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Kellie Wong Honors Portfolio

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Home

Hello!

My name is Kellie Wong and thank you for visiting my efolio page! I am currently a fourth year student at Minnesota State University, Mankato and I am pursuing a bachelor of science biochemsitry degree. After completion of my undergraduate studies, I intend to apply to graduate school to become a physician's assistant.

Mission Statement: My mission is to make a difference in my community and always put my best foot forward. I will value hard work, integrity, and perseverance in order to better myself as both a student and an individual.



About Me

Originally from Ankeny, Iowa, I began my studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato in the fall of 2014. Though I have pursued my biochemistry degree my entire college career, at first I was unsure of what I wanted to do for my career. After job shadowing several disciplines, both in the medical field and in the research field, I decided that I wanted to be a physician's assistant due to my passion for medicine and the desire to help those in pain. Being in the Honors Program has given me the opportunities to develop my skills in leadership, interpersonal communication, and insightful reasoning and thinking, qualities that will be essential for my future career. Along with being in the Honors Program, I am also a presidential scholar, an Equity Ambassador, and a member of the pre-PA club and biochemistry club.

Outside of my academic endeavors, I have many hobbies and interests. First and foremost, I love spending time with my family and friends. We are always finding fun things to do like watching movies, rollerblading, bike riding, and having very competitive game nights. Sports is another big part of my life. In high school I played volleyball and ran track and field. I also ran on the MSU women's track and field team for three years and it was a blast to represent the Mavericks! You can always find me cheering on the MSU Mavericks, the Iowa State Cyclones, and the Minnesota Vikings. In my free time I love to read (two words: Harry Potter) and travel when I can. Recently, I've had the opportunities to travel to Chicago, San Antonio, New York City and even abroad to Australia. Someday I hope to visit all fifty states and travel across Europe.



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Education



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I am currently a senior at MSU Mankato and I am a biochemistry major. I am a presidential scholar, part of the Honors Program, a member of the Equity Ambassadors, and part of the pre-PA club and biochemistry club. During my time at MSU, I have participated in IMPACT, served as an IELI tutor, and served as the sophomore class representative and the vice president on the honors student council. I also spent three years on the MSU Women's track and field team.

Ankeny Centennial High School:

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Phone: (515)-965-9610

I graduated from Ankeny Centennial High School in May 2014. During my time at ACHS, I was involved in National Honor Society, serving as secretary my senior year. I also participated in Silver Cord, our community service program which requires 120 hours of service. Lastly, I was involved in track and field and volleyball.



Leadership

Leadership Synthesis Essay

Before coming to Minnesota State University, Mankato, I thought I knew what it meant to be a leader. However, after four years in the MSU Honors Program, I learned more about leadership than I ever thought possible. I was first introduced to the complexity of leadership in my [first year experience class](#). In this class, we took the StrengthsFinder test to determine what strengths that would be essential to our future leadership style. My results came back that my top strengths were harmony, consistency, maximizer, discipline, and relator. While I was skeptical about trusting a computer to tell me about myself, through various experiences, I found out just how accurate they were. My work in the classroom and my time on the [MSU track and field team](#) demonstrated my strengths of consistency, maximization, and discipline. These were clear cut qualities that were easy to see through my involvements. However, my strengths of harmony and relator were more complex to figure out because these strengths dealt with relationships with people. It wasn't until I began collaborating with others and working on teams, that I was able to see these two strengths come into play.

