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# Redesigning the Frederick Meijer Honors College Curriculum

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TEAM

# *Vitality*

*Design  
Thinking to  
Meet Real World Needs  
Winter 2018*

## *Redesigning the Frederik Meijer Honors College Curriculum*

Malia Brooks  
Bradley Williams  
Andrew Dzierwa  
Kelsey Rutkowski  
Bethany Chambers

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# OPENING STATEMENT

Welcome reader,

We appreciate your interest in our design challenge of reimagining the Frederik Meijer Honors College curriculum. Over the course of several months, we have worked diligently through the design thinking process to arrive at a solution that meets the needs of FMHC stakeholders. We have conducted interviews with these stakeholders in order to gain empathy and conducted secondary research which allowed us to broaden the scope of our insights and search for potential solutions. Many hours were spent ideating our own solutions and prototyping them through a collaborator debrief process. This portfolio contains the details of our process start to finish, showing how we used design thinking to redesign the FMHC curriculum.

We are proud to be a part of the process of reinventing the Honors College curriculum. The effect of our efforts will create a more enriching college experience for future generations. Thank you for taking the time to explore and innovate with us.

Sincerely,

*Team Vitality*

Kathryn Malia Brooks  
Bradley Williams  
Kelsey Rutkowski  
Andrew Dzierwa  
Bethany Chambers

## Background and Context

The Frederik Meijer Honors College, or FMHC, is a program within Grand Valley State University’s Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies. The Honors College provides exceptional students with the opportunity to experience a more challenging curriculum as an alternative to Grand Valley’s general education path. It upholds a high academic standard—in 2017, freshmen enrolling into the program had an impressive average GPA of 3.957 and an average ACT score of 29, according to the *Frederik Meijer Honors College Annual Report* (Chamberlain, 2017). Furthermore, not only does the Honors College admit high-achieving students, it attracts them to Grand Valley—over 50% of students found their acceptance to FMHC a pivotal reason for attending GVSU (Chamberlain, 2017). These incoming students pursue a variety of majors (Figure 1). FMHC curriculum is applicable to all fields of study, using a broad range of topics and an interdisciplinary approach to emphasize collaboration, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and problem solving. It is not directly tied to a student’s major. Through their studies in FMHC, students improve their oral and written communication skills and they learn how to understand quantitative literacy. Each of these lessons and skills are practiced within a student’s coursework as they apply their knowledge through the promise of Grand Valley’s liberal education.

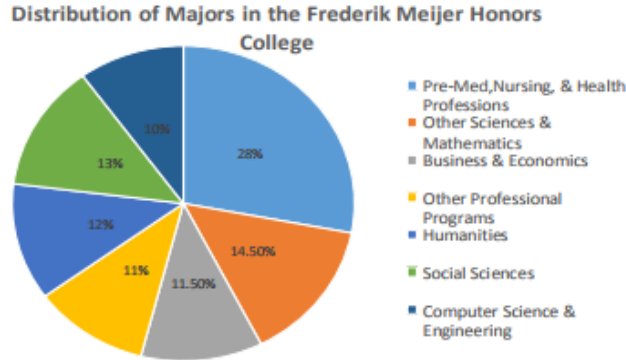


Figure 1: Distribution of Majors within FMHC (Chamberlain, 2017).

FMHC students are required to complete Honors credit hours to graduate with the ‘Grand Valley Honors’ distinction on their diploma. Honors College designated courses are used to fulfill the university’s general education requirements in supplemental writing skills, world perspectives, diversity, and issues. Additionally, an Honors “junior seminar” and senior project are required (*Frederik Meijer, 2017*). Furthermore, FMHC students have many opportunities to study abroad, participate in professional, scientific research, and live in Honors College-designated housing. They consistently excel outside of the classroom, attaining prestigious awards and scholarships, and proving their leadership through organizations and campus-wide events. For instance, in 2017, Honors students comprised over 20% of all student participants in Student Scholars Day (Chamberlain). In the same year, 62 first-year Honors students were honored by Phi Kappa Phi, a prestigious Honors

Society (Chamberlain). FMHC students go above and beyond and achievements like these routinely showcase the positive impact of the Honors College.

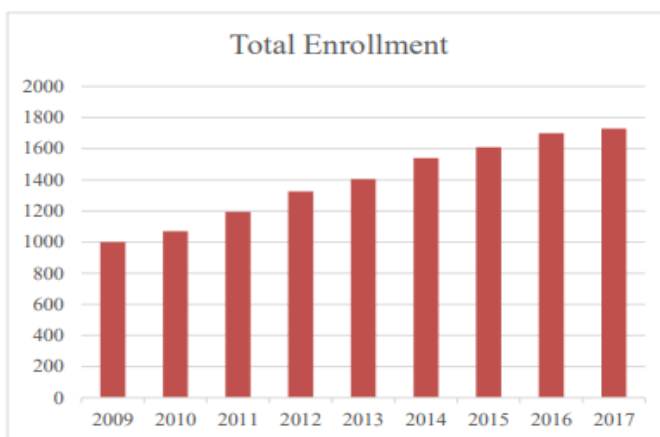


Figure 2: FMHC Enrollment by Year (Chamberlain, 2017).

Cohort	GVSU 4-yr	Hon elig 4-yr	Hon 4-yr	GVSU 5-yr	Hon elig 5-yr	Hon 5-yr	GVSU 6-yr	Hon elig 6-yr	Hon 6-yr
2012	~37%	47.0%	60.7%						
2011	35.7%	50.4%	62.6%	~60%	72.4%	81.7%			
2010	34.1%	39.4%	59.7%	60.2%	68.9%	87.3%	~67%	73.9%	90.9%
2009	36.7%	48.0%	65.4%	60.0%	64.9%	85.1%	66.6%	71.7%	87.6%

Figure 3: FMHC Graduation Rates by Year (Chamberlain, 2017)

FMHC is a valuable and enriching program within GVSU. It is growing steadily (Figure 2) and is associated with higher graduation rates (Figure 3). Yet, the Honors College curriculum has much room for improvement. Consider Dean Anne Hiskes’ document summarizing the National Collegiate Honors Council’s (NCHC) program review report for FMHC. The NCHC critiques the curriculum and offers suggestions for improvement—for instance, the counsel indicates that Honors student learning outcomes are “both too vague and too limited to general education learning, and not Honors learning” (Hiskes, 2017). It calls for the Honors College curriculum to be refocused and made more distinctive. It also points out that the current curriculum lacks inclusivity, limiting “both transfer and ‘late-bloomer’ student access to the program” (Hiskes, 2017). It is abundantly clear that while FMHC has made great strides in academia, there is more that can be done to improve the program’s curriculum to create something even greater.

## Opportunity Statement

The current curriculum of the Frederik Meijer Honors College is essentially an alternate pathway for students to complete their general education requirements. Recently, the FMHC was released from its duty to fulfil these general education requirements, granting freedom for our team to innovate a more flexible and unique curriculum. ***We will create a flexible curriculum that will stimulate personal growth and development of Honors students, while challenging the way students approach real-world issues.*** Our curriculum will stretch student’s thinking beyond their field of study through integrated classes. Through an empathetic approach we will gain knowledge and understanding of what current FMHC

students need and what we can do to help prospective students understand how to make the most of their engagement with FMHC.

## Constraints

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As part of the process to successfully transform the Honors College, Team Vitality is expected to face certain constraints that could impact or adversely affect our desired outcomes. Firstly, our curriculum must not deviate from the mission statements of both the Honors program and the overarching statement for the university. The curriculum has to “inspire and empower motivated students to be intellectually-curious lifelong learners who make positive contributions to their local and global communities and serve as capable leaders and active global citizens” (“Grand Valley”, 2017). Although given the freedom to restructure the skeleton of the Honors College curriculum, we also need to embed the following “Student Learning Objectives” in each class: collaboration, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, information literacy, integration, oral communication, problem solving, quantitative literacy, and written communication. These GVSU Student Learning Objectives (SLO’s), are non-negotiable for the Honors College, which may become a challenge if we attempt to refocus the direction of learning to concentrate on gaining diverse abilities in areas other than those currently emphasized. The time allotted to complete this project is 15 weeks, so our design thinking process will be intensive and fast-paced.

## Research Methods

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Our research throughout the entirety of this project is centered on utilizing the design thinking process. This human-centered design method is a progressive, linear application of collaboration and understanding, where our team will use these basic principles to evaluate which group of individuals are truly affected by the issue at hand. The design thinking process includes the following steps, listed in chronological order.

1. **Empathize** – understand the problem
2. **Define** – analyze, interpret, and plan
3. **Ideate** – imagine, research, ponder
4. **Prototype** – apply creativity to create
5. **Test** – review and revise

Throughout implementation of the project, we will continuously refer to our text *Creative Confidence* by David Kelley and Tom Kelley, brothers and co-founders at world-renown design thinking think-tank IDEO. This book will guide us through the design thinking processes, providing necessary life-skill oriented applications and stories that serve as motivation and fuel for thought. We are grateful to have annual FMHC reports from previous years as a resource, as well as publicized innovation portfolios from semester-prior coursework. Our class periods are often visited by faculty members of the Frederik Meijer Honors College as well. We will be able to apply empathy to these guest-speaker visits and follow-up each session with questions to provoke necessary information gathering as it pertains to our project.

The bulk of our research will consist of individual interviews, where a member of the team meets personally with the subject(s) of interest, with the intent of addressing relevant questions; each interview will bring a new perspective to the table, giving us greater insight into the challenge. We will apply insights from each of these interviews into redefining our hypothesis, ultimately using the information to ideate and develop winning prototype concepts, which will be archived in our final report.

## **Intended Outcomes**

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We envision the Frederik Meijer Honors College curriculum to be challenging and dynamic. It will offer a cutting-edge, nontraditional alternative, where ambitious students will be pushed to grow as individuals and as scholars using an interdisciplinary approach. Different fields will be tied together in new ways to stretch students' thinking and spark personal, academic and professional growth. Out-of-classroom experiences will be integrated into learning whenever possible, to engage students and inspire deeper learning. The curriculum will be broad in scope, emphasizing the importance of well-roundedness, yet it will afford students with opportunities to hand-tailor their experience to best fit their personal needs and goals; no student will be trapped in a class that is not right for them. The curriculum will foster academic curiosity and spark a passion for lifelong learning—this mindset will follow students into their work and lives well beyond GVSU. The Honors College will produce successful, proud Alumni. FMHC curriculum will embrace inclusion and adaptability, accommodating all of its students—anyone who takes an interest in Honors should be supported, including upperclassmen, transfers, and otherwise nontraditional students. The curriculum will provide a valuable, enriching, unforgettable experience that is inclusive and attracts talented, driven individuals.

FMHC sets apart those who aspire to be something greater--individuals who are here for more than just a degree and truly wish to make the most of their time at GVSU. It is our vision that the Honors program will bring new students to Grand Valley, and attract the attention of those already here, exciting all with its innovative and progressive curriculum. Honors faculty will be passionate about teaching in Honors, always seeking new ways to improve. Students entering Honors will feel engaged with FMHC throughout their college experience; they will find pride in identifying as Honors students. Upon leaving GVSU, the students will have gained valuable life skills and insight that will propel them into a successful future!



# STAKEHOLDER MAP

A stakeholder map is a tool that allows you to visually represent the various stakeholders (individual and groups) that are involved in the project, their level of interest in the innovation and their importance to the innovation. The Frederik Meijer Honors College acts as a complex web of stakeholders, all of whom have various conceptions of success (Figure 4).

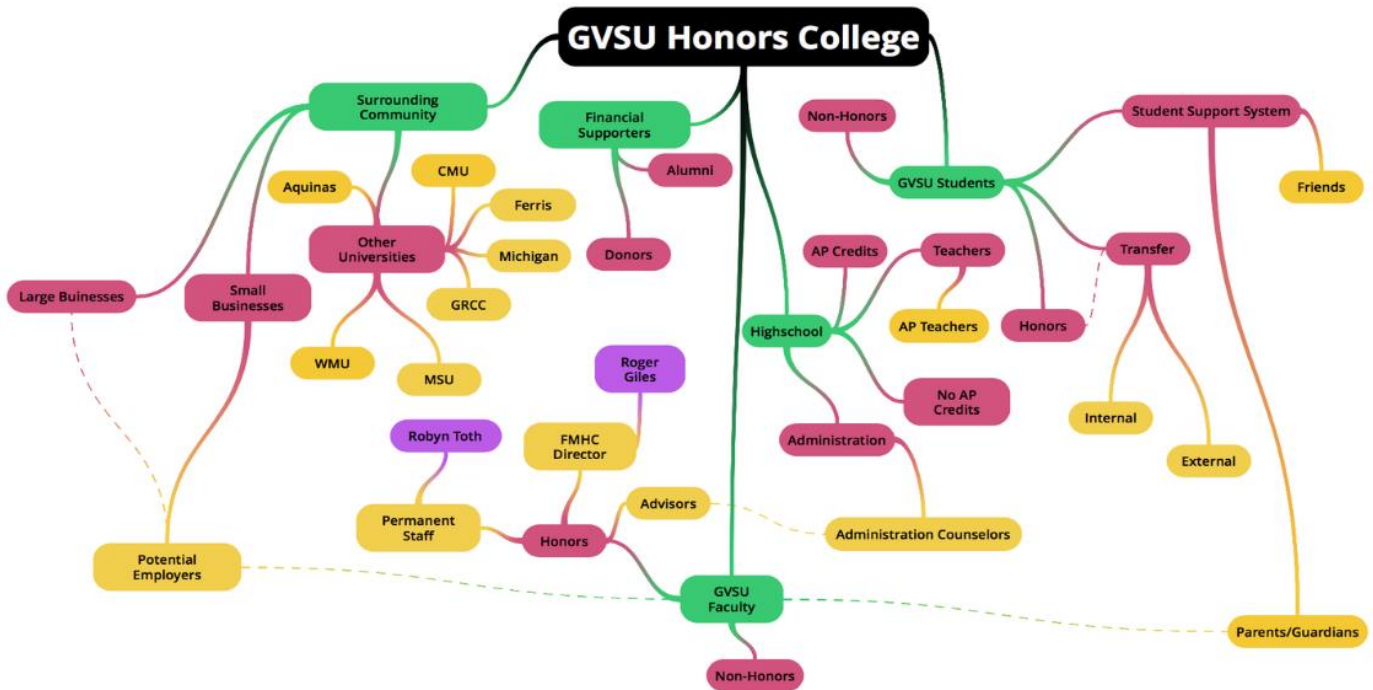


Figure 4: Map of FMHC Stakeholders

An accommodating curriculum must be derived through cooperation between all parties, so all points of view of stakeholders must be heard and understood. We have multiple overlapping perspectives to consider as we delve into this design challenge. To create our stakeholder map, we first had to decide who we are solving for, or who our key stakeholder was. We decided that it was Grand Valley’s Honors College as a whole. From there, we identified who is directly impacted or involved with the Honors College at Grand Valley and derived five groups: Financial Supporters, GVSU Students, High schools, GVSU Faculty, and Surrounding Community. We labeled these groups in green to acknowledge these main connections, and to indicate higher importance than other groups. From these top priority groups, we next identified specifically who we would consider to be a part of those groups that would hold an interest in our innovation. For example, in our GVSU Students grouping, we came up with Non-Honors, Honors, Transfer, and the Student Support System, which we color coded as pink groups. From here, if we were able, we tried to connect any groups that possibly had mutual representation, such as Transfer and Honors, since some students choose

to transfer into the Honors College either from the general non-Honors program at Grand Valley, or from a different University. This brings us to our next level of decision making. From this pink grouping, we thought of how we could narrow the focus even more. For example, in the subgroup of Other Universities found under the Surrounding Community, we listed several other universities or colleges that have Honors Colleges that we could look into for insight which we put into yellow ovals.

Next we tried to make any connections with any other groups to see stakeholder linkages. Following this, if possible, we continued narrowing our focus down to specific people that were a part of a larger subgroup, such as under the Permanent Staff in the Honors bubble, we put Robyn Toth in purple as someone that we wanted to interview to gain her insight on our innovation.

There are other, less obvious stakeholders to consider as well. For instance, we must consider the role of the community surrounding GVSU and its stake in the success of our Honors students. Upon graduating, FMHC alumni will embed in the region as young professionals—what they learn here will have an impact in “life” after GVSU. The role of the university is also important. Honors curriculum must align with the overarching goals of GVSU and fit well into the strategic intention of the university. Finally, we also must consider input from the financial backers of the FMHC, the State of Michigan taxpayers, donors, and tuition paying students and their families.

# AFFINITY MAP

After we started gaining insights into how people felt about the current curriculum in the Honors College, we started identifying general consensus, i.e. those insights from our research that had common theme. This provided an organized way to sort through the evidence (Figure 5). We wrote down questions prompted by review of these insights, to support identification of unmet needs, or problems with the current curriculum in order to come up with our innovations. We continued to refer to our affinity map as research evidence during our collaborator debriefs when stakeholders challenged our positions.

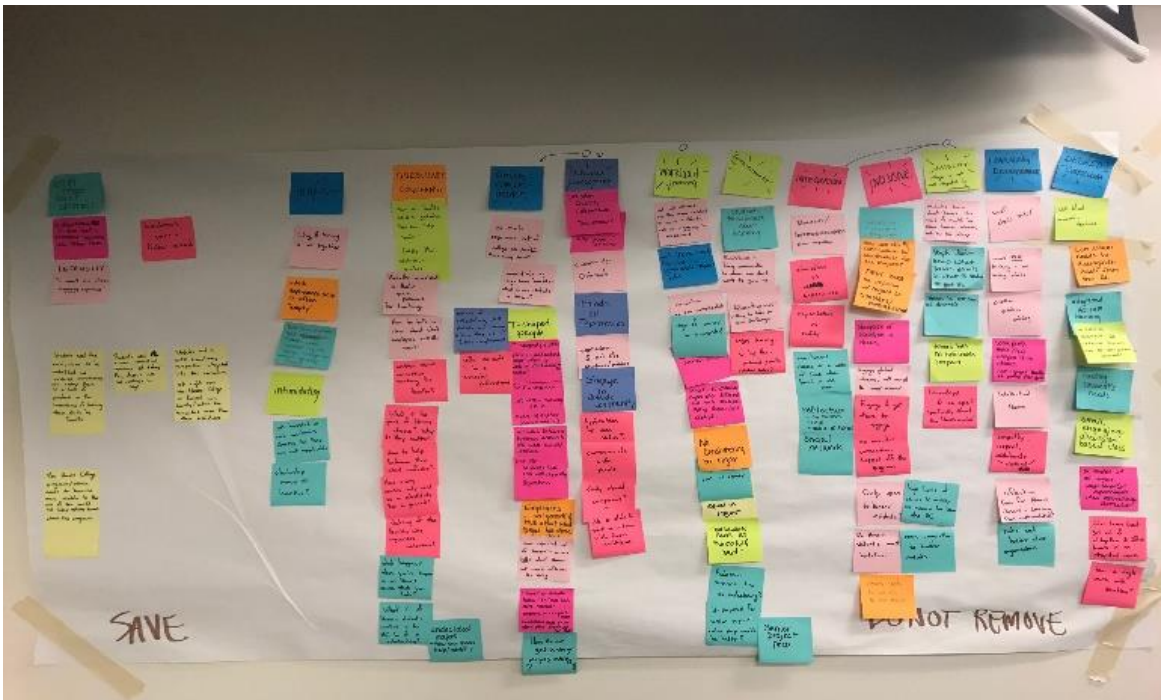


Figure 5: Affinity Map

# COLLABORATOR DEBRIEF

The Collaborator Debrief was a chance for our team to present our insights and questions to a small panel of stakeholders. Participating stakeholders and classmates were asked to provide feedback which we used to redefine some of our concepts or refine our ideas. Collaborator DebrieFs were an essential component in our design thinking process because it encouraged thought provoking dialogue that led to more innovations.

## Collaborator Debrief 1: Key Insights

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### Team Problem Statement

*We will create a curriculum that will stimulate personal growth and development of Honors students, while challenging the way students approach real-world issues.*

### Key Insights

- Students in the Honors program do not feel the experience has been enriching personally and academically or adds any value beyond fulfilling requirements and bolstering a resume.
- There is inconsistency in the rigor of FMHC courses.
- The stakeholders value cultural competency, favoring an engaging, hands-on, collaborative and diverse approach to teaching.

### Questions for the Collaborator

1. What kinds of things should FMHC Alumni be saying about their Honors experience? What aspects of Honors should students take pride in?
2. What are some ideas for measurable objectives when creating a “baseline” for the rigor of Honors courses and creating a consistent experience across the board?
3. How might we create cultural competency within the Honors College?

### Debrief Feedback

**Instructor:** Insights can be turned into needs statements. How can you meet some of these needs?

**Class:** We desire a *consistent* workload. The *reality* of Honors does not meet the *expectations* that we were presented with before we joined Honors. Students want to find value in the Honors College in general and want more community involvement.

**Collaborator:** Some do not think the Live, Learn, Lead accomplished what it was meant to do.

**Other Stakeholder(s):** Key phrases that were mentioned: intellectually stimulating, passionate, engaged, cultural competency, and academic integrity.

