global citizen is vital to successful intercultural interactions. Cultures vary in the way they interact, including their beliefs, way of dress, food, norms, values etc. There are countless numbers of cultures across the world, which makes it is important to build cultural competency skills through understanding and appreciating other cultures, speaking more than one language, and gaining personal experiences of other cultures.

At an individual level, it is important to recognize the similarities and differences that are present in today's world. Understanding the individualism of different groups, helps to expand our knowledge and appreciation for others, which aides in intercultural communication. Through course work and personal experience I have expanded my cultural understanding and have learned to appreciate cultural diversity. Through undergraduate courses such as Honors Sociology and German Studies I became more familiar with the differences of culture. During opportunities, such as the [Wacipi Powwow](#), taken during these classes I have come to appreciate cultural values and beliefs in a way I did not previously recognize. From these experiences I have also gained an awareness of the diverse cultures that are right under my nose. Becoming culturally competent does not always mean traveling to exotic countries; one can gain cultural experiences by observing their local community. I believe a global citizen is one who can recognize and appreciate cultural diversity and utilize those skills when interacting with others from around the world.

Learning a second language is not the only way to become diversified in culture, but Spanish has given me a tremendous resource to effectively communicate with a broader spectrum of individuals. With the 8 years of Spanish education and studying abroad in Ecuador, I have reached a conversational Spanish speaking level. Speaking Spanish has given me the ability to connect with Spanish speaking individuals on a more personal level. For example, with my job at the Mankato Clinic, Spanish speaking individuals occasionally come in with an interpreter. Instead of bypassing the patient and communicating solely with the interpreter, I am able to connect with the patient using my second language skills. I believe this makes the patient more comfortable knowing that I can speak directly with him or her. This gives me hope that in my future medical career, I will be able to make my Spanish speaking patients more at ease, which is the ultimate goal. Speaking conversational Spanish gives me a sense of pride knowing that I have improved my communication skills as a global citizen.

Lastly, my study abroad experiences have been my most rewarding cultural experiences of my undergraduate career. By traveling to [Germany and Austria](#), and spending a summer in [Cuenca, Ecuador](#), I immersed myself in other cultures so I could understand them from a personal perspective and learn more about their culture than I would have from a classroom. Being able to study abroad in two completely different areas of the world gave me an irreplaceable experience. Europe, with its' grand buildings and historic monuments, was almost incomparable to the poverty and lack of civilization in Ecuador. Though both are amazingly beautiful areas with so much culture, they differ in how that

culture is expressed. I viewed first hand the vast differences between Europe and South America, which truly opened my eyes to the vast range of lifestyles. While studying in Ecuador, I was not only improving my Spanish speaking skills, but I was able to live the life of an Ecuadorean and experience how their way of life differed from my own. By living with a host family and attending school I got a peek into the life of an Ecuadorean college student. These cultural encounters have given me a unique perspective that I believe every global citizen should obtain to understand others.

I believe being a global citizen is something everyone should desire to be. Understanding diverse cultures is vital to communication in our growing world. Through my experiences understanding cultural diversity, speaking Spanish, and studying abroad my competency as a global citizen has blossomed immensely. This competency will give me the skills I need to interact with a more diverse group of patients in my future medical career. I will continue to improve upon my global citizenship skills as I immerse myself into the diverse cultures that surround me.

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