During my second year at MSU I took [HONR 401: Developing your Mentor Philosophy](#). In this class, I learned that a mentor is a leader who creates an intimate, trusting relationship with another and passes on their knowledge to their mentee. This small scale leadership philosophy can easily be translated into large scale leadership. I've had many experiences working with teams, and over the years, I've grown to be more comfortable working with others. I believe the first step to a successful team, is trust of one another, something I learned during my time [volunteering in Australia](#). By creating trust among team members, we can fully share our thoughts and opinions without feeling scared or judged. Through this experience, my strength as a relator helped me understand what others were thinking and how to see things from another's point of view. I believe that trust is the quality that is at the root of teamwork and with this trust, teams will be able to accomplish a lot more than one person could alone. Another key concept I've learned through teamwork is the importance of finding the right style of leadership that best fits the group. During my time on the [Honors Student Council](#), we used a mixture of democratic style and servant style of leadership. A democratic style of leadership is allowing equal input from leaders and followers and servant style is where the leader acts first as a servant to the followers. These two styles best fit our group because as council members, it was our job to serve the students and try to advocate for what they wanted. In order to do this, we needed student input and feedback and had to put their needs before our own. Through this experience, I used my harmonizer strength to keep peace when there was disagreements and overall make sure that conversations ran smoothly between the council and the students. From this experience, I also learned that different leadership styles will vary with different groups and ultimately the style will depend on what the overall goal of the group is, in our case, representing students' needs.

While these experiences have helped me grow as a leader, it wasn't until I took [HONR 401: Leadership through Social Change](#) that I was really able to come full circle with my leadership philosophy. In this course, we re-evaluated our strengths and also picked out our top five values, mine being faith, respect, integrity, honesty, and loyalty. Through this activity, I was able to see that my strengths complemented my values. For example, I value respect and honesty, both of which contribute to harmony. This course was a great way to see how consistent my values were and that though I have had many experiences throughout my college career, I have always carried the same values with me. I quickly realized that these values have dictated what events and organizations that I get involved in. For example, my involvement with the [Equity Ambassadors](#) encompasses all that I value: respect, honesty, and loyalty. Being able to be part of a group that supports my values and working with other students who share the same values is an amazing experience that really demonstrates positive collaboration and having a common goal within the group.

All of these experiences have shaped me into the leader I am today. There is so much more I could say about my journey to becoming a better leader, but for now I'll leave you with my three main points: our values dictate our involvements, our strengths lie in our values, and our leadership style should play to our strengths.

Research

When first entering the Honors Program, the word research was very scary and intimidating. To me, it sounded like hours spent in a lab with lots of paperwork. However, after going through [First Year Experience](#), I learned that there are many parts of research and that if you take things one step at a time, it can be fun and intriguing rather than a burden. In FYEX, I learned a lot about information literacy and information synthesis, two key aspects to successful research. Information literacy is being able to find credible sources and identifying points that will help supplement or guide your own research. In class and through hands on experience, I learned how to use scholarly databases to find credible information and learned strategies, like using key words, to find information that will be useful to my area of study. While searches for primary literature can be extensive and sometimes frustrating, it is a skill that is needed to start successful research.

In FYEX, I was also introduced to information synthesis, the skill of organizing others' ideas with your own findings. I was able to demonstrate my growth in the skill of information synthesis in my [Biology 105 lab report](#) on photosynthesis. For this report, we had to compare our findings to the findings of other researchers. Once the literature search was complete, I had all this information that needed to be put together in one report. One of the hardest things about writing a report, is knowing what information needs to be included. While writing this report, I learned that not all the information you find will necessarily go into your report, rather some might just help supplement your understanding of your findings. Instead of making a report long and repetitive, it is important to add the most relevant information with the most significance that pertains to the specific research question. With that being said, it is okay to add literature that doesn't support your findings. One must ultimately remember that with research, we are constantly learning something new and there isn't always a right answer.

Once I understood the importance of information literacy and synthesis and how to master them, I was ready to take on the next step: performing my own original research. In [CHEM 466W](#), I was able to put my research skills to practice in a guided setting. In this class, we were split into teams and with our teams, we decided which abiotic stressor we would induce on a corn plant. Once we had our research question, we went through many hours of extensive literature searches that gave us background information on our case, methods we could use for our experiment, and results that we could later compare to our findings. After lots of trial and error, our experimental protocols were approved and our group was allowed to perform the various experiments. After our results were collected, I was able to use my literacy synthesis skills to put together a formal report which included my findings along with a comparison of the findings of others. This course was very strenuous; however, it gave me an idea of what real biochemistry research entailed and prepared me to do my capstone research project.