## Post-Debrief Feedback

### **Diverge:**

1. The stakeholders highlighted the responsibility of the student in shaping their own experiences in the Honors College.
2. The stakeholders didn't seem to understand the inconsistency in the rigor. (10 years since they've done a course correction)
3. Didn't seem as enthusiastic about hands-on experiences out in the community.

### **Converge:**

1. Faculty are inconsistent in their dedication to FMHC.
2. Academic integrity should be upheld.
3. Classes should enrich the entire Honors experience.
4. Students should be proud of their education

### **Apply:**

1. Asking questions in relation to what insights we gained.
2. Approaching with more empathy from stakeholders who are not students
3. Adding insights to the team affinity map
4. Review the team stakeholder map for direction in next interviews

### **Act:**

1. How can we create a curriculum that sparks intellectual passion?
2. In the interviews with students, ask them what "enriching Honors experience" would look like.
3. How can we incorporate leadership into the curriculum?
4. Interview a parent/guardian of an Honors student.

## Collaborator Debrief 2: Needs Statements

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### Team Problem Statement:

*We will create a curriculum that will stimulate personal growth and development of Honors students, while challenging the way students approach real-world issues.*

### Needs Statements

1. Students need to be actively engaged global citizens by immersing themselves with community and other cultures. There is inconsistency in the rigor of FMHC courses.
2. Students need a more consistent Honors experience with a clear purpose and goals.
3. The Honors college program/ administration needs to become more visible to the rest of the community. Honors classes should be open to regular students.
4. Students need to have guest speakers from different disciplines, or cultures that are relevant to the topic being taught in class.
5. Students need to volunteer at culturally intersecting organizations.
6. Students need internships and co-op opportunities specifically offered for Honors Students through the FMHC program.
7. Students require more engaging, verbal student course reviews mid-term, perhaps utilizing a third party to interview students.

### Questions for the Collaborator:

1. What can we do to make sure that all Honors professors across the board are dedicated to their classes and invested in student learning?
2. How can we make the purpose and goals of Honors Curriculum more understandable to students?
3. What are your thoughts on the handout?

### Debrief Feedback

**Instructor:** Why do professors of the Honors College choose to be Honors professors in the first place?

**Class:** The theme of consistency in experience and rigor was seen across each presentation. Flexibility and options are important in a curriculum. Student opinion should be heard and listened to.

Loved the ideas shared across class - having different levels of classes and other smaller classes as fillers. At least 1 credit requirement of an Honors course each year of college enrollment.

**Collaborator:** It is important to define what “rigor” is, maybe through assessment and measurement. There are many ways to meet the needs for cultural competency than just learning a language or study abroad.

## Post-Debrief Feedback:

### **Diverge:**

1. The stakeholders did not seem to understand what defines rigor.
2. Stakeholders felt that professors involved in teaching courses were investing time and energy into students even though student interviews provided evidence against this.

### **Converge:**

1. Stakeholders and the class seemed to non-verbally agree that consistency in the Honors College experience was important.
2. Stakeholders and the class agreed that we have a lack of understanding of the Honors program. Articulating what it is and what it does for students is difficult.

### **Apply:**

1. Why are you involved in Honors to begin with?
2. How would you define rigor?
3. What kinds of classes would you like to see in an Honors curriculum?  
Do you have any ideas about how we can integrate learning about different cultures into the Honors curriculum?

### **Act:**

1. Apply the above questions in the interviews to come.
2. Discuss and revise our innovations as we work to two prototype concepts.

## Collaborator Debrief 3: Top Two Prototypes

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### Team Problem Statement:

*We will create a curriculum that will stimulate personal growth and development of Honors students, while challenging the way students approach real-world issues.*

### Top Two Prototypes:

#### 1. Three-Segment Curriculum

- a. The new curriculum will consist of three modules, each with a clear purpose to fulfil a particular stakeholder need. The first unit will be reflective courses that teach students what it means to be a member of FMHC. The second will be an interdisciplinary course within the humanities that strengthens students' cultural and academic knowledge. The third will be application-based, offering several options including internships, field research, and senior projects.

#### 2. Inclusive Honors Courses

- a. Entry-level Honors courses (the freshmen sequence) will be made available to all GVSU students through a short application process. The majority of the seats in a particular class will be reserved for Honors students, while a few seats will be filled by applicants on a first-come first-serve basis. After completing (and passing) this introductory course, non-Honors students will be given the option of transferring into the Honors program.

### Questions for the Collaborator:

1. How well do our 3 tiers address FMHC's student learning objectives and overall mission? How can we make the purpose and goals of Honors Curriculum more understandable to students?
2. To what extent should FMHC be inclusive?

### Debrief Feedback

**Instructor:** It is important to link these innovations from your insights and needs statements and to be able to articulate it in the final presentation.

**Class:** What would our unit 3 set-up look like? What are some of the options for someone in unit 3?

**Collaborator:** This innovation looks a little bit like our current curriculum. How does your innovation compare?

### Post-Debrief Feedback:

#### Diverge:

1. Explaining some of the units was a challenge. It was tough because we are designing for the overall curriculum, not course specific.

#### Converge:

1. Our collaborators liked our idea.
2. The class enjoyed the concept and the flexibility of our innovation.
3. Stakeholders seemed open to our idea about inclusive classes.



**Apply:**

1. We will be comparing our innovation with our current program.
2. We will be linking out insights to our innovation in a way that is easy for people to see.

**Act:**

1. We will be creating a table to organize our thoughts and the two innovations will be combined into one for our final innovation.

# TOP FIVE INNOVATIONS

## 1. Three Segment Curriculum

We have identified three needs regarding FMHC curriculum: A) FMHC students need to understand the purpose and goals of an Honors education, B) FMHC students need opportunities to apply their learning in real-world situations, and C) FMHC students need a more flexible curriculum. This innovation aims to solve for all three of these needs. The FMHC course requirements will be restructured so that students will take three Units of classes during their time in Honors. Each segment will be designed to cover learning objectives; they must be taken in the designated order. The first segment is meant as an introduction to Honors and should include reflective activities such as an MBTI personality test and a seminar to explain the purpose and goals of FMHC, such that students will understand their responsibility as conscientious and articulate learners. The second segment will be subject-based and will allow the student to study the humanities in-depth within the context of a subject of their choosing (example: art, history, culture, language, and writing). The third segment will represent the application of student learning. Students will have the option of doing research in their field, completing an upperclassman project, taking part in a service learning opportunity, or taking a challenging, high level interdisciplinary class. A professional development course including resume building, networking, and practice interviews will also be offered as an option (Figure 6).

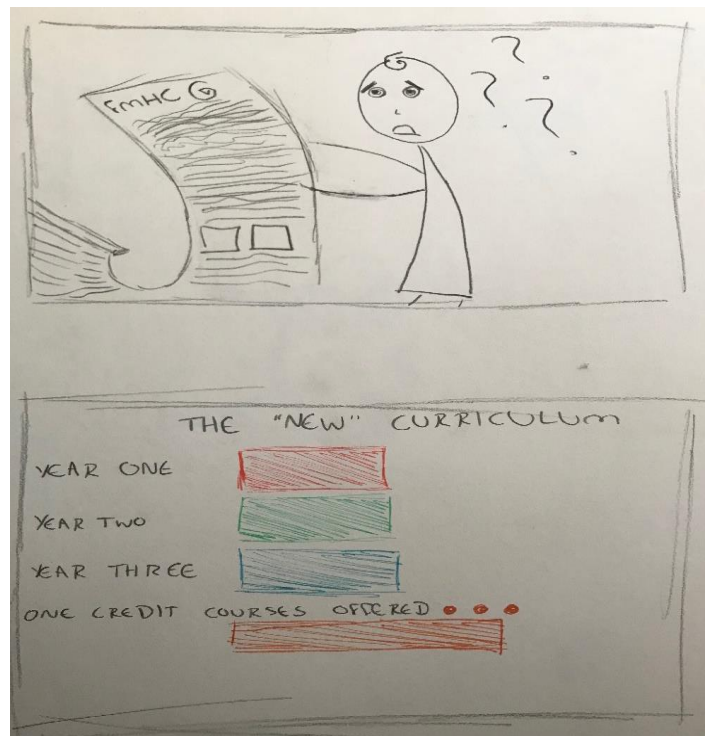


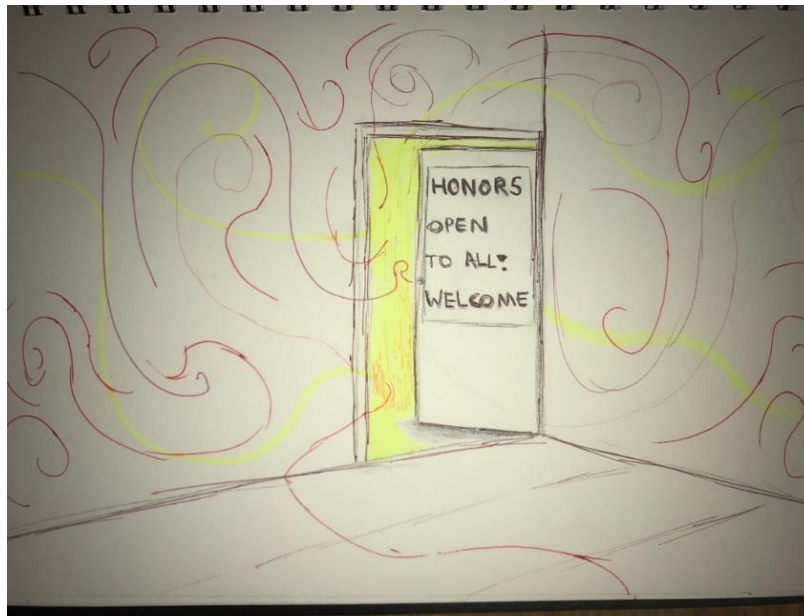
Figure 6: Early Visualization of Restructured Curriculum

Students will have several options of classes for each Unit. The classes themselves will cover a broad range of topics, and each will be one semester long. The three Units can be satisfied at any point in the students' four years, so long as they are completed in order. This will allow some flexibility; students will be able to tailor their Honors experience to their personal needs and align with the requirements of their major. Additionally, Honors-designated classes in biology, chemistry, economics, writing, history, business, computer programming, and physical education will be offered and will be optional.

## 2. Inclusive Honors Courses

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This innovation is designed to address the visibility issue we have seen regarding FMHC. Many potential Honors students who are fully qualified never find their way to FMHC due to lack of knowledge about the program. Too many GVSU students do not know what exactly Honors entails, what the qualifications are, or how the curriculum works. As a result, many talented, driven individuals do not enroll. This also means the Honors College is less visible to the University as a whole, and little is being done to mitigate feelings of isolation and separation between Honors and non-Honors students. To address these issues, we have designed the following innovation, which allows non-Honors students to test the waters in Honors without fully committing to joining FMHC (Figure 7).



*Figure 7: Early Visualization of Inclusivity*

Lower-level courses in FMHC (the freshman sequence, presently) will be open to all students at GVSU. Non-Honors students who are passionate about learning can speak to an Honors advisor or fill out a short application expressing their interest in FMHC to be considered for placement into an entry-level Honors course. Upon completing this course, non-Honors students will be given the option of applying to join FMHC. Honors students will take precedence during the registration process. Fifteen slots will be reserved per class for Honors students only. An additional five slots will be open to all GVSU students who have applied and will be filled on a “first-come first-serve” basis. Additionally, Honors-designated foundations courses in Economics, Chemistry, Biology, the Arts, etc. will be made open to all GVSU students, with similar application and registration processes (twenty slots will be reserved for Honors students, with an additional five for non-Honors registered being first-come first-serve). By making entry-level courses more inclusive, we will create a more flexible and welcoming program that encourages students to get involved with FMHC. We will give non-Honors students the opportunity to see what it’s all about.

### 3. Integrative Learning for Cultural Competency

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We have found that cultural competency and interdisciplinary learning are held in high regard by Honors faculty and by potential employers of Honors College graduates. Accordingly, we hope to emphasize certain classroom elements that help build these qualities. Using feedback regarding what methods students and faculty feel are most enriching, we have formed the following innovation.



*Figure 8: Early Visualization of Cultural Competency*

FMHC will require certain interdisciplinary, integrative classroom elements that promote higher-level learning and cultural competency in Honors students: guest lectures and field trips. One required element will be guest speakers. Firstly, a college professor from a discipline contrasting that of the primary professor or the content of the course, will guest lecture through their disciplinary lens (on a topic relating to the course in some way), then facilitate a discussion that relates their lecture to the course and places it in context. This discussion will be conversational and engage the students to share their thoughts and ideas. Secondly, a speaker native to a different country or from a different cultural/racial/ethnic background will guest lecture about their personal experiences, then answer student questions. They will speak on music, dance, food, the arts, language, or any other subject that would enrich student learning (Figure 8). This will provide a window into a different culture, related to the course content, and offer the opportunity for students to understand the world through a different perspective. A third required element will be outside of the classroom. Each freshman seminar will have at least one field trip. This could be a trip to a museum, a symphony, a play, an art exhibition, a historical landmark, etc. (funded or subsidized by FMHC). This field trip will provide more engaged learning through a culturally vibrant experience that reaches beyond the lecture hall.

## 4. Co-ops and Internships

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A recurring theme we have found from our student interviews is the sentiment that little is being done by FMHC to prepare students for their careers after college. This innovation is designed to make students more professionally competent and facilitate the transition from the classroom to the “real world.”



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with an internship specific to your major.

*Figure 9: Early Visualization of Co-Ops/Internships*

FMHC will partner with local companies to provide Co-Ops and internships specifically for Honors students (Figure 9). It will offer resources to guide students through the employment process, including a professional development class.

In the professional development class, students will learn how to create a high-quality resume and cover letter through workshops. Students will receive feedback from their peers and from a knowledgeable instructor. Students will also take part in practice interviews with actual employers from a variety of fields to improve their interview skills, network with potential employers, and be overall better equipped to secure a job. The employers will evaluate the students' performance and provide meaningful feedback to both students and the instructor. Students will also be required to attend designated networking events. These could be miniature career fairs, where representatives from companies of any/all disciplines will be available to speak to students and collect resumes. Networking events could also be small information sessions where a few employers give presentations about their companies and answer questions.

Students will have the option of pursuing an internship or Co-Op position that will count for Honors credits. This position may be within the student's discipline, but it is not required. A position outside a student's major that provides general professional development may be deemed acceptable. The hiring company and position must be approved by GVSU advisors or administration; the Co-Op or internship will count as three Honors credits and will be provided as an alternative to the senior project requirement currently in place.

## 5. Engaging Course Review

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Through speaking to FMHC faculty and administration, we have learned that little is being done to review and reflect on Honors courses and professors. Through our interviews, we have also identified a student need—students need Honors courses to be consistently high-quality and equitable in rigor, and they need consistently dedicated professors. FMHC must uphold well-defined standards, and to address this issue, we have designed the following innovation.



*Figure 10: Early Visualization of Course Review*

In addition to written, end-of-semester on-line course reviews, a more engaging, verbal form of course review will be conducted for each Honors class midway through the semester (Figure 10). A third-party individual or organization will conduct interviews with the students and facilitate group discussion on the class. The students will be asked to reflect on the course and the instruction, then share their thoughts on: the objectives of the course and how well they were met, the dedication demonstrated by the professor, what worked well for their learning and what didn't, what they would change about the course, etc. The third party will then report to FMHC administration so that student input can be considered in future decision-making.

These reviews will provide more meaningful, in-depth feedback than a traditional written course review. They will be a particularly valuable tool for identifying underrepresented (or overrepresented) opinions. By dedicating more time and energy to understanding student learning, FMHC will be more in touch with how instructors are supporting the mission of FMHC. Students will be able to elaborate on their ideas and reflect more deeply on their experience in the class. This will help facilitate continuous evaluation, reflection and improvement to FMHC curriculum moving forward. It will also allow administration to better uphold FMHC standards and provide a consistently high-quality experience.

These reviews will be conducted during the normal class period. All students will be required to attend. This is something that would be quite easy to implement as an FMHC requirement—an MIT (Mid-Semester Interview about Teaching) process is already available at GVSU that could be leveraged to prototype this innovation.

# TOP TWO PROTOTYPES

## Three Segment Curriculum

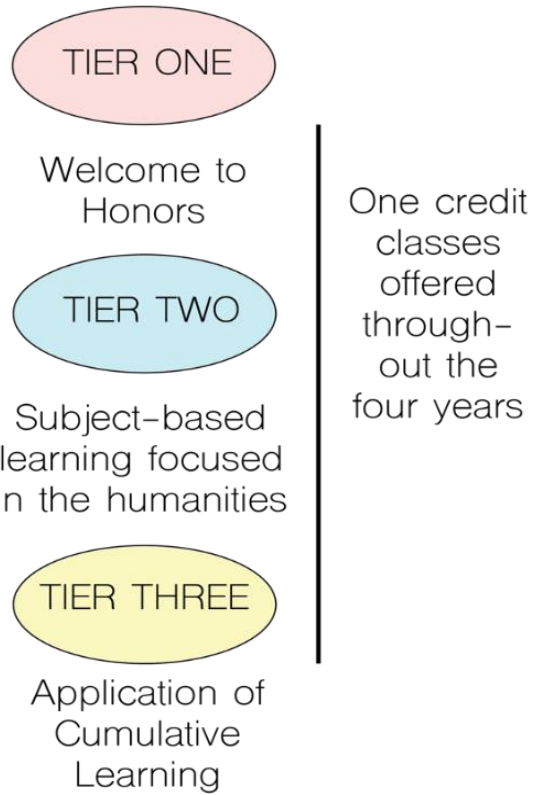
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We have identified three needs regarding FMHC curriculum: A) FMHC students need to understand the purpose and goals of Honors, B) FMHC students need opportunities to apply their learning in real-world situations, and C) FMHC students need a more flexible curriculum. This innovation aims to solve for all three of these needs (Figure 11). The FMHC course requirements will be restructured so that students will take three units of classes during their time in Honors. Each segment will be designed to cover learning objectives; they must be taken in the designated order. The first unit is meant as an introduction to Honors and should include reflective activities such as an MBTI personality test and a seminar to explain the purpose and goals of FMHC, such that students will understand their responsibility as conscientious and articulate learners. The second unit will be subject-based and will allow the student to study the humanities (example: art, history, culture, language, writing) in-depth within the context of a subject of their choosing. The third unit will represent the application of student learning. Students will have the option of doing research in their field, completing an upperclassman project, taking part in a service learning opportunity, or taking a challenging, high level interdisciplinary class. A professional development course including resume building, networking, and practice interviews will also be offered as an option.

Students will have several options of classes for each unit. The classes themselves will cover a broad range of topics, and each will be one semester long. The three units can be satisfied at any point in the students' four years, so long as they are completed in order. This will allow some flexibility; students will be able to tailor their Honors experience to their personal needs and align with the requirements of their major. Additionally, Honors-designated classes in biology, chemistry, economics, writing, history, business, computer programming, and physical education will be offered and will be optional.



Frederik Meijer Honors College Curriculum



*Figure 11: Three Segment Curriculum Structure*

## Inclusive Honors Courses

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This innovation is designed to address the visibility issue we have seen regarding FMHC. Many potential Honors students who are fully qualified never find their way into FMHC due to an ignorance of the program. Too many GVSU students do not know exactly what being in Honors entails, what the qualifications are, or how the curriculum works. As a result, many talented, driven individuals slip through the cracks. This also means we are less visible to the University as a whole--little is being done to disband feelings of isolation and separation between Honors and non-Honors students. To address these issues, we have designed the following innovation, which allows non-Honors students to test the waters without fully committing to joining FMHC (Figure 12).

Lower-level courses in FMHC (the freshman sequence presently) will be open to all students at GVSU. Non-Honors students who are passionate about learning can speak to an Honors advisor or fill out a short application expressing their interest in FMHC in order to be considered for placement into an entry-level Honors course. Upon completing this course, non-Honors students will be given the option of applying to join FMHC. Honors students will take precedence during the registration process. Fifteen slots will be reserved per class for Honors students only. An additional five slots will be open to all applicants and will be filled on a “first-come first-serve” basis.



*Figure 12: Visualization of Inclusivity*

Additionally, Honors-designated foundations courses in Economics, Chemistry, Biology, the Arts, etc. will be made open to all GVSU students, with similar application and registration processes (twenty slots will be reserved for Honors students, with an additional five being first-come first-serve). By making entry-level courses more inclusive, we will create a more flexible and welcoming program that encourages students to get involved with FMHC. We will give non-Honors students the opportunity to see what we're all about.

# FINAL PROTOTYPE CONCEPT

## Three-Segment Curriculum

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There are five identified needs regarding FMHC curriculum: A) FMHC students need to understand the purpose and goals of Honors, B) FMHC needs to be more visible to the surrounding University, C) FMHC students need to be culturally competent, integrative learners, D) FMHC students need opportunities to apply their learning in real-world situations, and E) FMHC students need a more flexible curriculum. These needs are tied to insights we gained through our research through stakeholder interviews and secondary sources. This innovation aims to solve for all 5 of these needs.

The FMHC course requirements will be restructured so that students will take three segments of classes during their time in Honors. Each tier will be designed to cover particular learning objectives; they must be taken in the designated order.

**The first segment** is meant as an introduction to Honors and should include reflective activities such as an MBTI personality test and seminars to explain the purpose and goals of FMHC, such that students will understand their responsibility as conscientious and articulate learners at FMHC.

This segment will be open to all students at GVSU. Non-Honors students who are passionate about learning can speak to an Honors advisor or fill out a short application expressing their interest in FMHC in order to be considered for placement into an entry-level Honors course. Upon completing this segment, non-Honors students will be given the option of applying to join FMHC.

Honors students will take precedence during the registration process. Fifteen slots will be reserved per class for Honors students. An additional 5 slots will be open to all GVSU students and will be filled on a “first-come first-serve” basis.

By making entry-level courses more inclusive, we will create a more flexible and welcoming program that encourages all students to get involved with FMHC. We will give non-Honors students the opportunity to see what the Honors College is all about.

**The second segment** will be subject-based and will allow the student to study in-depth within the humanities (example: art, history, culture, language, writing) within the context of a subject of their choosing. This segment aims to create culturally competent learners who can work with others and approach complex problems through many different lenses.

**The third segment** will represent the application of student learning. Students will have the option of doing research in their field, completing an upperclassman project, taking part in a service learning opportunity, or taking a challenging, high level interdisciplinary class.

A professional development course including resume building, networking, and practice interviews will also be offered as an option.

Students will have several options of classes for each segment. The classes themselves will cover a broad range of topics, and each will be one semester long. The three segments can be satisfied at any point in the students' four years, so long as they are completed in order. This will allow some flexibility; students will be able to tailor their Honors experience to their personal needs and align with the requirements of their major.

Additionally, Honors-designated classes in biology, chemistry, economics, writing, history, business, computer programming, and physical education will be offered and will be optional.


# CALL TO ACTION VIDEO

Team Vitality presents our Call to Action video. In this video we briefly describe the Design Thinking Process along with the insights and innovations that lead us to our final innovation. We hope to spark and interest and create a desire for action!



<https://vimeo.com/264320430>

# TEAM PRESENTATION



TEAM

# Vitality

FINAL PROTOTYPE

Three Segment Curriculum

Malia Brooks  
Andrew Dzierwa  
Bradley Williams  
Kelsey Rutkowski  
Bethany Chambers

## OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

*We will create a flexible curriculum that will stimulate personal growth and development of Honors students, while challenging the way students approach real-world issues.*

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### INCLUSIVE COURSES

Segment One  
Foundation Courses

### FILLER COURSES

Smaller credit  
courses (1-2)

### SEGMENT ONE

**Discover:** MBTI, introduction

### SEGMENT TWO

**Integrate:** in-depth study

### SEGMENT THREE

**Apply:** make it your own!

## SEGMENTS GUIDELINES

Run one semester long

Have several options

Be feasible and flexible!



## INCLUSIVE COURSES

Application Process  
for Non-Honors

- FMHC Visibility
- Inclusive Environment
- Challenge Students

Foundation Courses  
Segment One

## FILLER COURSES

Students must be  
enrolled in at least one  
Honors class per year.

- Hands-on approach
- Integrated learning

Examples: physical  
education classes,  
volunteer courses,  
cooking class

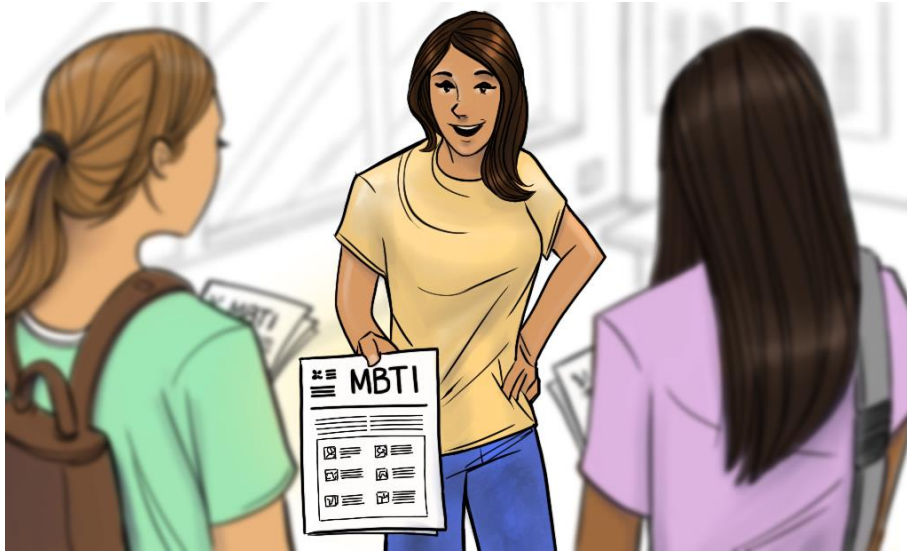
# JULIA'S STORY

*Bringing our innovation to life*



Welcome to college, Julia!

## Segment One



Discovering her identity and FMHC

## Segment Two



Exploring the history and culture of Ancient Asia

### Filler Course



Taking a hiking class with an integrated learning approach

### Segment Three



Applying her biology major with a research project

A few years later..



Receiving an award for her research in a foreign country

## READY FOR ACTION!

*The Mission of the Meijer Honors College is to inspire and empower motivated students to be intellectually curious **lifelong learners** who make **positive contributions** to their local and global communities, and serve as **capable leaders and active global citizens.***

# INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM FINDINGS

## Envisioning the Future

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### Our Call to Action

*We want to see a curriculum that embodies flexibility, feasibility, and application.*

### Overview

The audience received our idea and proposed prototype concept very well. Many of them supported our classes being available to non-Honors students. There were comments that our prototype concept slogan was helpful (discover, integrate, apply).

### Attendee Questions:

- Can you explain the proposed third segment? It is an Honors Senior Project?
- What would the credit load look like for these classes?
- Would you want to open up the filler courses for non-Honors students as well?

## Feedback to Help Advance our Innovation

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### Verbal Feedback:

- Change the name “filler courses” to something more appealing.
- Connect the segments with the ways they would fulfill GVSU’s Student Learning Outcomes.
- “I loved the ‘discover, integrate, apply’ mantra. I feel like that is usable!”
- “I enjoyed the simplicity of your innovation. Simple is good.”

## Written Feedback:

- Please address mechanism for transfer students.
- How will you keep academic rigor the FMHC is known for?
- Like the opportunity to apply to Honors once enrolled at GV. Think segment 2 & 3 are key to Honors.
- Loved the approach – everyone has the chance to be an Honors Student!

## Visual Feedback:

- Presentation was easy to follow!
- Enjoyed our video

# Post-Symposium Reflections

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### **Diverge:**

1. Did not like the term “filler courses.” There is a negative connotation for this phrase in academics; this piece of the innovation was sold as if it held no deeper value, but was merely a placeholder.

### **Converge:**

1. Positively responded to the idea for open-classes to non-Honors.
2. Liked our simple catch phrases for each segment.
3. Thought the concept of the filler courses was a great idea.

### **Synthesize:**

1. Decide on credit values for each segment and filler course.
2. Rename the “filler course” category.

### **Recommend:**

1. Think about the transition from our current Honors program into our new Three Segment Curriculum.
2. Consider the butterfly effect that could occur if this curriculum were to come alive (FMHC, GVSU, the surrounding community, future students, etc.).
3. Look at other group’s innovations. Combine the best elements of each to create something amazing for our future students.

# CLOSING STATEMENT

Our vision for the Honors College curriculum embodies the values of the FMHC and Grand Valley State University as a whole. The success of our Grand Valley Students starts with an extraordinary curriculum that embraces opportunities for personal and academic growth. We want our students to excel and be actively engaged in their communities. Our Three Segment Curriculum and our Open Honors Courses invites all Grand Valley students to expand their thinking and create their own enriching college experience. We are honored to have been a part of the design process to reimagine the FMHC curriculum.

Thank you for joining us on this innovation journey. We ask for your continued support of our students and the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Our team hopes that our work inspires innovation and sparks excitement about the changes that will be made in the future.

Best Regards,

Malia Brooks  
Bradley Williams  
Kelsey Rutkowski  
Bethany Chambers  
Andrew Dzierwa



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# APPENDICES: RESEARCH DIALOGUES

## Dialogue 1

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*AP High School Students - Estimated Age: 15-20 years old - Gender: Male*

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To gain insights on the motivations of a high school AP student and understand what influences them to join (or not join) an Honors College program.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

AP high school students are more likely to join an Honors program, and the curriculum will influence their decision heavily. By conducting this interview, we will gain understanding of how to format the curriculum in a way that will overall benefit this stakeholder group.

### Summary of Research:

AP high school students prioritize the number of credits gained through their classes and prefer an intellectually stimulated environment. They find the process of simply taking notes on lectures to be dull and find group work to be difficult and prefer to work individually. There is little awareness of any Honors College programs, including Grand Valley.

### Important Insights:

1. Workload is a huge priority – prefer to do more work only if there is a clear benefit and reason to do it – this includes a preference to do community-based work outside of the classroom rather than constant lectures.
2. Credits are another essential aspect in decision making for upper level classes, more credits given for challenging courses is expected.
3. Absolutely no advertising from Grand Valley’s Honors College program has reached or affected this stakeholder.
4. Need for better direction for group work, already have strong dislike for group projects.

### Dialogue Questions and Response:

#### **What’s a good experience that you’ve had in AP classes?**

*I like taking classes that are harder than everyone else. They feel like higher education. I think they’re worth it because I don’t get bored; they challenge me.*

#### **In your personal opinion, what comes to mind when you think about an Honors College program?**

*A lot of work and not worth it honestly, because of the amount of stress it causes. I already work so hard all year long and the possibility of sitting down [for the AP test] and getting a 2, failing, is my worst nightmare, because I spent money and did not succeed. I’m not sure I could handle a heavier workload without getting something back from it.*

#### **What would entice you to join an Honors program in college? What benefits would you expect to find when completing the program?**

*I’d want to pay less money and get more of an experience out of being in college. I know you did that trip in your freshman class where you went to the Field Museum in Chicago, and I really want to do something cool like that. The last time I went on a field trip was in elementary school. If I was advised to join one because of any benefits, like with money or credits or better classes I would join Honors.*

#### **Could you tell me about your identity as a student? What environment do you learn best?**

*I like making friends in my classes and I am pretty social in school, but definitely focused in class. I want to be better than [my family] was in school and I'm focused on getting all A's. I hate lectures and taking notes, lectures and taking notes.... It gets so boring. I'd rather be outside doing something instead of feeling like I'm just sucking up information all the time. I really hate group work though. I always end up doing everything and my groups never work together. I wish the teachers would try to connect with us more. That's why I love Mr. Landers (a teacher at his high school) because he actually talks to us and makes jokes and cares about us.*

**Tell me about one impactful moment you have experienced while taking AP/upper level classes.**

*I believe I'm a harder worker from being in AP because they expect more out of you than in regular classes. I like the wider scope AP gives in its classes, where it focuses more on the overall themes of life and society and that sort of thing instead of focusing on all the tiny details.*

## Dialogue 2

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*GVSU Freshman Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 years old - Gender: Male*

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To learn what they wish was different, what they currently like about the curriculum, and to see what they would think is a better curriculum possibility for the Honors College.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It will allow us to know what students wish was different, and if they believe the curriculum gives them a tailored experience in order to grow their academic and profession skills and give them a greater ability to succeed in the workforce.

### Summary of Research

This student is academically driven and values the opportunities for personal growth that FMHC offers. They feel that their experience so far has pushed them academically, but are unclear as to how Honors will contribute to their future in the long run. To us, the student's understanding of the purpose of Honors seems vague.

They talked mostly about the content of their freshman sequence, which they feel is challenging and of high quality. They did not comment much about the structure of the of Honors curriculum; they did mention that the course load is light, and they see this as a good thing. The student is glad that most of their schedule is dedicated to their major. The student indicated that the rigor of the freshman sequences varies. This is a potential red flag; the Honors experience should be consistent and held to a standard.

### Important Insights

1. The FMHC integrated approach is engaging/interesting to this student and distinguishes Honors from general education curriculum.
2. The student was pleasantly surprised regarding the course load of Honors, which they feel is light.
3. This student's freshman sequence is a welcome challenge and will help them grow as a student and person.
4. Work load between from sequence to sequence is inconsistent.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

**Tell us about yourself. What is your age/class? What are you studying?**

*19, computer science major, field of AI, freshman.*

**What made you pick Grand Valley?**

*Cozy feeling, mix of large and small college feel. More opportunities than small college, not far from home.*

**Why did you decide Honors?**

*Honors scholarship. Not a party person, being around studious people, interests are aligned, focused on studies.*

**Tell me about your sequence.**

*American civilization. History portion, literature portion.*

**What do you feel were valuable components of your sequence?**

*Didn't know much history. Deeper understanding of people with relation to history. Did not take a Live, Learn, Lead.*

**Are you taking any other Honors courses?**

*No. Focusing on computer science major.*

**Integrated learning is big component of Honors and its goal. Interdisciplinary approach. How did your sequence line up with this concept?**

*Standard history portion, also presented with articles from time, more personal. Poetry, books, art. Writing a paper on architecture from 50s.*

**Did you look at other Honors programs before coming here?**

*Most colleges I considered did not have Honors College. Not really.*

**How do you think Honors will prepare you for future? Advantages?**

*Don't know what classes right now are necessarily doing. Don't have a concept of what life is like after college. Maybe more prepared as a person, learn quicker, and prioritize time. Especially so for Honors. Presents different perspectives rather than focusing on one specific thing.*

**What have you heard about other sequences?**

*They are much easier. My sequence is a lot more work. At the same time I think it's a good thing, to push myself hard this year. 3 of friends are in Big History. Art Fair, nature walks. Otherwise haven't heard a whole lot.*

**If you could change anything about your sequence? To best suit a "great Honors experience."**

*Less reading. In Calculus I last semester, teacher would give an outline each class of what would be covered/talked about. Helped me retain info, gave me something to go back to before exam. Helped me study. I know it's a lot of work for the teachers, but it would help.*

**What methods does your teacher use in terms of class engagement?**

*History prof. has us read some article/etc. before class. In class we discuss the main takeaways/why we think people might have behaved this way. Sometimes brings in piece of art, we interpret and write short paragraph.*

**How do you feel about the curriculum? Lineup of classes/how did you feel when you first saw it?**

*Thought there would be much more you'd have to do to graduate with Honors. I'm okay with that. Reduces my stress exponentially. Glad I have this sequence rather than GE. Makes you care about the class. In GE I'd just try to get through it. Combining all these different things helps freshen it up, makes me more attentive.*

## Dialogue 3

*GVSU Junior Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 years old - Gender: Male*

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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To get a more diversified understanding of the upperclassmen perspective of Honors. To learn what they wish was different, what they currently like about the curriculum, and to see what they think are better curriculum possibilities for the Honors College.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It will allow us to know what students wish was different, and if they believe the curriculum gives them a tailored experience in order to grow their academic and profession skills and give them a greater ability to succeed in the workforce.

### Summary of Research

The interviewee talked about the immediate benefits of being an Honors student (fulfilling university requirements quicker, building resume), but did not have much to say regarding any long-term value that reflects the mission of FMHC. They had a few major complaints. They talked in length about their ineffective junior seminar, in which they were assigned readings and group papers they did not find valuable to their learning. They also spoke of their difficulty in creating a full-time schedule after switching majors. Finally, the student feels that FMHC curriculum is not well-explained. The student indicated that the laid-back nature of their Honors classes is appealing. They feel that Honors professors treat students like adults, and this distinguishes the Honors experience from the general education path.

### Important Insights:

1. The student did not feel there was a distinct advantage to FMHC other than getting general education requirements out of the way faster and being a resume-booster.
2. The student felt unclear on the requirements of the Honors curriculum and did not know what to expect of the junior seminar and senior project.
3. Professors of Honors classes take students more seriously and treat them more maturely, according to this student. Work load between from sequence to sequence is inconsistent.

### Dialogue Questions and Response:

#### **Tell me about your general experience in FMHC?**

*Honors is nicer/works well for students who know what they want to do. For someone like me, who switched majors later on, it's difficult to fill a full-time schedule with classes from my major now that all my Gen. Eds. are out of the way. Honors professors treat us more like adults than other professors. They won't test you; if you are where you should be, the class will be easy. Professors just made sure we were good writers. Very laid back. If you were where you needed to be as an entry-level college student, you were good. My economics professor just wanted us to know our stuff. Didn't check homework or any of that BS. No pop-quizzes. Treated us maturely. I wish they did a better job of explaining the curriculum. I still don't really know what a "junior seminar" is. Not really sure what the senior project will be like either.*

#### **What areas for improvement do you see in Honors? What things would you like to see done differently?**

*I don't see anything. I don't know how they would fix my personal issues. I don't necessarily think anything is wrong. They need to explain what every specific requirement is in the curriculum.*

#### **How do you feel about the course load for FMHC in the freshman year vs. sophomore/junior/senior years?**

*I was fine with it. A lot of programs have a few major pre-requisites. I think it works well, if you know what you want to do. Gen. Eds. get pounded out early on.*

**Tell me about the last class you took in Honors.**

*I took Medical Controversy online. Lots of group work. We actually weren't supposed to meet in person—all online. That is ridiculous. It was a joke. "You are not to meet face to face with the prof. or other students." There was no benefit of it. We took review questions each week. They were fine. Made you think about readings. I got by without reading like at all in Honors. Got away with skimming everything. I like the fact that they don't check, but...I don't know. I got an A in the junior seminar without ever reading a full article. I just skimmed until I found a good quote. Individual papers, group papers. Group members rarely responded. Interesting topics but not relevant to major. Not a lot of reading is necessary if you're going into in a STEM field.*

**Did you consider any other Honors programs? Did FMHC play a role in your decision to come to GVSU?**

*No. My Sister and brother in law told me about Honors at GVSU. Wouldn't have known about it otherwise. It did play part in coming to GV; I knew I'd get nicer housing and Gen. Eds. out of the way faster.*

**What do you see as the advantages of FMHC? How will this help you in future?**

*Looks better on resume. I think there are a lot of good professors, and also a lot of not good ones. It'll be the same in the normal program. I don't know how much of an advantage it would be, other than being able to move through material faster, learning more.*



## Dialogue 4

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*GVSU Non-Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 years old - Gender: Male*

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

This interview consisted of seeking information from a non-Honors student who attends Grand Valley. We believe this perspective could shed light on how the Honors College is perceived from students outside the program. By interviewing a non-Honors student, we might gain an idea of how the Honors program could review its methods of advocacy to GV students outside the program currently.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It will allow us to know what students wish was different, and if they believe the curriculum gives them a tailored experience in order to grow their academic and profession skills and give them a greater ability to succeed in the workforce.

### Summary of Research:

Our opportunity statement has the goal of “creat[ing] a curriculum that will stimulate personal growth and development of Honors students, while challenging the way students approach real-world issues.” (Design Brief – Team Vitality). In an effort to grow and develop Honors students, we find it important to understand the reasons why students join the Honors College in the first place. We took the time to interview non-Honors students to understand why they chose not to join the program.

### Important Insights:

1. Interviewee knew where the Honors College building was and had been there once to print something off in the computer lab.
2. Other than using the facility once, the interviewee had no knowledge of the program or what being in the program entails.
3. Interviewee doesn't think the Honors credentials would have a noticeable impact on his education. Work load between from sequence to sequence is inconsistent.

### Dialogue Questions and Response:

#### **Tell me about yourself?**

*Interviewee was a male criminal justice student with a minor in juvenile justice – a senior at Grand Valley.*

#### **What is the first think you think of when I say “GVSU Honors Program”?**

*Interviewee admitted immediately that they “didn't know much” about the Honors College. This response was short and derailed the question from having any legs or further insight to work with.*

#### **What stopped you from joining the Honors program?**

*The interviewee would not join the Honors College, because he doesn't believe going through the program would have a noticeable impact on his academic career, as opposed to a normal four-year education at Grand Valley. Interviewee believes being an Honors student would be more work and more stress, and his resume wouldn't look “that much better” if he had Honors designation.*

*However, the interviewee stated clearly that “nobody has ever approached me about being in the Honors College. The interviewee included that “he's not even sure if he can get into the Honors College”, continuing to say that he's “never heard anything about it” and he's “never gotten an email about it.”*

#### **What do you know about the Honors College?**

*Interviewee admitted immediately that they “didn't know much” about the Honors College. This response was short and derailed the question from having any legs or further insight to work with.*

#### **What would need to be in place for you to want to join the program?**

*If the interviewee knew that graduating with Honors would meet having more opportunities after graduating, then he would give second consideration to joining.*

## Dialogue 5

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*MSU Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Female*

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To research how an Honors student feels about their curriculum at MSU and see if it reflects the viewpoints of GVSU Honors students.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It shows how MSU integrated and immerses their students in the curriculum, and also provides further evidence of what overall Honors students want to have improved in their respective Honors College.