For my capstone research project, I studied the [effects of arachidonic acid and oxidation on the myosin II motor domain](#). With the help of my faculty mentor, Dr. Rebecca Moen, I have been able to use my information literacy and synthesis skills to write both a grant proposal and an abstract. Through this process, I learned that the use and careful organization of the literature can show the possible outcomes of one's research and the probable success, making the grant or abstract seem more appealing to fund providers or future collaborators. With my research, I have been able to develop not only as a scholar, but also become a better scientist. I have had the chance to work with many different instruments and perform multiple biochemical lab techniques. In April, I attended the Undergraduate Research Symposium at MSU Mankato and the ASBMB annual meeting in San Diego, CA to present my research through the use of a poster.

While much of my research has been in the lab due to my biochemistry major, I have also had the experience of taking on research in another field. As a domestic student of color within the Honors Program, my fellow classmate, Ana Leyva, and I wanted to investigate why the [enrollment of domestic students of color in the Honors Program](#) did not reflect the enrollment of domestic students of color on the MSU campus. Our research will primarily focus on what activities, both academic and social, domestic students of color involve themselves in and what their perspectives on the MSU Honors Program are. Because we are gathering student responses, we wrote a proposal that will go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB), another experience that has helped me understand the importance of information literacy and synthesis. As our method of gathering information, we will distribute a survey and from there use focus groups to address the major trends within the survey. We hope to present our findings at the National Society for Minorities in Honors on the University of Central Arkansas campus next October.

Through all my research experiences, I have learned that it is a valuable tool to gaining new insight on various subjects. While it can seem intimidating, I believe that if you work to master your information literacy and synthesis skills, you will have the right foundation to do the rest. From my experiences, I now have a new appreciation for research and I have learned to embrace it rather than fear it.



Global Citizenship

During my time at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I have learned the many aspects of what it takes to become a global citizen. A global citizen is one who sees the world through another's point of view. Rather than carrying judgment, a global citizen is respectful and receptive to cultures other than their own. Though this concept seems very simplistic, it is best learned if it is lived out through various experiences.

The first encounter that opened my eyes to the concept of global citizenship was my [first year experience](#) class. Before entering college I was very unfamiliar with the term 'global citizenship'. However, after going through FYEX I now have a better understanding. I learned that the first step in growing as a global citizen is to identify the culture you belong to and what role you play in it. This self-awareness allows you to compare and contrast your culture with other cultures and helps you determine the possible biases you might have. Through FYEX, I was able to reflect on my limited views of culture and I was able to realize that I knew very little about other cultures. This realization sparked my interest in learning about other cultures and it led me to seek out various cultural experiences.

After FYEX, I knew that I wanted to start interacting with students of other cultures in order to build this competency. This prompted my decision to become an [Intensive English Language Institute \(IELI\) tutor](#). As a tutor, I worked with a Japanese student on English language skills to prepare him to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examination. During our time spent together, I was able to learn more about the Japanese culture and in doing so, I was better able to accommodate to his needs. For example, my student told me that compared to Americans, Japanese people tended to be more quiet and reserved. By knowing this information, I prodded my student with questions so that he would be more comfortable talking and therefore was able to get more practice speaking the English language. From this experience, I realized that having knowledge about another culture can help foster better interactions and lead to the acceptance of other cultures.

Another aspect of global citizenship is communication. I have taken a total of four and a half years of [Spanish](#) language courses in both high school and college. Over the course of my studies, I have learned the basics of the Spanish language including vocabulary, conjugating verbs, verb tenses, and commands. These practices opened my eyes to the difficulty of learning a second language and the struggles one faces to be in a society in which they don't speak the language. Through my experience in the classroom, I realized that verbal communication is not the only factor which defines the Spanish culture. My courses also provided me opportunities to learn about, and experience, aspects of Spanish history, traditions, art, and music. With the knowledge I took away from my Spanish courses, I was able to realize the complexity of culture and cultural understanding.