### Summary of Research

Overall the interviewee likes the Honors College at MSU because she feels included in social and academic life from the small class sizes and the equal rigor of class work. The only thing she wishes were different is that there is exclusive classes to just Honors kids. Due to the large population of the University, along with the Honors College itself, many of their classes are open to general students. The main reason for joining was to create a network of peers and professors in order to help her later on in her schooling and career.

### Important insights:

1. To be a part of the Honors College, students must be in the top 5% of their class, so in most Honors classes, the level of learning is much higher than average.
2. Students take non-Honors classes and complete an extra project to complete the curriculum for Honors credit
3. People join to create a network with their peers and professors, which allows for a deeper relationship with both groups.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

#### **What made you want to join the Honors College?**

*I personally wanted to join the Honors College to have a more enriched educational experience, and to establish deeper relationships with my peers on such a large campus. The Honors College provides many opportunities for its students, including small class experiences and chances to meet one on one with instructors and advisors, which was one of the main reasons why I wanted to join the Honors College.*

#### **What had you heard about your Honors College before you joined?**

*Before joining the Honors College, I had not heard much about it. I knew that to join, you needed to be in the top 5% of your class, and once you were a member, you had to maintain a GPA of 3.2 or above. I also knew that enrolling in Honors courses entailed more in-depth schoolwork and research.*

#### **How would you rate your Honors classes compared to some friends Honors classes (equity of work, difficulty of work, etc.)**

*Because of the large number of students in the Honors College here at MSU, not many people are able to take actual Honors courses that are exclusive for Honors students. Instead, many Honors College students take non-advanced courses, and complete an extra project in order to consider the class an "Honors option." I personally think that the Honors options are pretty much equal in amount of work and difficulty, but it depends on the course and the instructor you have. The Honors options I have completed were very in-depth and took a lot of time and effort to complete, and my friends seem to have similar experiences.*

#### **What is the inclusivity like at the Honors College?**

*I feel that the Honors College here at MSU is fairly inclusive. To join you must be in the top 5% of your class, which could unintentionally exclude some groups of people, however, the College does not discriminate and welcomes all who have worked hard on their schoolwork and have established good grades.*

**What is one thing that you like about the Honors College? Why?**

*I personally like having the option of taking smaller, more intimate classes. Here at MSU many classes have upwards of 150 students, which makes it fairly difficult to connect with the instructor or other students in the class. The option of taking classes with less than 30 people is important to me because it allows me to meet and establish relationships with other students in the Honors College, as well as with the professor.*

**What is one thing that you don't like/would change about the Honors College or Honors College experience so far? Why?**

*Something I don't like about the Honors College is the lack of exclusive Honors courses. Because of the large number of students who are enrolled in the Honors College, it is extremely difficult to find and successfully sign up for honors courses that are only offered to Honors College students.*

**What do you want to get out of the Honors College experience?**

*My goal in joining the Honors College is to build a social network for myself, including peers in the same field as me, my instructors, and my advisors. I also hope to be able to participate in undergraduate research programs which would prepare me for my future as a clinical psychologist. I also hope to enjoy my time as an Honors College student and learn about the importance of hard work and dedication.*

# Dialogue 6

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*GVSU Freshman Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Female*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To gain insight on the strengths and weaknesses of the Honors curriculum, from the eyes of a freshman Honors student.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

Allows our group to further understand what Honors students like/dislike about the current curriculum, and how a potentially new program can be improved.

## Summary of Research

The student transferred into the Honors College from her local community college. She firmly enjoys course work as it pertains to the healthcare profession, and design/innovation isn't exactly her forte. From her experience, she believes the Honors College can make some changes in how they deal with sequences, especially regarding transfer students, whom she doesn't feel get the right attention or acknowledgment within the Honors program.

## Important insights

1. GVSU and the Honors College can do a better job in consideration of transfer students, tailoring coursework to what the student enjoys/excels at, not just the requirements.
2. Coursework should consider that, although this is a liberal arts education and being "exposed" to other subjects is beneficial, there is a fine line between broad curriculum and just plain studying things that aren't interesting to the student.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

### **Tell us about yourself. What is your age/class? What are you studying?**

*20/Nursing – Community College transfer. First year was at Delta College in Saginaw. Transition was easy, and the Honors College was able to work with her. She just needed to take a sequence – Design Thinking and Innovation.*

### **What made you pick Grand Valley?**

*Wasn't in Saginaw – wanted to get out of her hometown. Nursing program is fantastic, and West Michigan is a nice part of the state that she can see herself settling down in. Grand Valley is expanding and growing rapidly.*

*She saved money by going to Delta College for a year and she's happy with it.*

*She felt that the Honors College didn't do anything for her as a transfer student. She felt that the Honors College could have been more involved.*

### **Why did you decide Honors?**

*She was always an AP and Honors student in high school, and that was the type of rigor she wanted in her college experience. She also enjoyed meeting new people and experiencing different backgrounds.*

### **Tell me about your sequence.**

*Although her sequence isn't that much work, she originally tried switching out – but cannot switch to another chosen sequence. Her heart wasn't in the course and she wasn't passionate about it. Now that she's stuck it out in the course, she's getting the hang of the material/course.*

*Students are given coursework and the professor (collaborative teaching style) asks the students to create their curriculum, but the students just want to be given an assignment and complete it.*

*She admitted that lack of organization within the course is a big disadvantage. She would have appreciated taking a course on innovation as it directly related to her healthcare profession. As a nursing student, those are the skills she wants in her education.*

**What's your biggest takeaway from your sequence?**

*Professors have gotten students to think outside the box more, including the design aspects. She doesn't know if she'll use those skills after her sequence is completed. Business and entrepreneurship skills were highly emphasized, but she isn't as interested in that as much as others are.*

**Are you taking any other Honors courses?**

*None right now. Although she enjoyed LLL last semester – philosophy oriented.*

**Integrated learning and approach is a big component of Honors, and a main goal. How did your sequence line up with this concept?**

*The material itself was designed for students to choose a third world country and create/innovate something to help make the lives of people in that country a better place.*

**Did you look at other Honors programs before enrolling at Grand Valley?**

*No – but she scrolled through the UofM website to see what it took to get into their Honors program, but the requirements didn't interest her.*

**How do you think Honors will prepare you for your future? Advantages? Disadvantages?**

*Good connections and learning about a different major (business) that she never considered. She learned to be a little bit more creative.*

*Shelters students from the rest of the general education requirements. The student said that “if she didn't know what her major was, she can see how students would have trouble finding their path in the Honors College. For example, if you aren't passionate about design thinking, I don't know what they would do during that year (similar to her situation).”*

**What have you heard about other sequences?**

*She hasn't heard much about other students' sequences. She has only heard that Theory and Rights is a lot of writing.*

**If you could change anything about your sequence, in order to best fulfill “a great Honors experience” what would it be?**

*The professors need to be more organized before they teach students. Many students, including her, want the assignment given to them without having to create the assignment themselves, and then complete it.*

**What methods does your teacher use in terms of class engagement?**

*Activities for ideating were engaging, but many other class activities weren't. Professors took too much time reviewing the whole semester's syllabus each class and students would get overwhelmed, and obviously weren't going to complete the whole syllabus in a week.*

**How do you feel about the curriculum, regarding your line up of classes? How did you feel when you first saw it?**

*She liked the fact that she didn't have to take any of the general education requirements, and that Honors covered everything she needed. Her work load for her past year was manageable – wasn't too hard.*

## Dialogue 7

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*GVSU Non-Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Female*

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To research the motivations of non-honors students and to understand the reasons why they choose to opt out of the Honors Program.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It reveals how we can further integrate the curriculum to appeal to more of the Grand Valley community.

### Summary of Research

The interview provided many valuable insights for our team involving non-Honors curriculum and the motivations of a non-Honors student. The stakeholder did enjoy her freshman sequence and it helped expand her worldview with its application to real life and focus on integrated learning techniques. The level of anxiety and stress she felt caused her to drop out of the program, and her workload is much lighter and more straightforward.

### Important insights:

1. Non-Honors core classes feel like a waste of time when they focus too much on one area of study.
2. The freshman sequence classes vary widely in level of workload expected.
3. High levels of stress and anxiety due to an overwhelming workload caused her to drop the program.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

#### **Tell me about your identity as a student at Grand Valley.**

*Well, I'm a general business major right now. I'm not actually sure yet what I want to do so I'm not very involved in Grand Valley, mostly taking my core classes right now. I'm not very invested because I know I'm not going in those directions my core classes are focused on and I'm not going to take them again.*

#### **So, I know you used to be an Honors student. Describe your freshman sequence experience.**

*I took Alliance and Conflict along with a Live Learn Lead course: Saging and Aging. I really like my professor for Alliance and Conflict and I feel like the class really expanded my worldview. The class was definitely challenging but I feel like it was worth it. The class just applied to real life and to me that made it more fulfilling to have taken, even if it doesn't apply directly to my major. I will say that the class was difficult because the professor made it hard to understand what was expected of me; was vague. The workload itself was decent, with mostly readings and lectures.*

*Live Learn Lead was a very different experience. I loved the class but it was so easy, honestly I just mostly was there on test days after a while because I realized I didn't need to be there to get the grade. It was mostly opinion-based and just really, really easy.*

#### **What has been your experience with classes that are less focused on a specific discipline, i.e. your freshman sequence vs a core class?**

*I really like classes that have a more integrated form of learning. I feel like I took more away from my freshman sequence than my chemistry class, because I knew I could still apply the information I learned from Alliance and Conflict in my daily life but not balancing equations or any of that.*

#### **Tell me about your decision to leave the Honors College.**

*I chose to stop doing Honors because it was just way too overwhelming for me coming into college my first year. The workload was really heavy right away and I just started falling behind. I developed stress migraines that got so bad that some days I couldn't even leave my dorm. After that I just had to drop.*

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**What learning environment do you tend to thrive in?**

*I prefer hands-on learning with real-life examples, doing real things in my community. I want to feel like I've actually improved something when I leave college.*



## Dialogue 8

*GVSU Upperclassmen Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: N/A*

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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

This interview was conducted to gain insight and perspective from an upper classmen Honors student about the impact that FMHC has had on them and what their thoughts on the curriculum was.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We wanted to be inclusive about who we interviewed so it was important to gain an insight from an upperclassman honors student.

### Summary of Research

This interview helped me gain some insight about the FMHC from an upper classmen Honors student who participated in Honors curriculum starting their freshman year of college. The student joined Honors because they won a scholarship competition through the Honors College. Questions were based around the student's experiences with Honors curriculum and involvement in the Honors College. The student seemed to have a positive experience overall with the Honors College. In comparison to the majority of Honors students, this student was directly involved with publicity and marketing for the College through their leadership roles as an Honors mentor – investing time and energy into the Honors College. The student believed that the freshman sequences and junior seminar were beneficial in that they were able to learn a different discipline that they wouldn't have received from their focus of study. They enjoyed this experience and perspective.

### Important insights:

1. Sophomore year seemed empty.
2. Rigor of courses was inconsistent.
3. Scholarship money could have a major factor on who joins the Honors College – So, what percent of Honors students enrolled in the College because of a scholarship?
4. Whether the student had a positive or negative association with the Honors College might correlate with the amount of money, time, or energy invested into the Honors College.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

#### **Major?**

*Allied health sciences emphasis speech language pathology.*

#### **What drew you to the Honors College?**

*Won a big scholarship from the competition - Excellence.*

*I knew I wanted to go to grad school and I figured Honors College would look good on my resume.*

#### **Tell me about your sequence**

*I took national security it was really cool sequence, something I would not take otherwise.*

*Did not have a lot of work which was nice.*

*Dr. John was great and I learned a lot.*

#### **What other topics you learned outside of your curriculum**

*A lot about terrorism and active shooter and Middle East.*

*Stuff you would not learn about otherwise, like on the news and such.*

#### **How was the rigor of the course? Compared to other Honors courses?**

*Compared to other sequences mine was a lot less work because I was busy with other classes.*

**Did you do projects?**

*Team project throughout the year.*

*Chinese liberation peoples ground work forces.*

**Anything outside class that was able to help you apply your learning?**

*No field trips.*

**How has Honors impacted you so far? How have you been involved?**

*Impacted me because I have made friends in Honors College and was able to combine gen. eds. and get them out of the way.*

*Been involved...student mentor in the fall and I liked that a lot.*

*And I was a guide for the scholarship days to show the high school seniors around.*

**What are your thoughts on the Honors curriculum as a whole?**

*They could have more options for the junior seminar.*

*It is confusing especially as a freshman.*

**Tell me about your junior seminar.**

*Culture and the holocaust.*

*Been doing a lot of reading and discussion.*

*It is interesting and something different than I would be taking....its fine.*

**If you were to re-do your Honors experience or change something?**

*I don't know if there is anything I would change.*

*The senior project should be prepped for earlier.*

*I don't know what to do for it...more prep starting like sophomore year.*

**How do you think Honors will have an impact on your future?**

*The stuff I have learned is interesting and I wouldn't learn in my gen. eds. or major.*

*Hopefully use in my future, just like know about it.*

**If you were to try to convince someone to join Honors College...?**

*Take gen. eds. out of way by taking interesting classes*

*MONEY from scholarship competitions*

# Dialogue 9

*GVSU Sophomore Honors Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 years old - Gender: Female*

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## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

Interviewing an Honors Student who is of sophomore standing which has been recognized as the "empty year" in order to gain insight about their experiences. Sophomores are usually very familiar with their freshman sequence since it was more recent.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

Inclusiveness was an important aspect of our problem statement. Interviewing a Sophomore Honors helps us stay true to the concept of inclusiveness.

## Summary of Research

The aspects of my interviewee's curriculum that seemed valuable to them was being able to apply what they learn in class into the real world. They wanted to solve problems that were relevant and things that they were passionate about. My interviewee felt that their sophomore year is a little empty except for their involvement with an organization sponsored by the Honors College. They felt that the design thinking program they are in has been really valuable and that the lessons they are learning are things they can take with them in their career.

## Important Insights

1. Expectations and reality didn't line up – it was interesting that they themselves hyped up the Honors College at the scholarship competition tours
2. Honors students expect Honors classes to hold students who are passionate about their learning
3. The freshman sequence felt pointless and a waste of time
4. Enjoyed the integrated aspect of learning

## Dialogue Questions and Response

**Tell me why you chose the Honors College.** *When I was a junior in high school a girl in my high school was going to GV and told me about it. I met all the qualifications and I liked that I could live where I had classes, even though I only had one class in NMR. I felt like a celebrity when Dr. J emailed me back personally about my essay.*

**The Honors College was really hyped up, what were your expectations?** *I think I may have not understood it all, it was very hyped up. This year I was an Honors mentor for the scholarship day guides "student ambassador" so like looking back after having some experience, I understand why I didn't understand this stuff. I thought more of my classes would be Honors, I thought it was more community. I thought everyone was going to be like me...loved school and hanging out in groups. That didn't happen. I think that's where I didn't fully understand it, I also hyped up stuff because I wanted people to come.*

**Can you tell me about your curriculum?**

*I have only taken my Live. Learn. Lead. and my sequence so far. I took immigration for my Live. Learn. Lead. Galbraith was awesome, and it was definitely eye opening. My roommate was an immigrant and it was really cool to see a firsthand experience. I wrote one of the best essays ever in that class. But they also made us include the live, learn part of it so we had to volunteer and go to things on campus that were mandated by the Honors office. It was really bad and kind of pointless. Forced community involvement via school work is not the way to go.*

**How did you feel about the rigor of your curriculum?**

*I took Food for Thought and there was no rigor. It felt like rigor at the time, because like I'm in the Honors class. We had to write papers all the time and they were never good enough. We never got a*

*lot of positive feedback from her, which was hard because I know I am a strong writer and I felt very beaten down in that class. She was not willing to come to the author's perspective and I wasn't willing to go to her perspective. No tests or quizzes. The professors did not get along. They did not go to each other's classes and it was confusing and stressful. Vocalizing was intense but a good teacher. McFarland we just tapped maple trees for sap. I spent my tuition money on tapping maple trees so that's awesome. I feel like there wasn't a lot of rigor for me, very easy.*

**With your current standing, are you currently plugged into the Honors College in terms of classes?**

*I live in Niemeyer. I don't have any Honors classes this year. I am currently in UIF (university innovation fellows) which is sponsored by the Honors College to use design thinking to improve the school. But because our mentor is Honors, they want us to improve Honors. The UIF are all Honors. We have been working to identify problems within the Honors College, but that's the only way I've been involved this year.*

**Describe to me an enriching curriculum looks like.**

*Something that's applicable to the real world. That's why I liked design thinking so much. I was the only non-science major I liked that I could apply it to the real world. Engaging, in that a lot of Honors sequences are papers, lectures and tests. If you are going to claim to be more integrated, and progressive get us out of the classroom and into the real world to handle problems. And I think it has to be more of a relationship based. Right now, I feel like it's the professor just talks about what they are interested. Students should learn about what they are interested in, not just want the professor wants to.*

**Integrated learning is big component of Honors and its goal. Interdisciplinary approach. How did your sequence line up with this concept?**

*Standard history portion, also presented with articles from time, more personal. Poetry, books, art. Writing a paper on architecture from 50s.*

**Any other thoughts/comments?**

*My GPA would have been so much higher if I didn't take Honors classes. The sequence was a complete waste. I feel like Honors classes should enrich your experiences at Grand Valley, not make you want to smash your head through a wall.*

# Dialogue 10

*GVSU Honors College Faculty - Estimated Age: 40-50 years old - Gender: Male*

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## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

This administrator is immersed in FMHC and may have insights into the inner workings of the program and the constraints of our challenge. They are new to the program and we hope to get an objective, high-level understanding of FMHC and the sorts of ideas the administrators have been exploring already.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

In order to stimulate personal growth/ development of Honors students and challenge them to approach real-world issues, it is important to draw insights from those with years of experience in and around FMHC. Administrators have deeper understandings of how the program has grown and changed, and its effect on shaping the type of students we want to produce.

## Summary of Research

The interviewee saw great room for improvement in creating a curriculum that keeps students active and engaged in Honors during all 4 years of the program. They think some sort of sophomore experience would resolve the disconnect between FMHC and Honors Students. During the freshman year, the interviewee thinks an interdisciplinary experience that brings together teachers from different fields to solve larger problems is necessary. They feel “soft” skills like communication, problem solving, and leadership should be taught in the context of these classes—intellectual passion is what is truly valuable in a professional setting. The interviewee also spoke of Honors-designated courses within specific majors that may help connect student’s fields of study to their experience in FMHC and promote inclusivity.

## Important Insights

1. Interviewee feels it is better to be broadly prepared than narrowly prepared; this is the aim of a liberal arts education. The topics discussed in Honors classes are inconsequential.
2. Honors professors should be actively involved in their respective fields.
3. FMHC should be more actively involved in the majors. Honors-designated major classes are an idea.
4. The interviewee would like to see a few more required Honors credits.
5. The interviewee wishes AP credits did not “count” towards Honors.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

**Thinking back to your undergraduate education, is there an aspect of your experience that you had wished was different, either in program requirements or a specific post-graduate preparatory feature? If yes, what would you have changed, and can that be applied to today’s college experience?**

*I went to a select private college. 3500 undergrads. Smart students. Ambitious. Being around those people raises the bar for everyone. Seeing the amazing things, they do keeps you working hard and raises expectations as a person. I realized I had to be serious. I needed to prove myself to my peers, it really helped me as a person. FMHC in some ways is better off, we get the best of both worlds (small vs. big feel). My experience was a traditional general education program. It was good for me to take that disciplinary range. Did not have interdisciplinary experiences. Learned a lot from separate disciplinary lenses, happy with it. Faculty were active scholars in their field. Very best thing to ask of faculty as an Honors College is to be active scholars.*

**I’ve seen programs that value character, integrity, and pride, rather than disciplinary skills. Employers I’ve talked to have valued soft skills as well.**

*I agree. It's more important now to be generally prepared for whatever is going to come. It's a mistake to be narrowly prepared. That's kind of what GV does. Mix of liberal education.*

**Tell me about a college that you have heard of that is trying to balance a liberal arts education with a professional degree.**

*Arizona State. Tough state because they've cut educational funding. Arizona State is progressive and interesting. They make connections to professions while maintaining a liberal arts feel. Huge school. Many campuses and centers. I admire what they've done. Heard good things about Honors College at University of Houston.*

**I suppose that could be interpreted in many ways. I'm interested in the context of West Michigan, the juxtaposition between the Allendale campus and the GR campuses, etc.**

*This has been a major concern for faculty over the years. I philosophically resisted the idea that liberal arts are in Allendale and professional degrees are Downtown, but it sort of is the case. Liberal education occurs even in professional schools. It's a factor even in the FMHC community. Students feel as they go deeper into their majors, they "fall off" from Honors. In a way, the lack of housing downtown forces students to join the community here, which is a good thing.*

**Can FMHC hone in on this location dynamic?**

*Other Honors Colleges are more involved in the majors. One way to keep the Honors "thing" going is to look forward to taking major-specific Honors courses. We're talking about that as a possibility. Courses you'd already have to take, just Honors-designated. The concern is further alienating FMHC. Solution is making them open to anyone who would like to take them. If student feels they can take that challenge, why wouldn't we allow them that? There is potential to transfer in. Taking Honors courses may make people feel they can be Honors students. There is tension between wanting a separate community vs an open community that is welcoming. The consensus is that inclusivity is better than exclusivity. Honors-designated courses have to be distinguished from regular classes still. There is a tension in all education between upholding catalog standards and dealing w/ people in the room. A lot of Honors students come in with AP credits and take higher level courses immediately, this can cause problems.*

**My friend knew nothing of Honors or the requirements. He didn't think he could get in.**

*The University reaches out to qualified people. We could do better, we've toyed with the idea of sending an email to qualified people asking to apply.*

**I think there's merit in contacting people who aren't qualified and giving them opportunities.**

*If people want to be in a place, they usually do well.*

**What are your thoughts on Live Learn lead?**

*Separate out leadership, or integrate into other classes? I think the latter.*

**How can FMHC support student career goals?**

*It is not clear in people's minds how the curriculum prepares them for careers. Making people aware of what they're learning and how they're being prepared is important. Participation? Coming in late, sitting in back with headphones? Dishonesty? These things should count, they are relevant to the real world. I generally reserve a space in grading for the "intangibles." At some institutions, grades are "made up" and it is difficult to tell where it came from. Good student? You get a B.*

**What are the primary objectives of the freshman sequence?**

*Bring together 2 passionate professors, who are experts in their fields, to explore a topic w/ students that goes beyond their specific fields. Requires an interdisciplinary lens. New approve course: Culture, Power and Inequality. No one discipline can explain this entirely. That's what the sequence should be. Mix up the disciplines. Bring people together. We need to model passion for learning – it hurts to hear that some professors are less dedicated. Content is fleeting. Intellectual passion more important. Unemployment numbers for passionate people are very low. I don't like idea of choosing path based on employment prospects. I never went into an interview and thought I wouldn't get it. We need to develop this confidence through classes. Interdisciplinarity. Modern problems are solved by bringing in experts from different fields.*

**What is the biggest challenge to FMHC curriculum?**

*Fixing the sophomore gap. There has to be a sense that something is happening every year. Maintain momentum and energy through 4 years.*

**What do you envision the credit structure for FMHC curriculum looking like? Do you have any ideas of your own?**

*Our credits have dwindled. I would hope for 24. There should be a sophomore experience. This would help with transfers, give something for them to do. The “freshman heavy” approach is probably here to stay. I would like if AP classes counted towards graduation but not Honors. It diminishes the college experience. Big difference between 120 credit degree and 90 credit degree.*

# Dialogue 11

*Parent of GVSU Honors Student - Estimated Age: 40-50 years old - Gender: Female*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To learn what they want for their kids to experience and learn from the Honors College, as well as what things they would like their child to experience in the classroom.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It will allow us to know what Honors parent's wish was different, and if they believe the curriculum gives their child a worthwhile experience in order to grow their research skills and give them a greater ability in the workforce compared to typical four-year degree seeking students.

## Summary of Research

The interviewee loves the Honors College for her son. She likes that he is challenged academically, but that there is a community in the Honors College itself for him to be a part of; to intermingle with other intellectually curious minds. She hopes that from her son's experience in the Honors College, he will be looked more highly upon by potential employers later on, due to the hard work that is necessary. She didn't know basically anything about the Honors College before she started researching it, but for the most part understood what was required once she had looked into it. She liked that her son would be able to get more of the general education classes out of the way within one class per say but was disappointed that some of the AP credits that her son brought in were also included in the main class and were therefore pointless basically.

## Important Insights

1. Parents like the Honors College because of the academic rigor, along with the smaller community environment that is on such a large campus.
2. Other than the fact that it is more challenging, parents do not know a lot about the Honors College, especially how the curriculum is set up.
3. Liked that Gen Ed's would be quick to get done with but didn't like that AP credits were basically useless sometimes due to the credits being lumped in with the freshman sequence.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

### **Whose decision was it for your child to join the FMHC?**

*I mentioned it to my son when he was in his sophomore year of high school in order to convey the importance of his grades throughout high school, and other than mentioning it to him again when he applied, I did not really push for it. It was ultimately his idea to go forward with applying to the FMHC, which I am very glad that he did.*

### **Why did you want your child to join the FMHC?**

*I wanted him to join because he I knew it would be a good and challenging experience for him. When I had mentioned it to him in his junior year of high school, he had already taken two AP classes and was planning on taking more in his senior year, so I knew that for him to be academically interested in subjects, he needed more than just an average lecture/test format.*

### **What opportunities do you want your child to experience by going through the Honors College?**

*I want him to learn how to manage his time, along with starting to grow a network with his peers and professors, as this will help him land a job later on. Due to him taking AP classes, he knows the basics of time management, but with high school being a lot different than college with no set times of studying and the ability to do whatever you want, I want him to learn how to manage a social life along with a challenging load of courses.*

### **After college, what do you hope your child will say about the Honor's College experience?**



*I hope that he will say that it was challenging, but worth the extra effort put in. I want him to struggle with things in order to grow, but not struggle enough that it will hinder his free time with friends, or with the college experience as a whole.*

**What had you heard about the Honors College before your son got in?**

*Initially nothing. I assumed that it was just more challenging classes, due to the Honors placed in front of it, but other than that, I figured it was like any Honors classes that he took in high school. Once I started researching it, though, I saw that the Honors program is more than that, and it will help him with everything overall with critical thinking skills, and socially due to the more discussion based classes instead of lecture base classes.*

# Dialogue 12

*GVSU Office of the Provost - Estimated Age: 40-50 years old - Gender: Female*

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## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

This is our first formal interview with an administrator. We are hoping to get a better top-level understanding of our challenge and gain insights into how we might reshape FMHC curriculum to reflect the purpose and goals of Honors.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

In order to stimulate personal growth/ development of Honors students and challenge them to approach real-world issues, it is important to draw insights from those with years of experience in and around FMHC. Administrators have deeper understandings of how the program has grown and changed, and its effect on shaping the type of students we want to produce.

## Summary of Research

The interviewee talked at length regarding the engagement of the students, and how we can promote more valuable learning by drawing connections between the material and the real world. They spoke of dynamic, nontraditional classes that integrate multiple disciplines into the problem solving process and highlighted the importance of approaching problems through different lenses. Furthermore, the interviewee indicated that, while FMHC aims for these things, it sometimes falls short in offering a truly valuable experience, also recognizing that some students are dissatisfied with Honors. The interviewee is glad to see so many people working to change things for the better; they feel there is much room for potential in FMHC curriculum and pointed to several “benchmark peers” that have been innovative with their own curriculums.

## Important Insights

1. Learning is seen as much more worthwhile by students if the professor makes efforts to demonstrate the relevancy of the work or reference course content to real world applications. Even small comments/asides can have a large impact. It is an explicit choice to pull creative/critical thinking out of the material and bring meaning to it.
2. Book and lecture learning has its virtues but should not be the sole focus of curriculum. A valuable liberal arts Honors experience brings disciplines together and challenges students to solve complex problems.
3. Across the country, curriculum is moving towards project-based learning, community-based learning, and experiential learning. Things like internships and Co-Ops are starting to be explored by even the humanities.

## Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Thinking back to your undergraduate education, is there an aspect of your experience that you had wished was different, either in program requirements or a specific post-graduate preparatory feature? If yes, what would you have changed, and can that be applied to today’s college experience?**

*Went to a really small school in Alabama. 1600 students. Everyone lives on campus all 4 years. 90% Greek. Everyone graduates in four years. Liberal arts, small classes—between 5 and 30 people. Knew professors well. Very good experience. It was very traditional curriculum. I was an English and History double major. Prescribed courses I had to take, not much choice. No contemporary content until the English major got revamped my junior year. I only got to take some of those. I wish the courses had been more innovative and interesting. In Honors College there. Courses were team-taught, which I loved, but weren’t really interesting to me. Then the curriculum was revamped, and I got to take a civil rights course, which was really interesting. It was in heart of the Civil Rights*

movement, 20 years later. I sat in my classes and asked “How does this matter? What’s the point of the Humanities?” I didn’t feel connections were made by faculty for me, they didn’t talk about how what we were doing mattered.

**When you visited our class room, you specifically noted the value of humanities in a college experience, can you elaborate on this? Why are humanities important? Do you believe there’s a way to integrate these lessons within classes that are more focused in the humanities area?**

*It is through art, literature, history, etc., that we understand the human condition. “What makes them think? What is the role of culture in our lives?” Humanities get at that. It makes me think about my history major, which I haven’t used directly in the workplace. Historians think in a specific, chronological way. They ask questions different than those, say, an engineer would ask. Different kinds of thinking are important for us to be exposed to and internalized. In the workplace, our ways of thinking and values have an impact. Teach reading, writing, and communication. For example, how does learning art history shape who I’m going to be in my career? It won’t exactly connect, but will expand your mind.*

**FMHC was audited this summer. Is Honors teaching students to apply humanities experience in professional setting?**

*I suspect it’s hit or miss, it has a lot to do with faculty deciding to make those connections. It’s easy to talk about the same thing every week. You have explicitly decide to pull critical/creative thinking out of the material. I should be able to sit in on any subject and find a way to engage. Engagement is in part on the student. I think explicit connections to how something is applicable is important to keeping students engaged. Sometimes connections are small. On a small class-to-class scale, the student has responsibility to keep engaged. On a broader scale, semester or whole 4 year experience, the curriculum plays a larger role.*

**Tell me about a college that you have heard of that is trying to balance a liberal arts education with a professional degree.**

*Benchmark peers are similar institutions to us. Similar size, mission, student profile. Liberal arts core, large institutions. These are schools we compare ourselves to. James Madison University, Appalachian State University. Portland State. They do a good job of being innovative with curriculum, moving beyond classics in English, for example. How do we build courses around interdisciplinary? Put different majors in a room together and solve problems, and people are able to bring their different strengths to the table.*

**What have you noticed is taking place in curriculum development across the country? Are there any changes worth noting?**

*Interdisciplinary, drawing connections between disciplines and seeing relevancy. Big move towards community-based learning and project based learning. Experiential learning. Internships, Co-Ops—this is new for the humanities to start moving into. I believe our English department is looking in to this right now. Global learning, including cultural competency.*

**Have you noticed anything specifically within curriculum that makes students culturally competent?**

*Here’s what you look for. We can say we’re doing cultural competency through studying something international, or studying different ethnicities. That itself is not making you culturally competent. You’re not any more experienced with interacting with those different from you. Curriculum around cultural competency is not fully embedded into our curriculum here. There is training you can do, and strategies for overcoming cultural differences in work. There are cultural competency courses at institutions. They talk about how to become more cultural competency. They study international topics. Example: Intercultural Training Certificate. Model of explicit cultural competency work.*

**As a competitor (businessman, past athlete), I want to go into a room and win. If I got into an interview with a University of Michigan student, I want to come out as the winner. Is GVSU preparing their students to win?**

*Yes. I think GV is working hard to get students to win. Where I see the disconnect is, like you, I don’t think we’ve developed the value of Honors. It makes me sad to hear that students think they could get*

*same experience out of general education. There is a lot to be done. It's hard for some to hear that students are disappointed with the Honors program. I'm happy we're going down the path of fixing it. I've had lots of meeting with the director.*

**What do you believe is most successful about the Honors program as it stands? What do you believe is its greatest weakness?**

*Looking at curriculum, its greatest strength is the opportunities for faculty to come together and do something different. To pair up with someone and help students see connections. We are probably not living up to even that right now. The greatest weakness? Did the director show you that horrifying course chart? So many courses, you can't find identity in that curriculum. Some topics look a little boring and need freshening up.*

# Dialogue 13

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*GVSU Career Services - Estimated Age: N/A - Gender: N/A*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To gain insight from a university resource that has extensive experience in helping students reach career goals once they leave school.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We're focusing on Honors curriculum – and by gaining insight from a resource that helps Honors students find careers, we can further understand which parts of the Honors curriculum are helping students meet career goals, and which parts are not.

## Summary of Research

GVSU Career services focuses on helping the entirety of the University in career services – not just the Honors College. While Honors students are well-respected in the workforce/fresh out of school, the University does not necessarily go out of their way to promote an Honors student over a non-Honors. Rather, the Career Services center will offer up a variety of student populations, with the Honors College being one of them.

## Important Insights

1. Career Services does not keep demographics specific to Honors students...yet.
2. GVSU promotes all students in the process of helping them find jobs.
3. However, employers like to see specific skills sets – like being an honors student.

## Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Tell me about your interaction with Honors College students here at the career center.**

*I have been with the Career Center since 2009. Throughout the years, the interaction with the Honors College has varied. We have done career exploration workshops, career testing, held career conversations about the anxiety that goes along with choosing a path when you have many options, provided grad school resources, resume workshops and practice interviewing. This has mostly happened in the context of the resident hall but also a few of the classes through the years. We have also provided resources and support to the Brooks College Professional Series since its inception. (They have a networking event next week which would be a great event for Honors College students to attend.)*

**What kind of demographics do you have to measure Honors College students that use the Career Center?**

*Currently, we do not isolate data related to the Honors College. Our data reporting is captured by major and as you know, Honors College houses just about every GV major there is. Our data team is currently in conversations with IT and institutional analysis and when I posed the question to the team lead, she agrees that it will be one of the data points to see if we can capture through our current system.*

**What kind of demographics do you have to measure the success of Honors College students after they graduate?**

*Again, we capture by major so the success of Honors College students is tracked through our first destination survey. The survey is sent to grads immediately upon graduation and then we follow NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) standards for gathering data. (We reach out at designated increments during the first year to learn where they are attending grad school OR working. Also if the work is related to their course of study, required a degree etc.)*

**Do employers even know about the Frederik Meijer Honors College?**

*Yes, our employer development team—and the advisors—regularly, generally, share information about the variety of student populations and the Honors College is one of them. (i.e. Student Athletes, Student Leaders, Honors College students, students in Oliver Wilson Freshman Academy....) In particular, Honors College gets discussed further when an employer identifies they are looking with students who have leadership skills, an understanding of Design Thinking, and interdisciplinary approach to problem solving.*

**Are there certain employers that seek out Honors College students specifically? If so, who are they, and why do they seek out GVSU Honors Students?**

*I did talk with the lead of the Employer Relations team this morning. There are not employers who ask specifically for Honors College students. Employers are much more likely to ask for specific skill sets and then we point them toward the programs, student populations, etc. where we suspect they will find potential interns/employees with those skill sets. For example, GM is a company that we work with in the area of IT—when they ask for people who think more broadly than coding and trouble-shooting—the Honors College would be one of the places we would reach out to inquiring whether or not there were current Honors College students who were working in that arena. Our role is not placement of students into positions but rather connecting students and employers (and vice versa).*

**Does the career center advocate for Honors College students when potential employers seek students? Why or why not?**

*Yes, as I explained above, we do promote the Honors College (and therefore the students) during employer conversations in general when introducing GV, and specifically, when the skill sets requested by the employer are potentially connected. Yes, we advocate for all students—including Honors College students—as great young talent prepared for graduate programs and the workplace. GVSU students are pretty amazing and employers actively seek you out. If the question is, do we specifically promote selecting an Honors College student vs another student, no, we do not do that. The ethical standard in our field is to make opportunities related to internships and employment available to ALL students. We have some latitude to direct employers toward student populations that line up with their needed skill sets, but we do that for all programs to the best of our ability. I will say that to that if a student is actively engaging with the Career Center, attending events and workshops and meeting with their Career Advisor periodically, they are more likely to be aware of opportunities and be ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise—and as much as we can, we will specifically push the info to them. For example, I have been regularly meeting with a philosophy major who is interested in using some of his skills developed in the workplace with his passion for design with the way he has learned to approach problems in Philosophy. Last week, I had two employers reach out to me for someone who could work with digital marketing. I thought of him immediately and even though we promoted the opportunity throughout the university—and with specific departments—I also sent him a note and copied the employer as a way of introduction.*

# Dialogue 14

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*GVSU Honors Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Male*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To see what a GV Honors student likes and dislikes about the Honors College, along with what they want to get out of the Honors College experience and why they chose to be a part of the Honors College.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It will allow us to know what Honors students wish was different, and if they believe the curriculum gives them a worthwhile experience in order to grow their research skills and give them a greater ability in the workforce compared to typical four year degree seeking students.

## Summary of Research

Overall the student enjoys their time spent in the Honors College. They feel that it will give them more opportunities later on in life due to the increased critical thinking skills and networks grown over the four years of school. They did not know much about the Honors College and the curriculum that is taught, other than the fact that the freshman sequence gets a lot of the general education classes out of the way, which is going to allow them to graduate earlier. They feel closer to the Honors College professors as the classes were smaller and everyone got to know each other better as opposed to a traditional lecture hall of many people.

## Important insights

1. Like the curriculum because they can take less credits, but fulfilling many required classes, allowing them to graduate earlier.
2. Not much is generally known, but information can be easily answered through one of the advisors
3. Feels closer to honors professors due to the low class size and therefore more comfortable feel of the class.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

### **Why did you want to join the Honors College?**

*Growing up, my father always pushed me academically, so once sophomore year of high school hit, he started telling me about the Honor's Colleges at different universities and how they would help me in my career with networking, along with it would be challenging, and that it would make college more interesting to me probably.*

### **What had you heard about the Honor's College before joining it?**

*Other than what I had heard from my father, which I don't know how much was from research he had done, or information that he came up with to talk me into joining, I didn't know a whole lot. I figured it was like being in almost all AP courses in high school; you had a centralized group of people that were all go-getters, intellectual, and always striving to do more with life, along with the fact that it added challenge to classes that some classes miss.*

### **What is your favorite thing about the Honors College?**

*I have two main ones. One being that it is a tighter community, in which coming from high school, college can be scary as you know almost no one, so the community at Niemeyer is nice to have. Also, it's a like just as much as a dislike. I like how my freshman sequence took care of a lot of my gen eds that I would have had to take without being in the Honor's College, but it made some of my AP credits worth nothing, as they were included in my sequence.*

**What would you tell a junior or senior in high school about FMHC?**

*I would say to do it. Especially if you are coming from high school with a lot of AP credits. Taking all general classes will get boring, as, yes there is some critical thinking involved, but the Honor's College truly makes you think about how to solve problems in innovative ways and to think outside the box. Even when writing papers.*

**How would you say the rigor is between classes?**

*I would say overall, each class poses its own set of challenges for the student, but I know a couple of my friends and I had the same class our sophomore year, but with different professors, and my professor was super easy and we didn't have to do a lot of work, but the other professor gave my friend's class a lot of papers to write along with other assignments to do, all about the same subject, which none of us really understood. Even our freshman sequences seemed to be really different in how hard they were depending on which one you chose to take.*



# Dialogue 15

*GVSU Honors College Staff - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Female*

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## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Honors College by someone who speaks directly to both Honors faculty and students daily.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

Our team statement focuses on integration within the overarching university, and this interview will give us further insight on how to improve the current disconnect of the Honors College from the rest of Grand Valley.

## Summary of Research

Students need to reach out to the staff commonly for questions about their senior project, MyPath, and other issues that they had a difficult time understanding. The Honors College Assistant finds that the outreach to the rest of the community is lacking and communication could be stronger within both the Honors College itself and the Honors College and Grand Valley.