While I have been provided many opportunities at MSU which have allowed me to grow as a global citizen, my trip to [Australia](#) proved to have the most impact on my understanding of a global citizen. When entering another country, you are taken out of your comfort zone and encouraged to adapt to your surroundings. With a lack of language barrier, I was able to observe differences between the lifestyles of Australians and Americans. By immersing myself in the Australian culture, I was better able to understand the culture from their point of view rather than an outsider looking in.

Another revelation I had was that culture doesn't necessarily refer to different countries or different parts of the world, but rather diversified communities with common traits. During my time in Australia, I observed the importance of conservation and sustainability. This eco-friendly mindset shared by many Australians can be referred to as a micro-culture, a sub-unit of the population that shares common ideas and values. From this new understanding, I can now seek out different cultures within my community in everyday life.

While my growth in global citizenship has been a progression, I have greatly developed my skills in self-awareness, knowledge of other cultures, and second language skills. However despite this growth, I still have much to learn and therefore I will continue to expose myself to other cultures in order to do so.

MSU Track and Field

For three years I had the amazing opportunity to run on the MSU women's track and field team. During my time on the team, I specialized in the 60 meter hurdles (indoor) and the 100 meter hurdles (outdoor). Through this experience, I was able to gain many skills that will come in handy for the future, as well as create genuine friendships.

Like any athlete, hard work and dedication are essential if you want to excel in your sport. Along with being a full time student, I was putting fifteen hours a week into practice and competition. I quickly learned that being a collegiate athlete was a big time commitment. In order to do well both in the classroom and on the track, I had to learn how to balance my time. This time management skill allowed me to still excel in the classroom even though I was putting many hours into track. The discipline I exhibited to do well on the track, like going to practice, eating healthy, and getting enough sleep, was easily translated into the same kind of discipline I needed to show to do well in the classroom. While college sports are intense, you can succeed if you put in the time and stay determined, characteristics that I can now apply to the rest of my life.

Besides teaching me about a strong work ethic, track has also taught me the importance of learning from failures and being able to pick yourself up after you fall down. As a track runner, it is so easy to get discouraged after a bad meet. Each week, a runner strives to beat their time from last week. However, it is easier said than done. As an athlete, if we don't get a personal record (PR) each race, we feel like failures and feel like practice that week was a waste. Because of this deceiving mindset, it is easy to lose self-confidence in your abilities. In order to get past the bumps in the road, it was important for me to remember that every race was a learning opportunity and that even if I didn't get a PR, I could still find something about my race that went well. Having the courage to try again and having self-confidence in your abilities is what will ultimately make you successful not only on the track, but also in life.

During my time as a collegiate athlete, I was able to accomplish multiple goals I had set for myself and I gained skills that will help me be successful in the future. However, despite all those great accomplishments, the best part of my track and field experience was creating genuine relationships with my teammates and coaches. As a freshman entering a collegiate track program, it was no doubt scary. However, when I got there I was instantly greeted by some amazing upperclassmen who took me under their wing and showed me the ropes. Their sportsmanship was so authentic and that authenticity eventually turned into long lasting friendships. While I was lucky to find these friends, it is impossible to be best friends with everyone on such a big team. However, it was very important that we still supported each other. Whether in practice or during a meet, we would all be cheering for each other. We would share in each other's joy and we could comfort each other in the disappointments. Though our team was large, we were all brought together by our mutual love for the sport. While I may not remember the time of every race I ran, I will remember the moments I shared with my teammates.

Track has been a big part of my life and it has impacted me in ways I never realized. It was truly an honor to represent MSU and I will cherish the memories and lessons learned forever. [#gomavs](#)





Work & Volunteer Experiences

Employment

Vista Prairie at Monarch Meadows: This August I began working as a CNA at Monarch Meadows, an assisted living facility. This job is challenging and requires much patience, however, it is very rewarding when you begin to connect with the residents. I am learning skills both in direct patient care and interpersonal communication. With the experience I am getting, I will be more confident in my skills and therefore more prepared to attend PA school.