## Important insights

1. Students are often unclear of expectations within the Honors College after freshman year.
2. Students prefer the smaller class sizes and sense of community from the isolation to the rest of the university.
3. Marketing is a challenge for the Honors College, and although they are trying, they are failing to reach everyone.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

**Tell me a little about what you do as the Honors assistant here.**

*I basically manage the office. So, talking to prospective students, working with students as they come in or working with the faculty and staff, whatever anybody needs. I do the financial part of it as well. And part of it is just being able to communicate to prospective families, what the Honors College is about, what the curriculum does, housing, things like that.*

**Tell me about your experience working with students within the Honors College.**

*Like I said, a lot of it is working with prospective students. So sitting down with them, any questions or things they might need. But this also means working with current students, answering any questions they may have and it might just be something quick I can answer at the desk, not necessarily anything they need to make an appointment with an advisor or anything like that. Now that we do have two full-time advisors, I had done more before working with students and answering emails and things like that but now that we have our two advisors, they take care of that. I also work with students who may be my student assistants, so I work with them on a daily basis.*

**What are your most frequent questions?**

*A lot of times it does have a lot to do with curriculum in regards to current students. You know, signing up for senior projects, MyPath problems or questions they might have, regarding GPA, our probation and things like that. So really more general questions.*

**What do students tend to struggle with within the current curriculum?**

*Probably MyPath, understanding that. I do all of the scheduling and making sure what is on My Banner is accurate, so there is a lot of behind-the-scenes which sometimes it's difficult working with the other departments like the Records Department to ensure that things are correct or any changes*

*that might be ongoing, making sure the right changes are being made and updated and things like that. Issues in regards to some things not getting checked right on My Path, that kind of thing.*

**What do prospective students respond to most in the Honors College?**

*I think when we talk about the sequences a lot, just the idea behind it. The more than one professor, smaller class size, the community within that class, just that aspect of being part of the Honors College and what that means in the classes they take. So, feeling more integrated and connected in the College, and housing has a lot to do with this too. If they choose to live in Honors housing, where they might choose to live as far as HHLC or here in Niemeyer. Connectedness is a big part of it. I think students like the idea of being a part of the larger university while still having a little bit being a smaller community. I think Honors gives them that security.*

**In regards to faculty, have you noticed a difference in approach from those who work solely in the Honors College compared to a staff member who works in more locations around the university?**

*I think there could be some because faculty who teach full-time at Honors obviously are a little more focused on just that. They're here on a daily basis and might be working with other faculty on a daily basis and communicating with them about what they do in their classes and things like that. But I also feel like a lot of other faculty who are not only here and do not teach full-time still have the passion for teaching, because I think they feel like the students they're working with allow them to maybe do some different things that they might not be able to do with their regular classes that do not fall in the Honors College. So I think that they are still teaching to Honors but there might be a little more of a disconnect because it's not everything they do.*

**Have you ever heard anything from students about discrepancy in workload?**

*Oh yeah, definitely I do. Not quite as much as the advisors since they're more one-on-one with students and I stand at the desk. I do think that there is some of that between the different classes.*

**How do you feel about the way the Honors College currently markets itself?**

*It's really hard to say because sometimes I feel like we do quite a bit but yet somehow people still don't know things. I get frustrated with that fact because I feel like there are things that we do but they're just not always getting seen.*

*As far as prospective students, Admissions I believe does their part. I think that there is more that can be done but I feel like there is more we could do to communicate things. They [Admissions Office] reaches out to students who meet the qualifications to encourage them to apply but also with the different events going on and things to highlight Honors. There always seems to be people who've never heard of it and don't know about it. It's always hard to figure out what to do more. As far as current students go I think getting students aware of different activities and things we have, like open advising, we try to send out weekly announcements. But again, we try to make it shorter so you read the entire thing and there are still students not reading it. I think we do try really hard but students, some of them still aren't getting it.*

*I think it's hard too because we aren't a part of the general tour around campus, and I do think the Admissions counselors do have students meet with them to talk about Honors. I worry about this too though because they may not always be communicating the correct information. We just recently connected with Admissions because someone had been saying that Transfer students cannot join Honors, which is not true. And well no, we've been working really hard to include Transfer students and our Transfer applications have definitely increased and so we try to nip those things in the bud right away and make sure the right information gets passed down to everyone. And you know, you can't control everything students who are tour guides say but we try to do quite a lot.*

# Dialogue 16

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*GVSU Non-Honors Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Male*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To further comprehend why students lose motivation and drift away from the Honors College.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

This work allows for us to understand how best to become a more inclusive program by learning the common trends among its flaws in the curriculum. By finding and focusing on these issues, we hope to create a more inviting community for students to find comfort and security.

## Summary of Research

The student felt isolated from the Honors College because of proximity and lack of common ground. He was unaware of many different aspects of the College despite attending for his freshman year, and believes the workload was more difficult in his freshman sequence than others he had witnessed. He had joined the Honors College as a substitute for a General Education Program, but left due to feelings of anxiety over extenuating circumstances.

## Important insights

1. Student was unaware of attempted communication by email from the Honors College and did not know he could seek support for his situation.
2. Student learned best independently with aid if needed by a teacher.
3. The rigor of his sequence was more essay and lecture heavy, and felt like a waste of time for him because there was no real-world application. Felt trapped in the class because it was the only one left available to join.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

### **Tell me about your identity as a student at Grand Valley. How would you describe yourself?**

*I would say I'm a very relaxed student. I'm not really involved in sports or anything and the only club I'm in is Meditation Club. I tend to not rely on studying because I pick things up very easily and do them pretty well.*

### **What is your experience with the Honors College?**

*I spent my freshman year in the Honors College at Grand Valley. I thought that the sequence I did, American History and American Literature was a waste of time, personally. Everything that I learned in that class I had already learned in high school, so it was just really repetitive. I was reading books I had already read, writing essays on short stories that I had already written essays on. I think that was partially my fault because I had waited so long to pick a sequence. The class that was left wasn't anything I was interested in at all. Not to mention, it was way harder than a lot of the other sequences my friends had.*

### **Why did you decide to join Honors?**

*They invited me to go and my grades were good enough that my parents really pushed for me to go. I knew it cut down on my credit requirements, so I wanted that instead. It felt like replacing one curriculum for another shorter one.*

### **How connected did you feel to the Honors College?**

*Not that connected. I mean, I went to class there three times a week but other than that I never went over that far. And it sucked walking that far from my dorm in North Campus.*

**[[I then ask if he is aware that the College sent out weekly email announcements advertising different events for Honors students]]** No, I honestly had so many emails that I didn't even notice they sent those. I wish someone had told me about them earlier.

**What learning environment do you learn best in?**

I learn best when given a concise explanation with visuals on how to do something, and then leaving me to try and complete the task on my own. I need a hands-on environment where I learn by doing. If I don't even want the information to begin with, what am I doing in the class? Wasting time and money.

**Why did you leave of the Honors College?**

I lost my financial aid due to certain circumstances and my GPA dropped so I just left.

**[[I then explain the steps in place for when an Honors student's GPA drops and about academic probation]]**

I didn't even know any of that. I think at that point I was just so overwhelmed that I didn't even look for help and I just walked away instead. To be fair, nobody reached out to help me either.

# Dialogue 17

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*GVSU Honors College Alumni - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Male*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To learn about the support system the Honors College offers to its alumni and listen to feedback on our current top five innovations.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are researching into how effective our top five innovations would be to achieve our objectives of creating a curriculum focused on real-world issues and personal student growth.

## Summary of Research

The alumni really responded to the innovations focused on opening up the Honors College to non-Honors GVSU students as well as the innovations that help students prepare for their future careers. He did not find the innovations for cultural competency to be necessary.

## Important insights

1. Innovation 2 would be effective for opening up the College for students who may just not have the confidence to apply on their own.
2. Alumni did not feel prepared or supported for his final senior project.
3. The Honors College is not involved virtually at all in the senior project, other than it being a requirement for the program.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

**Tell me about your identity as a Grand Valley student. How would you describe yourself?**

*I don't know, I wouldn't say I was very involved because I saw some other people who were definitely involved... but I did volunteer opportunities, was in two clubs and the officer of one of those, I did an intermural sport for a semester and worked at Grand Valley for three semesters, and I was a tour guide three times.*

**What made you decide to be a tour guide?**

*I took a Speech class in high school and college and enjoyed them so much. I just like talking to people.*

**When you did the tours, did you ever bring people to Niemeyer?**

*Nope. That wasn't the route they gave us. They would give us a map with all of the places we needed to go, and that wasn't on it.*

**Did you ever mention Niemeyer or the Honors College anyway?**

*No, actually, I didn't. [Even though you went there?] Yeah, the groups never really cared about me personally though. And I guess I just never thought about it.*

**What is your experience with the Honors College? Were you proud to go there?**

*Yes, I liked the people and the things I learned there. I couldn't have learned about the history of the 1960s if I wasn't in the Honors program, you know? I felt like I got along with a lot of people from there too. I knew there were certain people way above me in intelligence going there, but I was okay with that because I still felt like I fit in.*

**Tell me about your freshman sequence.**

*In my freshman sequence I learned about China, Japan, and Korea – I think it was called History and Culture of Asia but I can't remember exactly. Maybe The Study of East Asia. Anyway, I absolutely loved it. It was split into two classes, so one day we were learning about poetry and culture and the*

*other we learned about the history. The workload was reasonable to me, especially after hearing what other people were going through in their sequences.*

**What was your experience in your junior seminar course?**

*It was called The Study of the 1960s, and it was the best class ever. The subject matter and professor were both great and the class was mostly discussion-based, focusing on the readings we had assigned. I only wrote like one essay a month, my longest only around six pages, and those were the only grades for the class.*

**Tell me about your senior project. How prepared did you feel to do it?**

*For my senior project I had chosen to research the history of the meat in the United States, and how meat consumption got to the point it's at today. I didn't feel at all like I knew what I was doing and it was pretty much just between me and my professor for the entire semester. I think I stepped foot in Niemeyer that year maybe two times. My professor basically helped me the entire time and then grades the final too, so the Honors College didn't feel involved at all.*

**So, my team and I came up with five innovations that we're testing right now, and I'd like to get your opinion on them.**

**[Innovation #1]**

*I definitely would have loved one credit classes. Maybe something like Personal Finance too, and a career class. I needed a "real world" curriculum, everyone needs it.*

**[Innovation 2]**

*That would help open the College up to more people. Most are just afraid to apply because they don't think they're good enough – I heard that all the time when I went there. This would help lessen that fear.*

**[Innovation 3]**

*I don't think they need this because Grand Valley already does this as a whole. Even next week they're bringing in Native Americans to speak. I don't think Honors needs anything special.*

**[Innovation 4]**

*Hmm, I think they do this well enough already at Grand Valley without Honors involvement by forcing people to do internships and co-ops in certain degrees. But I guess that extra support would've been nice when I was there. I think if this happens though that it shouldn't only be for Honors, it should be for everyone. This is helpful for everyone.*

**[Innovation 5]**

*Yes, this is my favorite innovation. They need to reconnect with the students instead of being so focused on gen-eds.*

# Dialogue 18

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*GVSU Honors Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: Female*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To receive feedback on our top five innovations from one of our main stakeholder groups.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are testing whether our innovations for implementing real-world application of skills into Honors courses are feasible and beneficial for our stakeholder groups.

## Summary of Research

Stakeholder responded positively to all innovations except for the options for internships and co-ops available through Honors. She felt a lack of support from the Honors College for her Honors Senior Project. She doesn't currently find many reasons to be at Niemyer other than her required classes.

## Important insights

1. Stakeholder offered insight into how to differentiate Honors one credit classes from the one credit classes offered in general education courses.
2. Cultural food days were of specific interest to the student.
3. Stakeholder feels a lack of connection to the Honors College as is, and agrees that this could be helped with midterm reviews for the faculty and curriculum.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

**Tell me about your identity as a Grand Valley student. How would you describe yourself?**

*I'm not super involved. I'm in the beginning of my senior year but I'm pretty much solely in Calder involved in the art scene over there more than anything else. I have no reason to go anywhere else unless it's a required course. I'm not in any clubs and I live downtown to save money.*

**We'd like to ask you about our top five innovations for the Honors College curriculum. Could you give us your honest feedback?**

**[Innovation 1]**

*I like that a lot! Even though there are still required core classes I like the idea of one credit courses a lot, then I could do more in the Honors College and feel more a part of it than I do now. Maybe even a yoga class or something, although I'm not sure how that's different than the ones they offer everyone at Grand Valley. The hiking one I would take for sure.*

**[Innovation 2]**

*I think that would really help open up the College. I meet a lot of really smart non-Honors kids who know nothing about Honors even though they would be perfect for it! Maybe if they could take a class they would sign up quicker.*

**[Innovation 3]**

*That sounds so fun! I used to do food days in Spanish in high school and it was yummy AND educational! I would love to do cultural days like that in an Honors class.*

**[Innovation 4]**

*I'm not sure. I feel pretty isolated from how science-heavy and business-thinking all the students seem to be in the Honors College already and I'm not really interested in getting more into capitalism so I don't think I would take those internships.*

**[Innovation 5]**

*I think that's necessary, I'm surprised the Honors College doesn't do that now. The faculty needs to stay up to date and connected with students. That's who they're trying to help grow and thrive in the future, right?*



# Dialogue 19

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*GVSU Honors Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: N/A*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To examine what Honor's Students like and dislike about our innovations for the Honor's College.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It allows us to know what they like and dislike about the current curriculum and what they would like and potentially change about our proposed curriculum ideas.

## Summary of Research

They liked the Unit innovation probably the best, possibly because it is similar to the setup that we currently have, but it provides a greater advantage to the student than our current one gives. They also really like having guest lecturers come in and people of other viewpoints in order to get the cultural competency that is lacking currently. They produced concerns with how professors will react to the change that would happen, as most if not all professors have a certain way of teaching their class and changing that would be difficult.

## Important insights

1. Feels involved in the class, but not necessarily the Honor's College, and doesn't need change but would be ok with some change in level of involvement.
2. Liked having a Unit of classes to take, but was indifferent to having to take a Honor's class each year as they already do that with electives and other required classes.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

### **What do you think of the Honors College curriculum right now?**

*Overall I like it. It provides a challenge whereas my general classes lack that for the most part, and so far has allowed for me to grow into a better student and learner due to the increased demand of critical thinking and time management. The smaller classes allow for me to ask questions without getting lost in the crowd, and I feel like I'm in a little family for the semester that we are all in that class.*

### **How involved do you feel like you are within the Honors College community?**

*Outside of class, I would say that I am not very involved. During freshman week when we had to go around and do different activities with a mentor and a group, I went to that, but it didn't seem worth it or enjoyable to me, so I kind of sit out of most Honor's College events. I get together with my classmates and do different things, but with the Honor's College itself, I don't do anything with it other than go to class.*

### **Do you want this involvement level to change?**

*I suppose so. I am happy with my level of involvement as of now, but if something were to come up that seemed interesting and exciting to go to that people have said that it is worth it to attend, then I would go. Like I said, I enjoy hanging out and studying with my group of classmates from the Honor's College, so I don't need much more than that.*

### **For my class project we had to come up with 5 innovations to the Honors College curriculum. What is your opinion on the first one?**

*I would love this one. I like how it basically has the college walk with you helping you figure out what college is and how to be successful, and then gives you a deeper learning experience, and then helps you get out into the world to basically show them what you've learned. If there is enough variety in the classes per Unit then I feel like everyone should like it, but my concern is if none of the classes in*

*let's say Unit two interest me, then I am forced to take it to keep going. I see what you mean with the disconnect sophomore year. I luckily had a couple Honors classes in FMHC my sophomore year, so I was still in here and knowing what was happening.*

**The second one?**

*I think this one is good. I wouldn't mind having a few non-Honors people in my classes, but my concern with this is that academically, if they don't feel the same passion for learning that most Honor's kids do, then for any group work, they will be the ones being carried by the group. It is a cool way to get the rest of the University to be involved in a non-committed way, and students with reservations can get those cleared up fairly quickly without having to put in a ton of time spent joining the Honor's College fully.*

**The third one?**

*I would love to have guest lecturers come in. From past experiences, they are almost even more passionate about the subject matter than my professors were. It would be amazing to have a person from a different ethnic or cultural stance come in to give their opinion or view on the subject, as most people in Western Michigan seem to get in the same bubble on thought process for how things are viewed.*

**The fourth one?**

*This would be extremely helpful especially if combined with your first innovation. Expanding your network in your third or fourth year is difficult and having a group of names that give you access to other people in your same field that then could provide you with future jobs would be helpful to get a foot in the door with a company. I know there are career fairs around GV quite often, but those have been difficult for me to get to between work and other events, so I really like your idea of a sit-down question and answer format with a company employer.*

**The fifth one?**

*I have never heard of the Mid-Semester Interview about Teaching before, but if this were to be implemented, I feel like it would benefit the class a lot as professors don't have to wait until the end of a semester to see what they should have done differently. Although I feel like most professors have been teaching their content for so long that if we told them they had to change something mid-way through the semester, they first of all probably wouldn't and secondly, I feel like professors may not want to have this implemented because of the fact that they would have to change their processes most likely.*

## Dialogue 20

*GVSU Non-Honor Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: N/A*

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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

Discuss some of our innovations to a non-honors student to see if they would be interested in the Honors College if these ideas were implemented into the curriculum.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We believe inclusivity is important. We want to make sure we have the viewpoints of different stakeholders to gain a broad spectrum of insight.

Originally, we thought to only interview Honors students, but then believed that it would be valuable to gain insight from a non-honors student. Their perspective could be related to the perspective of a prospective student who does not have a background within the Honors College. The non-honors student posed some very helpful questions. They were able to best relate to our inclusive-classes idea. They said they would definitely be interested in being a part of these types of classes. The relevance to future career was extremely important to the interviewee. The interviewee liked the idea of the connections with companies that Unit Three of our curriculum overview would provide.

### Important Insights

1. It was difficult to explain the background information about the innovation when they have no experience within the honors college itself.
2. Students are interested in finding programs and classes that suit their learning abilities
3. Where the credits are applied does hold significant importance to students.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

#### **Explaining Three Segment program.**

*Are there any courses for your fourth year?*

**No, reason being is flexibility. We want you to be able to decide what you do.**

*I think that's a good idea.*

*I like the one credit course ideas. Getting different world perspective.*

#### **Explaining Segment three**

*I like the flexibility of that.*

*Not stressing about school. I like the internship idea*

#### **What do you think of smaller credit honors class?**

*I like it. I feel like to would be fun for students to do.*

#### **(Explained coding class)**

*This would be a great idea as an introduction.*

#### **Explaining inclusive classes idea – relevance to problem statement.**

*If they take this class would it still count for credits toward any of their major credits, if they decided not to go through with joining Honors?*

#### **General education credit substitution? Substitution for Lib 100 or US diversity / World perspectives?**

#### **Open Foundations courses – what do you think about this idea?**

*I think it's good. It might work for students with different learning styles (referring to class size)*

#### **If you had the opportunity to enroll in either an open freshman seminar or a foundations course (honors) would you and why?**

*Yes. If it covered general education credits then yeah. I wouldn't want to waste the credits if I didn't end up doing honors.*

#### **What would you like to see out an honors foundation course vs general education?**

*More relevance to future professional career. Many of my gen. eds. – I am never going to use that information again. Example, I took an oceans class. Really not applicable. Very boring.*

# Dialogue 21

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*GVSU Honors Professor - Estimated Age: 30-40 - Gender: Male*

## Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To test our top two prototypes on a stakeholder who also participated in one of our Collaborator Debriefs.

## How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We need to listen to feedback from our stakeholders on our prototypes, and work out any possible problems or dissatisfaction before moving further into the process.

## Summary of Research

Stakeholder reacted positively to the motivations of each innovation, and raised important topics to consider. We must think of Honors in terms of what makes it special and distinctive from the rest of the university, and be conscious not to remove that element. We must also think of the motivations of students, and why they would choose to take Honors courses versus a regular college experience.

## Important insights

1. May have revealed bias in focus of arts and humanities within the program.
2. We need to take all majors' interests into account, as all majors are attending the Honors College.
3. High impact practices as an essential element of building the curriculum.

## Dialogue Questions and Response

### **[Innovation 1]**

*So in terms of some of the challenges that you identified at a prior stage of the process, this seems like to some extent it's a response to the Honors idea that you have this really intense experience your first year that sort of tails off from there? **[agreement]** So you want to scaffold it a little bit more over your entire experience? **[agreement]** And then there's that question of application that seems especially pressing.*

*So you mentioned the arts and humanities as a particular focus, you know there's a structural tension within Honors from the beginning, really. Which is that, within a big university like Grand Valley, you've got the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that has all these majors, the College for Interdisciplinary Studies, which distinguishes itself in those terms, and then you've got the Honors College that is sort of nested within the Brooks College. A struggle that we have as faculty, particularly when it comes to specific sequences and things like this is to say, "How is Honors not just a shadow Liberal Arts College?" So one of the questions I have then is that one of the ideas that in addition to this introductory class you're talking about, this entry into the curriculum is normally arts and humanities based, what informs that choice of arts and humanities as opposed to some other field of inquiry?*

**We saw more of an opportunity for interdisciplinary classes within arts and humanities courses, versus something more tailored specifically to the sciences. We also thought it would help the students become more well-rounded, knowledgeable, and critical of their outside environment. History, culture, and the arts, things that aren't a strong focus in the world right now we find really important to expose to the students as part of our cultural competency goal.**

*I ask the question in part because have you asked yourselves explicitly whether or not there may be an implicit assumption there that many Honors students are sort of going into STEM fields and things like that and therefore they need this particular rounding out? Is this a response to the market as you*

*know it or is this what the people are making these days? I mean, there's a tension there, and in the existing curriculum.*

*If I wanted to come to Grand Valley as an English major, and I do the Honors curriculum, then that not only gives me whatever the "special sauce" of Honors is, but it also gives me a fast track into what I want to study. Which is awesome, there's nothing wrong with that. But then this is an issue that I think Honors has in general, right? "I want to go into Marketing", or, "I want to go into Public Relations", or I want to go into BMS or whatever," you know, "this is distracting me from what I'm really here to do. Why am I spending my money for credits if it doesn't come out in the end?"*

*There are responses to that, and I think your cultural competency goal is well placed, but there is that potential imbalance, where arts and humanities students go into Honors as a fast track for what they want to study, and the STEM or vocationally-focused people see it more as a diversion or distraction from what they're really doing. It's again a way of just interrogating what the implicit assumptions may be around this kind of thing, so if the implication is, most of us are STEM or vocationally-focused and need to be more well-rounded, you come up with one solution. Whereas, the question is something else, there's a different solution there.*

*The other question is, and I know you guys have been grappling with this, is what is the "special sauce" of Honors that makes it Honors? And, there's a tension in a lot of the presentations you're doing between wanting be really open-ended in wanting to enable people in pursuing what they want to pursue, and keeping it manageable and those other kinds of things. This is a question that I wanted to ask when we were there, and that I think bears thinking about. It saddens me that this seems not to be perceived this way, this is something I'm learning from the process and just hearing from you guys. I have often thought that the "special sauce" of Honors was the really intense first year experience that the introductory sequences give you. But if that's perceived as a burden, or as stressful, you know there are issues there that need to be addressed. I would say, and you know this is something as we educators try to do is we try to look to some of the scholarly teaching and learning to think about what kinds of environments produce optimum outcomes when it comes to not only enabling people to master content and things like that but to develop skills.*

*There's something called high-impact practices. It's the water we live and breathe in as faculty, we're always asking ourselves, "How can we incorporate high-impact practices in the curriculum?" and things like that. And there's a list of them. And they embrace some of the things you guys are already talking about, like active learning, community engagement, study abroad internships, undergraduate research, all of those kinds of things that really are much more self-directed, more active and engaged, also very expensive.*

*Another part of it is cohort-based learning. Whether you perceive it or not, there's research that would suggest that that experience you guys have in that really concentrated arts and humanities freshman sequence is really time-consuming, is really involving, is really intense, but in ways that probably produce a severity of outcomes in several ways. If that is indeed the case, we need to do a better job in communicating in why that might be.*

*There's always a danger in trying to put in change, of throwing the baby out with the bath water. And I'm not trying to be like those old dinosaurs saying, "Oh Honors has always been like this so it always will be" but you know, if it comes to a sort of rupture, and it's important that we have an Honors program that responds to the needs and challenges in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that's what you're paying for and these are the challenges you have. But, we also don't want to be redesigning the curriculum every 4, or 8, or 12 years. Or maybe we do, I don't know. There is a tension there I think, having institutional continuity just because that's the way it is, that's a very*

*Roman way of thinking about things. But again, if it isn't that continuity, continually reaffirming itself, "Yes this is what we are here to do and why it continues to be worthwhile and important to do so".*

*If we reach the point that there is no "special sauce" or what we thought was the special sauce was really just ketchup and who cares, then that's a mandate for radical change. But if there is something there that is worth preserving, I think that's a matter of talking about what it might be and how it can be done, and how it can be affirmed and presented in a way that people embrace and react positively instead of seeing this as another hoop you have to jump through.*

*I think it's a problem. I think it's a problem with the complexity of academia, I think it's a problem with curricula, much of the time we spend talking with you guys is about how to navigate the system so that everybody maximizes its advantages. Everybody gets out in the shortest time, and we generate the kind of statistics we need to keep running, and not wasting your money and your time. But that gets in the way of a conversation about, you know the things I think you're talking about and why this stuff is worth doing and having broader perspectives, and why having this kind of investment in culture is still worthwhile.*

*I think information literacy becomes a really important part of the kind of skill set we're talking about. I think it's probably something that in the Honors curriculum it's a good place to do. I think there are various reasons why the ways we teach, or at least the ways I teach have evolved, because we do have these screens at our side that can tell us the date of the Battle of Adrianople if we really need to know what it is. That doesn't devalue content but it means we need to develop the skills so that we know what we know. That's a challenge not even thinking just about the past but even with all the fake news and propaganda and everything else that's roiling us these days. I think that is something we have to do across the university and something that in Honors is a particularly good place to do.*

*I believe, you know, this is one of the chief reasons why I came to Grand Valley and why I've given in some ways a greater investment than it would be in other classes that we do, the opportunity to have these small groups with the amount of time that we have, typically with two instructors, at least in Classics, I know this doesn't happen in all the sequences but in the Classics we're really committed to having two instructors in the classroom just about all that time, and out of that I think comes an optimal way of reaching some of these goals because it opens up space for a much more open-ended and extraneous style of environment and I've seen this with your class and every group that's come along, the end of that year you guys know each other so well and trust each other so well because you've had all of these experiences together, that you're much more willing to put yourselves out there and be vulnerable in various kinds of ways. You also have a bunch of different and hopefully complimentary ways of learning things, because we all learn in different ways. Some of it is monkey see monkey do, and the point is not to turn everybody into little mini-me versions of the professor by any means, we can't imagine a situation like that, but it is a great privilege to have this time with really smart and committed people focusing intently on something of mutual interest or self-evident importance.*

*Honors is a really distinctive and worthwhile version of that for the kind of people who embrace it and ready to commit to it. That approach might have a version of what the special sauce is, I take fully on board some of the dissatisfaction and inconsistencies and agreed upon standards and qualifications seem to vary widely and things like that. It's a structural problem, and organizational problem that has to do with human capital just because of the way that faculty are invested. And of course, people have different legitimate views about what the purpose of the exercise is and has to be*

*open to that. But, the challenge is that all of us need to do a better job of making it clear that we do have an agreed upon explanation about what those distinctive qualities to the program are.*

*There are people who qualify for Honors who are better advised not to join because they're here only to do what they have to do. Their attitude is, "I paid good money to come here and get trained for a particular profession or a particular career and I'm confident that I know what to do and I'm impatient with anything that isn't linear toward that goal". If they had that conversation with me I'd probably tell that person, "Are you sure you want to be in Honors? Why is it that you want to be in Honors?"*

*It's also interesting to me, I had the idea after that meeting, it use to be the case that there was perceived to be a credential value to have Honors on a transcript. At one time it was the case that people would enroll in Honors and then drop it so they could say they've been accepted into the Honors program. I don't know that there's that perception there at all that having Honors on a transcript is at all beneficial, and that there's a motivation to join Honors because of the credentials of having it on a transcript. This is the stock and trade, it is a gold star, but if you're doing it to get the gold star, that's a recipe for dissatisfaction and unhappiness.*

*All of us have been pleasantly surprised by the phenomenal growth of Honors, even the new building that opened. It speaks to the rhetoric of spaces, those are facilities that communicate that these are special places and places apart, and places that people feel instinctively welcomed in, and that's wonderful.*

#### **[Innovation 2]**

*So is the idea that this would be a recruitment program, that if people thrived they would be able to join the program completely? [Yes.] My baseline reaction is that I've always thought we need to have a more effective pipeline of getting students into Honors, students who have already matriculated. The people who you were talking about, who felt unqualified, or who didn't think about it, or for whatever reason, I mean GPA alone can be a very poor predictor of outcomes because increasingly it measures your success in jumping through whatever hoops you have to jump through. I mean typically when people test really highly and have very high GPAs it's because their school environment has worked for them in one way or another. If that's the principle, I endorse the principle.*

*So then it becomes a question of what the mechanism is. So your suggestion is the possibility that people would be sort of self-nominating, but how would they find out about that opportunity in the first place?*

*It's a problem with 25,000 students, to get this done. I think it is the way that is it because one comes to Admissions and orientation, that's a moment we've got your attention and it's indisputable that Honors exists as a recruitment mechanism to the university that we want people to come to Grand Valley because they want to be in Honors. A cynic would say, "Well once you're here, maybe that isn't so pressing". Now I'm not saying necessarily that I believe that or endorse that. Then they go through the process or they don't, or they stream in or they don't.*

*What you're talking about is something that has fewer gatekeeping mechanisms to it, and again I just wonder, on the one hand everyone can come in or on the other hand, it's very diluted. And again, a cynic would say, "Well, if this is something everyone can enjoy, how do you justify the privilege in the first place?" And again, I'm not... you see what I do with these things, I take ideas I pull them apart and I sometimes look at them in the worst possible light, I play Devil's Advocate.*



*I do think that it would be worthwhile, and I do think some of these conversations revolve around the same points, we agree that there should be closer coordination among faculty who teach at Honors, and it's probably or possibly the sort of message, the case that people who teach at Honors and that the consensus, if there was a consensus, about what Honors is for has grown as the program has gotten bigger and more diffused. If there were in place a system of faculty recommendations, coupled with other things, and again, the details are problematic but maybe if it had to do with midterm grades or first semester success, maybe as you've gotten more scaffolding later on.*

*We've had people in Classics who have taken the Classical World Sequence, as a kind of do-over because that's the particular experience that motivated them in that program. It's a tough nut to crack, but I do think that if there was greater receptivity to streaming people in Honors, and if there was a point that people could raise that question, in a somewhat focused way. An email blast is not really the right way to go. And there's also the problem of "Well, if Honors is doing it why can't we? We should all be able to!" And you've got to pay for it, the cost of Honors is really skewed. People want their investments to be worthwhile and achieve their outcomes.*

*We have to ask ourselves this question, if we are out to recruit people who have shown success, and who have a future of being very successful regardless of what they do, what value does Honors add even if we add a bit of extra success on top of how successful they'll already be? This is the problem of constructing an elite. Even if we say that it's a meritocracy or something like that, we've got to be clear about the basis of inquiry is and about why the investment of resources is justified. It's the nature of these things that it only extends so far. That's not to say that this is dead in the water by any means, but part of approaching this is, and I know you're at the point of making concrete suggestions and things like that, but being clear about what the challenges are, what the principles are, and what you want those things to be, and it's whether or not it's achievable.*

*And there's the danger of circularity there, the value of Honors is that it requires an enormous amount of investment on everyone's part to make it work, is that a means to an end? What's the purpose of all that? So there has to be a larger outcome there that you have to feel confident about. I think it sounds like there's skepticism behind that and that's an issue that needs to be worked out. It's a conversation for students to have but we have to find a way to reinvigorate the sense of professors teaching Honors as Honors faculty. There is a certain portion appointed to Honors, a larger portion that teaches in Honors, and so many of the things you're pointing to speak to that challenge of having a core people who put in the hard work of keeping the program going, and a larger number of people who are putting their own kind of investment in it, but at a distance that may be preventing them from participating as they should, another problem of scale.*

## Dialogue 22

*GVSU Honors College Internal Transfer - Estimated Age: 30-40 - Gender: Female*

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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To gain insight from a student that internally transferred from the regular Grand Valley general education to the Honors College

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are attempting to provide innovations to the curriculum. As a result, we want to understand the positive and negative characteristics of the internal transfer process through the eyes of someone who experienced the jump first hand.

### Summary of Research

The student internally transferred into the Honors College after entering her sophomore year; originally, she was unable to be accepted to the Honors College due to her ACT score. She was not required to take a Live. Learn. Lead.

### Important insights

1. There was a miscommunication in the credits that the student would have transferred to the Honors College from previous credits through the general education requirements – as a result, the student was forced to take substitute classes.
2. The curriculum can be more flexible.
3. The student believes the Honors College should complement a student's major, not compete for the students' time.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

**Tell me about your experience internally transferring to the Honors College. Why did you choose to internally transfer?**

*I applied because I wanted to be a part of the Honors College, but didn't get in before I entered my freshman year. (ACT score wasn't high enough). I was encouraged to apply to it anyways because ACT was less important than the actual essay that went with the application. I always pushed myself academically in high school and thought Honors College would do the same. I also saw it as an opportunity to jump ahead in my classes to knock out my general education credits quicker.*

**What were some advantages and disadvantages to internally transferring to the Honors College?**

*I didn't have to take a Live, Learn, Lead. I am very thankful for that because I heard from other students that it was a waste of time. A major disadvantage was that the credits I was supposed to receive through a full freshman sequence did not get met, so I am now required to take two junior seminars.*

**In your perspective as an internal transfer to the Honors College, how do you believe the curriculum could be improved?**

*I think the curriculum needs to be more flexible and more applicable to my future. I think flexibility is important to fit the rigor of many different majors. I also think that as a whole, The Honors College should compliment a student's major, not compete for its time. I shouldn't be spending unnecessary amounts of time on Honors courses and they shouldn't inhibit my ability to graduate on time.*

**From your experience in the Honors College (because you've seen both sides), do you feel that you have an educational and professional advantage from other Grand Valley students that are not members of the Honors College?**

*Not entirely. I think I can say that I joined the Honors College and that I took one class worth my while. I actually don't even have the Honors College listed on my resume. I joined to get caught up on credits so that I could graduate on time. I enjoy integrated learning so I thought the classes I did take here were interesting, but not really applicable. I definitely don't feel like I have any professional advantage from the Honors College, granted I didn't participate in any of the opportunities that were presented. My schedule doesn't allow free time for me to attend events or activities.*

## Dialogue 23

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*GVSU External Transfer Student - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: N/A*

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

To see what an external transfer student's perspective would be on our innovations, and see what they would change about them in order for there to be more incentive to join the Honor's College.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It digs in deeper to what changes to the Honor's College curriculum would do for how many people decide to join. Considering this is exactly what our problem statement is, it is getting us closer to a solution that makes the Honor's College more appealing to everyone.

### Summary of Research

Overall, they like our top two prototype concepts. For the open class policy involving letting non-Honors students take a freshman Honor's course, their only concern was with how a non-Honors would do in a group project with the work load. Other than that, they thought it was a good idea to get the word out on how Honors classes operated without having to totally commit to joining the Honor's College. For the tier classes they liked that the first year was an introduction to what college was and how to get through it successfully. They also liked how the other two tiers allowed more involvement of a student's majors and applied more to what they would be doing in the future.

### Important insights

1. Group work would need to be monitored a lot with surveys or something to make sure the non-Honors student was putting as much effort in as the Honors students.
2. They like the tier course system, especially because a transfer student wouldn't be put behind the rest of their class due to the "Transfer class" that would be put into place to catch them up.

### Dialogue Questions and Response

#### **What school did you transfer from?**

*GRCC.*

#### **How would you compare their Honors program to GV's Honor's College?**

*To me, there's was just the title of Honors in front of the class title. The classes themselves were more interesting than some of the other normal classes that I took, but that may have had to do with subject matter instead of the Honor's title and therefore intensity. The Honor's College here at GV is more of a community based feel, and I have spent a lot of time in Niemeyer either studying or taking classes, so I feel like I am a part of a smaller, but also large, family within a community of the 25,000 students on campus. I feel like the professors here have more passion for their subject than some of GRCC's teachers, but from friends here that I have talked to, I may have just gotten lucky with the professors that I've picked.*

#### **If the Honor's College made it so some freshman Honor's courses were open to non-Honors students, how would you feel about being a part of one of those classes?**

*I wouldn't really mind, other than with group work. From what I have seen and experienced in my one year of being here at GV from transferring after my sophomore year, whenever you are in a group of Honor's kids for a project, there is never any real worry if 100% effort will be given, or if things will be turned in on time, because Honor's kids for the most part always strive to do their best and get A's. I feel like with non-Honors kids, they may not*

*necessarily have this drive to get things done to the best of their ability if they realize that the rest of their group will make up for whatever slacking they are doing. I think it would be great to get other people involved in the Honor's College without them having to be totally committed to it, but having to make sure there is still balance between everything would have to be important.*

**After having explained the triple tiered curriculum, how would you feel about implementing that?**

*This seems like this kind of follows what we have in place now, but also implements making sure that we would have a class in our "off year". I like it because I know without having a reason to come in Niemeyer, people just feel like they are a typical college student, which is great, but from friends that have gone through most of the system, they feel really disconnected from everything in their off year if they don't have an Honors course to take. I like that the first years curriculum would basically give students a feel for the Honor's College and explain all the processes while also helping you to figure out how to do well in college. I think it's a great idea to have a broad range of classes in order to incorporate those who are not a part of the main majors that the Honor's College seems to focus on right now. And I like that there would still be a choice in doing a senior project, but that is not necessarily what you have to do. I like that transfer students wouldn't be put behind in the tiers due to the one "catch you up" class to get you to where you're supposed to be at in the levels.*

## Dialogue 24

*GVSU Upperclassmen Honors Students - Estimated Age: 20-30 - Gender: N/A*

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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity

This interview is conducted to gain insight and opinion on Team Vitality's top two prototype concepts.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

It is important that we speak to students who are in the Honor's College because we are designing for the students. We want to include Honors students who understand the program and have experienced it.

### Summary of Research

I decided having a follow-up interview with a previous participant would be helpful to our team's innovation process. The interviewee is familiar with the project and its concepts and is also heavily involved within the Honors College. Their understanding of the Honors College's current curriculum was extremely helpful for evaluating our top two prototype concepts.

They posed questions that allowed me to realize some of the holes that we did not discuss in our original two innovations. The interviewee responded really well to our innovation ideas. I plan on discussing ideas with my team to tweak our prototype concepts to fit more "what-if" scenarios and address some of the concerns that were brought up during this interview.

### Important insights

1. Honors College curriculum will impact many different majors and our innovations need to be able to tend to the needs of a broad spectrum of disciplines
2. Tier two needs to be more refined
3. People need to find a valuable reason to be involved in the Honors College

### Dialogue Questions and Response

#### **[Three Segment Innovation]**

#### **What are your thoughts?**

*Friend goes to Eastern and she has something very similar.*

*Might be a lot of work*

*I have classes that have many pre-requisites. Would I have to take an Honors course every semester?*

**Yes.**

*My concern is education people.*

*Student teaching and taking classes. That would be really hard to fit in classes for Honors.*

*So many different majors. How would it fit me?*

**We design for a broader overview of the College. Course specifics are up to the Honors College. What do you like about this idea?**

*I like that you have to take an Honors class every semester*

*Helps meet other Honors students*

*I like application process throughout career (tier three)*

*I like that it is tier based.*

**Do you have any questions or suggestions?**

*I feel fuzzy about what tier two is.*

*Tier two is still a broad subject, but less about learning about you and more about learning subjects you might be interested. Three is definitely more application for the send-off of your college career.*

**[Inclusive Courses]**

**Solving for issue of inclusivity and visibility. Thoughts or questions?**

*I feel like this makes more sense. Especially people who transfer into programs.*

*Great for people who feel like they might not be able to handle Honors, but want a taste of it.*

*Would they (non-Honors in an Honors class) get extra credit hours? Or would it be the same for everyone? I feel like it would be more incentive to take it. Like a reward system of some sort. I feel like there should be an incentive besides just taking an Honors class.*

*I don't feel like a foundation class would necessarily be more work, rather than more integration.*

*I feel like the people you are targeting should already be in the Honors College.*

*The purpose of these classes is to draw those students into the Honors Program.*

# RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHIES

## Research Bibliography 1

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Chamberlain, J. (July 2017). *Frederik Meijer Honors College Annual Report - Executive Summary* (Rep.).

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

The annual report provides us with an overview and year summary from the Honors College during the 2016-2017 academic year. It includes information about enrollment and students who have received special honors, and how Honors influenced the student's decision to attend Grand Valley State University – including GPA, ACT scores of incoming students, distribution of majors.

### **Main argument:**

The Honor's College is held in high esteem. Students who participate in the Honors College curriculum are high achieving. The programs that Honors College has in place contributes to the success of the students. Each of their programs has benefited many of the students within the Honors College.

### **Important ideas:**

- The Honors College has helped students become leaders in their fields of study.
- Students who attend Honors College graduate at a higher rate than those who don't.
- Students who attended the Honors College have received high recognition in their fields.
- Programs that the FMHC has implemented.

### **Evidence**

There are images and statistics to support some of the main ideas presented above. Students who have received awards in their chosen major have been recognized and honored by the FMHC through scholarships. Programs within the Honors College are discussed through the success of selected students who have received scholarships on that program's behalf.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “Honors students have a wide range of interests. Consequently, there are Honors students in every major in the university.”
- “We continue to be amazed and gratified by the accomplishments of Honors students.”
- “[...]extraordinary opportunities for extraordinary students.”

### **Strengths:**

- Emphasizes the accomplishments of the Honors College and the students within it.
- Provides very helpful statistics

### **Weaknesses:**

- *Only* talks about strengths.
- Lacks mentions of improvements that could be made.



### **Connections:**

- The Honors College looks great based on these reports and statistics, based on the tone of the report, which is all positive; that leaves space for our team to dig into the report more to see where the problem issues could be.
- There are many opportunities within the Honors College, but none of them made mention of curriculum, specifically.
- The diverse population of majors within the Honors College means that our team will have to be aware of being inclusive as we design a curriculum guideline for the future.

### **Questions/Concerns:**

- Did the Honors College have a direct effect on the success of the award recipients? (*i.e. if recipient hadn't been enrolled in the Honors College, would they have still gotten that award?*)
- If the Honors College has an array of majors, how can its curriculum appeal to all while remaining inclusive?

The Honors College is a place for extraordinary opportunities, how can we construct a curriculum that embodies this statement?

## Research Bibliography 2

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Hiskes, A. L. (2017). *Selected Observations and Suggestions from the National Collegiate Honors Council Program Review Report Frederik Meijer Honors College at Grand Valley State University* (Rep.). National Collegiate Honors Council.

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

During the 2017, the National Collegiate Honors Council completed an audit of the Frederik Meijer Honors College, including curriculum information. This summary of findings is a benchmark analysis to other university Honors programs around the country, and shows the strengths and weaknesses of the current Honors College program at Grand Valley.

### **Main argument:**

FMHC is full of intelligent students with passion for learning – for the purposes of corrective criticism, we will focus on weaknesses as outlined by the audit: the Honors College curriculum is a replacement for general education; more opportunity should be provided for integrated active learning strategies; student learning outcomes are too vague and geared only towards general university education – not an Honors College education.

### **Important ideas:**

- Need to develop well-defined, measurable objectives for student learning.
- Students are required to participate in intensive research or creative activity – however, this can be improved even further.
- Raise the visibility of Honors to create a more apparent visual profile.
- Clear disconnect between two of the Honors student populations.