Ankeny Little League: For three summers, I worked in the concession stand for the Ankeny Little League. Though it might seem like a simple minded job, it still taught me the importance of hard work, as well as customer service, two qualities that are necessary in my future work.

Ankeny Community School District: For two years, I was employed by the Ankeny Community School District. My job was to run the basketball scoreboard during the winter and the baseball and softball scoreboard during the summer.

This job taught me responsibility because people were counting on me to keep the time or the balls and strikes. I always had to be alert and I had to stay focused. It also taught me patience because some people would question the score or the balls and strikes and I would have to explain the situation and figure out how to handle it.

Track Coach: For three summers I was a coach at the Ankeny Summer Track Camp. My job entailed working with kids ranging from ages 9-14 and teaching them the basics of track.

This job taught me responsibility because parents were trusting me with their kids. It also taught me how to share my knowledge with others. I was able to develop teaching methods and therefore improve my teaching skills

Babysitter: I have been babysitting since I was thirteen. I have babysat for seven different families with children ranging from 5 months-12 years. Babysitting all these years has taught me responsibility. Parents are trusting me to take care of their kids and it is a lot of weight on your shoulders. Along with responsibility, babysitting teaches you how to discipline and be disciplined. Sometimes you need to be stern with them if they are not behaving correctly and it also teaches me that I need to be watching the kids the whole time and not just letting them run around wild.

Volunteer Work

College Volunteer Work:

2018: In order to promote the importance of health in the community, I was able to help at the Jefferson Elementary Jaguar Jog, the Leprechaun 10K Chase, and the Scheels Spring half marathon. I also got the chance to be a judge at the Southern Minnesota Regional Science Fair held at MSU during the winter and the spring.

2017: I gave back to the Mankato community by helping set up the Kiwanis Lights and helping with Rake the Town. I also got the chance to help at the SCSC Science and Nature Conference, teaching fifth graders about science as well as being a traffic guard during the Jefferson Elementary Jaguar Jog. As a member of the MSU track team I also helped volunteer by working high school track meets.

2016: I continued to volunteer through the Honors program, including helping with the Relay for Life. During the summer after my second year I had the opportunity to travel to Australia and volunteer on a wallaby sanctuary. Through this amazing experience I was able to volunteer a total of 80 hours to an organization fighting to save the brush tailed rock wallabies.

2015: I became involved in IMPACT, the student events planning club. During my time with IMPACT I helped out with the Color Rush and multiple homecoming events including the Nearly Naked Mile, the concert, and the parade. I also volunteered with my track team by setting up lights for the Kiwanis Holiday Lights, which went on display around Thanksgiving. During second semester, I was an IELI tutor. For two hours a week, I would tutor a Japanese student to help him become more fluent in English.

High School Volunteer Work:

2012-2014: During high school I was involved in our silver cord community service program. This program required 120 hours of community service, 40 hours each year (sophomore, junior, and senior). Throughout these 120 hours, I volunteered at multiple organizations including Living History Farms, the Des Moines marathon, Kirkendall Public Library, elementary school fun nights, track camp, VBS, and many more.



Awards and Honors

During my time at MSU, I've had the opportunity to receive many awards and honors that I am very thankful for and humbled.

MSU Presidential Scholar

As a scholar, I was awarded a scholarship dispersed over a four year period. I was also assigned a MSU administrative mentor each year, including several deans, the Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Education and the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

ASBMB Honors Society Member (Chi Omega Lambda)

The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology sponsors an honors society for junior and senior undergraduate students who excel in the classroom and promote scientific outreach. I was inducted in April of 2018 in San Diego, CA at the ASBMB annual meeting along with fifty-two other students from across the country.

URS Outstanding Presenter Award

In April of 2018, I presented research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I was recognized as an outstanding presenter along with several other students.

Department Scholarship Recipient

Over the years, I have been granted several scholarships from the Department of Chemistry and Geology as well as several endowments from private family donors.