### **Evidence**

- Many Honors College students, including myself, do not want to refer to themselves as an Honors student outside of Niemeyer, specifically because you're seen as either arrogant, or nerdy.
- When I first transferred to GV, I noticed the disconnect between living centers immediately - but mostly because I lived off campus. Not only did I see the disconnect as third-party spectator, but also experienced the disconnect myself, by living off campus.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “The mission and goals of the College could be structured so that there are well-defined, measurable objectives for student learning that transcend the narrow warrant of any single major but can still be applied to any and all majors.”
- “We encourage GVSU to find creative ways for students in all majors to participate in intensive research or creative activity projects that will give those students the chance to show that they are indeed a “cut above,” and have produced, as well, a tangible document that proves the point.”
- “Steps should to be taken to raise the visibility of Honors on the GVSU campus and beyond. The Honors College should have a more apparent visual profile.”

- “In our discussions with the students, we detected a clear disconnect between two of the Honors student populations: the one that lives in the Niemeyer building, and the predominately freshmen population that lives across the ravine in the Holton-Hooker Learning and Living Center.”
- “Refocus the Honors curriculum. The general education replacement paradigm currently used precludes significant Honors engagement in most of the GVSU majors and it further limits both transfer and “late-bloomer student” access to the program.”

**Strengths:**

The Honors College has done a fantastic job of providing an alternative, yet challenging curriculum for students that aren't interested in GV's general education requirements.

**Weaknesses:**

The Honors College is simply summed up in the strengths section – the curriculum is essentially JUST an alternative to the general education requirements.

**Connections:**

- Expand on a creative curriculum; Honors students should be getting opportunities that general education students aren't – because they're Honors students.
- Students should take more pride in being an Honors student.
- Students should hone-in on what they love to do, not what they think will be the most successful career.
- The Honors College should be advertising more – both externally and around campus.

**Questions/Concerns:**

We are concerned that Honors students will never truly be viewed as anything other than either arrogant or nerdy – that's just culture these days, unfortunately.

## Research Bibliography 3

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Bell, James D. (2005). *Expand the Honors Curriculum: Teach Entrepreneurship, Risk-Taking, and Change Across the Curriculum*. Honors in Practice. Online Archive. 32.  
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nchchip/32>

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

This article examines the application of a curriculum that applies entrepreneurship, leadership, and team building and how that effects minor and major change on their college campus. This project provides information about the outcomes and has an example of a full-course structure.

### **Main argument:**

Integrated courses should be a vital part of college curriculum. They provide new insights and opportunities. As seen by the student reflections, a course that combines multiple disciplines and application in problem solving helps instill confidence in a student's abilities to become successful and make a change on campus. Leadership skills are best developed in places where students are challenged to think and function in a team.

### **Important ideas:**

- Course was structured for non-business students and focused on instituting change on campus.
- Designed to spark genuine interest in creating and identifying opportunities for change and practice the process of turning ideas into substance and into tangibles.
- The Honor's curriculum was designed to be very open ended to help students prototype solutions for problems that their group was passionate about.

### **Evidence**

- The content in the article included a full semester outline.
- Three of the students had their paper accepted by the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference and then they went on to present at the Change/Creations Conference held in Chicago in 2003.
- Student outcomes included more confidence in the ability to make a difference and take action, awareness about what it means to be an entrepreneur, application of concepts of entrepreneurship (networking, action, planning, etc.).

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- Many majors and minors focus more on thinking than doing.
- The goal is to encourage and guide administrators and professors as they expand entrepreneurship and leadership course offerings.
- "The combination of networking, research, self-motivation, and goal orientation is what I believe to be the most important." – Student Reflection
- "The class has opened a new door in my life. I am now aware of what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur". – Student Reflection

### **Strengths:**

- Great details about how to set up a class that helps students become confident and successful in their creativity and application skills.

**Weaknesses:**

- Focus was strictly on entrepreneurship as a whole.

**Connections:**

- This course is a great example of an integrated class and also provides a valuable insight about the value of integrated classes that are applicable to real life.
- Many of the future employers we interviewed wanted students to be able to apply what they learn and have a proactive mindset. This class seemed to encourage that based on the student's responses.
- The program challenges students to critically think, problem solve, prototype, and apply solutions to real life – all things that are of great value to the Honor's College.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we create a guideline for course work that provides integration that is also applicable to real life?
- How important is it that students are passionate about their coursework and the problems they are solving for?
- How can we promote integrated classes to future students so that they would want to participate in the Honors College Curriculum?

# Research Bibliography 4

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*Fellowships 2016-2017 Annual Report.* (n.d). Grand Valley State University.

## **Reason for including this source in your work:**

To research further into the distribution of awards and scholarships at Grand Valley, and to learn how many Honors students are impacted specifically by Honors when earning these awards.

## **Main argument:**

While GVSU remains a top achiever of scholarship and award winners, there is no specific mention of the awards ever coming specifically from Honors. There is also no mention in any of the student's biographies of an inclusion in the Honors program. While this may be due to a lack of any of the students' involvement in Honors, it could also be attributed to the low confidence shared by students about the Honors program and a lack of pride.

## **Important ideas:**

- The Frederik Meijer Office of Fellowships was established through a generous donation by the Meijer Foundation in Fall 2009.
- GVSU students have been offered over \$2,000,000 dollars in (inter)nationally competitive funding since 2009.
- Although all of the students have high accolades and are multi-disciplined, there is no mention of a background with the Honors program in their biographies.

## **Evidence**

Student Haoyu Guo received Gilman and Freeman-ASIA funding, but it was based on her language skills that she was offered all of the opportunities given. Cameron Saghaipour, major in IR/Middle East Studies, International Business minor, gives the impression of being Honors material but again, his awards were given based on his knowledge and study of an immersive Farsi language.

## **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- "Meijer Office of Fellowships staff (a director and a 20-hour/week graduate assistant during the academic year) provide nationally prestigious scholarship and fellowship advising services to alumni and students from all GVSU campuses, colleges, and schools".
- "Over 50 GVSU students and alumni received inter/nationally competitive scholarships, fellowships, and awards during AY 2015/16... GVSU students and alumni have been awarded over \$500,000 in competitive fellowships, scholarships and awards during AY 2016/17."
- "GVSU remains Michigan's top producer of Gilman Scholars in 2016 (and for competitions to date in 2017), as well as a top producer of Gilman Scholars nationally."

## **Strengths:**

- Gives further background and sources of common scholarships awarded to GVSU students.

## **Weaknesses:**

- Does not specifically mention any involvement with the Honors College program.

**Connections:**

- The lack of visibility could be part of the issue as to why no students have mentioned an Honors background in their biographies.
- Further focus on inclusivity of Grand Valley's students could help to raise awareness of what the Honors program can achieve for their students.
- Having a specifically Honors-funded scholarship could also aid in raising awareness and motivation to join the Honors program.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Should we continue to focus on the benefits of offering Honors-specific scholarships after seeing that there aren't any with a huge impact for students currently?
- Inclusion continues to be a major focus for strengthening the Honors College relationship with its students.
- Why are students so hesitant to include their time with the Honors program? How can we bring more pride to the program?

## Research Bibliography 5

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Wolfensberger, Marca V.C. 2012. "Honors education and global citizenship." *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council*, no. 2, p. 279+. *Academic OneFile*, [http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/apps/doc/A314800213/AONE?u=lom\\_gvalleysu&sid=AONE&xid=daec9929](http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/apps/doc/A314800213/AONE?u=lom_gvalleysu&sid=AONE&xid=daec9929). Accessed 23 Feb. 2018.

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

This source flushes out the idea of cultural competency and the role it plays in Honors curriculum. We have been struggling to pin down exactly what is meant by cultural competency; there are varying ideas of how it can be taught to students and integrated into an academic setting. This source will help shape our understanding of this topic and give us ideas for creating a curriculum that shapes culturally competent students.

### **Main argument:**

The world is full of complex problems that require collaboration and compassion. It is the responsibility of an Honors program to shape a better world by inspiring students to respect and understand different cultures, values, and disciplines.

### **Important ideas:**

- Experiential learning programs, service learning programs, community projects, study abroad and seminars/classes on international exchange are valuable tools for teaching cultural competency in a curriculum.
- Educational elements such as conversation, reflection, and cross-cultural exchange inspire students to understand those that are different from them and become responsible citizens of the world.
- Colleges have a responsibility to help young people attend college, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and the impoverished. An Honors College must provide a distinct, valuable experience for the exceptionally driven.

### **Evidence**

The author mentions interactive projects like City as Text[™] and the Shriver Center of the University of Maryland Baltimore County as examples of more involved, engaging learning environments.

They cite statistics as well, such as the percentage of the world's children that do not attend school, or the percentage of countries that provide boys and girls equal access to education.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- "Honors programs, which function as laboratories for innovation in regular education, offer educational opportunities for talented, motivated students; we thus have a special responsibility to inspire these students to respect other disciplines, cultures, and nationalities through genuine conversations, interactive learning, and international exchange."
- "Such involvement includes participation in, for instance, NCHC-designed experiential programs such as City as Text[™]; seminars in which students reflect on international



exchanges; the service-learning programs that have become a standard part of curricula in U.S. Honors education; and programs like the Shriver Center of the University of Maryland Baltimore County, where faculty connect their research and teaching to relevant social needs and students link academic study to professional practice as well as service to the community.”

- “Teachers and students working together on independent studies create an effective learning environment.”
- “If we provide an education rich in conversation, interactive and reflective learning, and cross-cultural exchanges, then we both enable and encourage these students to honor people who are different from them, to enhance the dignity of all human beings, and to become responsible citizens of the world.”

### **Strengths:**

- The article helped define the idea of cultural competency and gave examples of characteristics/elements of Honors programs that develop it.

### **Weaknesses:**

- The article is short and provides limited examples of how cultural competency can be implemented into academia.
- The diversity/inclusion section towards the end of the article strays a bit from our challenge.

### **Connections:**

- This source gave us a better understanding of what is meant by cultural competency, which is something that Honors faculty, employers, and students value.
- The source listed a few ideas of types of programs that create cultural competency; we can consider these when designing for FMHC’s curriculum.
- The source stated that conversation, reflection, and cross-cultural exchange help build cultural competency in students. These are important traits we should keep in mind when designing the curriculum.

### **Questions/Concerns:**

- How might we implement experiential learning, community-based learning, or other interactive curricula that create culturally competent students?
- How might study abroad be encouraged or expanded? How will study abroad fit into the Honors requirements?

## Research Bibliography 6

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Harvard College. (2017). *Freshman Seminar Program 2017-2018*. Retrieved from [https://freshmanseminars.college.harvard.edu/files/freshmanseminars/files/fsp-catalog\\_2017-2018.pdf](https://freshmanseminars.college.harvard.edu/files/freshmanseminars/files/fsp-catalog_2017-2018.pdf)

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

Harvard's Freshman Seminar program was created to engage college freshman in a program that would give them smaller learning communities and a more intimate setting with the professors. This catalog can be seen in comparison to the freshman sequences of the FMHC.

### **Main argument:**

The freshman seminars are open to freshman students at Harvard providing them with a more intimate setting to learn. There are many options to choose from which allows students to explore their interests. The purpose of the seminar is to help students become accustomed to a liberal arts school and allow them to find community in a more accessible way.

### **Important ideas:**

- Freshman seminars provide a rich learning experience.
- There are many options to choose from.
- Professors who teach these classes are Harvard's most distinguishable faculty.
- The freshman seminar will be a highlight of their first-year experience.
- Implements liberal education.

### **Evidence**

Student's reviews of the Freshman Seminar affirmed the statements that Harvard's Freshman Seminar was a jewel of the college. Many of the students felt that they were given many unique opportunities through the program. The program provided a safe place for students to learn and engage in a unique community environment. Overall the student reviews are very positive and strongly advocate for the strengths of the Freshman Seminar.

Students are evaluated by "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" and one credit is counted toward their degree. Some of the seminars may be counted toward a student's concentration requirement as determined by the department or the committee of the concentration.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- "It was fascinating, educating, thought provoking, de-stressful, and fun."
- "My seminar was like a family. It was truly a highlight of my freshman year."
- "I really appreciate the opportunity to look into something I wouldn't have thought to study."
- "I worked closely with my peers and leading professor to work through and think about important questions that have real-life implications."
- "This class is meant for students with all levels of experience."
- Over 100 seminars are taught and include a vast diversity of disciplines.

**Strengths:**

- Students responded really well to the seminar.

**Weaknesses:**

- Student reviews only emphasized strengths of the programs.

**Connections:**

- Our Freshman Sequences in the FMHC have a very similar concept to the Freshman Seminars at Harvard.
- The idea the seminar based on a student's participation and engagement in class is quite interesting. It eliminates a tie to credits and allows for flexibility.
- Based upon the student reviews, students saw their time spent in their seminar as a valuable component to their college experience.
- Many of the programs implement community engagement which the students seemed to enjoy.
- Finding community during freshman year of college is extremely important. The freshman seminar allowed for this to happen much easier.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- GVSU doesn't have access to as many professors as Harvard does, how can we make seminars that implement interdisciplinary concepts?
- How can our curriculum make students passionate about what they are learning?
- Should we open up freshman sequences to all Grand Valley Students?

## Research Bibliography 7

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Tharp, D. S. (2017). Exploring First-Year College Students' Cultural Competence. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 15(3), 241-263. doi:10.1177/1541344616686552

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

This is a study of how a sample of college freshman understood and applied core concepts after taking part in a diversity and social justice lesson plan. This is related to our desired “cultural competence” learning outcome. It may provide ideas and insight into how cultural competence can be implemented into a curriculum.

### **Main argument:**

A large Midwestern university requires all first-year students to complete an 8-week seminar covering many topics including diversity and social justice. Reflection papers were used to qualitatively analyze how the diversity and social justice lesson plan effected student learning. It was found that a broad range of many core concepts, the emphasis and reflection on many simultaneous social identities, and the exploration of systems of privilege and oppression were all valuable to student learning.

### **Important ideas:**

- Diversity curriculum should emphasize many core concepts through the lens of many social identities.
- There is a gap between student's understanding of social identity/diversity concepts and their ability to apply them to themselves.
- Emphasizing privilege and oppression allows students to better connect with and understand multiple core concepts.

### **Evidence**

The author backs up their claims with many percentages from the study itself. For instance, “While students were only expected to discuss one core concept, 46.2% of students decided to talk about multiple concepts throughout their reflection papers.” (Tharp).

They also cite countless secondary sources to flush out the concept of cultural competence and how it is achieved through pedagogy.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “It is important to consider how multiple social identities simultaneously exist while influencing students' ability to understand different concepts.” (Tharp)
- “Designing diversity workshop curricula that emphasize multiple concepts and multiple identities honors how students engage diversity content from multiple vantage points and can maximize the opportunity to more willingly examine prior beliefs and experiences.” (Tharp)
- “Given that approximately two thirds of students who talked about multiple core concepts did so accurately, it is possible that providing more core concepts for students to reflect upon assisted their ability to accurately apply multiple concepts to their social identities.” (Tharp)

- “Further, students were most likely to indicate self-reported growth when accurately reflecting on the concepts of social identity and diversity, with students often citing the identity wheel activity as useful for their intrapersonal development.” (Tharp)
- “However, cultivating critical reflection on one’s social identities and sense of self can be useful to challenge these beliefs and embrace a holistic sense of self that embraces social identity and promotes transformative learning.” (Tharp)
- “Given how the concepts of privilege and oppression are rooted in an understanding of social identity and diversity definitionally, this model also may offer insight into why students who discussed concepts of privilege and oppression were more likely to accurately understand multiple core concepts.” (Tharp)

**Strengths:**

- Breaks down how cultural competence has been taught and which elements were effective.

**Weaknesses:**

- Study not entirely generalizable.
- Qualitative study, different school.

**Connections:**

- Cultural competence is an important learning outcome according to employers and FMHC faculty we’ve spoken to. This study discusses the results of diversity and social justice seminar meant to foster cultural competence.
- The article provides specific ideas for activities that have been used in teaching cultural competence-related core concepts. We may implement some of these ideas into our own project.
- The article also highlights the qualities of the seminar that were most effective. If we decide to implement the seminar format itself, this source will be a good starting point.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How might we implement the best elements of these seminars to promote cultural competence in FMHC?
- Which elements of these seminars are applicable?

## Research Bibliography 8

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Chun, E., & Evans, A. (2016). Rethinking Cultural Competence in Higher Education: An Ecological Framework for Student Development. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 42(4), 93-100. doi:10.1002/aehe.20102

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

This source gives suggestions for fostering cultural competence through an institution's curriculum and culture in general. The employers and FMHC faculty we've talked to value cultural competence highly, so we are interested in finding ways to develop culturally competent faculty and students.

### **Main argument:**

The goals outlined in college diversity missions are not often actualized; there is a disconnect. The appropriate administrative infrastructure, well-defined student learning outcomes, diversity competence in faculty, and inclusive, intergroup learning practices help to foster cultural competence.

### **Important ideas:**

- Universities are failing to properly accommodate their diverse student bodies and create a culturally competent learning environment.
- Diversity competency must be embedded into all areas of the institution, including the hiring/review processes for faculty, the application/recruitment process for incoming students, the mission statement of the institution, the learning outcomes of the institution/program, and the pedagogy itself.
- Meaningful cross-cultural engagement is not created by having a diverse student body alone. Cultural competence must be designed into the institution intentionally.

### **Evidence**

The article cites the University of Maryland College Park's mission statement as an example of how diversity competence should be a well-defined and articulated learning outcome. It uses an incident at Mount Holyoke College (involving a professor singling out minority students and asking them to identify racial slurs) to highlight cultural/racial tensions and show that universities are failing to appropriately address cultural competency.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “As a result, there is a tendency to view diversity competence as a luxury or an appendage to the educational process, something nice-to-have but not necessary. Further, such competence is associated with pleasant events such as international potlucks and is often devoid of consideration of the problematic social issues of inequality and social justice.” (Chun)
- “Develop a common definition of diversity competence and include as a goal for student learning and development that is addressed in institutional mission statement and strategic planning documents.” (Chun)

- “Explicitly address the need for diversity or cultural competence as a learning outcome in the undergraduate curriculum and tie this outcome to the need for students to navigate as citizens in a diverse, global society.” (Chun)
- “Enlist faculty leadership in addressing diversity competence within the curriculum. The instrumental role of faculty leadership through taskforces, collaborative workgroups, and faculty senate committees has been noted in several examples shared in the monograph.” (Chun)
- “Use first-year experiences to promote diversity during the most formative period of the undergraduate college experience.” (Chun)
- “Incorporate the emphasis on diversity competence in admissions processes and materials as well as student orientation programs.” (Chun)
- “Provide comprehensive professional development offerings in diversity competence for administrators, faculty, and staff. Recognize contributions to diversity engagement in evaluation processes and recognition programs.” (Chun)
- “Develop strategies for addressing classroom diversity and creating culturally inclusive classroom environments.” (Chun)

**Strengths:**

- Addresses the disconnect we’ve seen between FMHC values/learning outcomes and actual results.

**Weaknesses:**

- Some pieces of advice are vague. Some are not within the scope of our project.

**Connections:**

- We are working to flush out the concept of cultural competency. We know it is valued by employers and FMHC faculty, but it is ill-defined. This source shows us that teaching cultural competence must be intentional, and the goal must be well-articulated.
- The source also gives ideas that may help promote cultural competence. Some of these can be implemented into our project as we redesign FMHC curriculum.
- One idea this source gave was to use things like taskforces, collaborative workgroups, and committees to engage faculty as leaders in instilling cultural competent into the program. This connects with one of our insights—that FMHC needs more communication between professors and administrative staff, and FMHC faculty need to be more intentional about accomplishing learning objectives.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How might we emphasize cultural competency when designing FMHC curriculum?
- Should cultural competency be taught in isolation, or integrated into courses with other topics?

## Research Bibliography 9

Grand Valley State University. (September 2017). *Profile of Grand Valley Students*.

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### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

A profile and complete breakdown of the student demographic at Grand Valley will offer further understanding of the type of students that are in the college currently. This profile also analyzes the motivations and priorities in learning for both professors and students, taken by various surveys. There is a comparison between the professors and students in topics such as anxiety, learning objectives, and the outcomes of the current curriculum in place at Grand Valley. This information will influence the direction our team takes in solving the problem of the curriculum in the Honors College, as it reveals both what is and is not working in the current curriculum set in place.

### **Main argument:**

The faculty goals for undergraduate education as it stands now heavily prioritize effective writing and critical thinking, focusing less on the students' personal development of values and culture. Students develop most in critical thinking skills and effective writing but fall below in actually acquiring work or job-related knowledge and skills, developing/clarifying a personal code of values/ethics, and understanding people of other backgrounds. Priorities fall short in essentially every category except critical thinking, and student anxiety has lowered overall.

### **Important ideas:**

- Anxiety and academic challenge are directly influenced by each other, with anxiety having lowered – overwhelming anxiety felt in the last 30 days of surveys lowering almost 10% between 2010 and 2016.
- Almost 70% of faculty find students to be a source of stress for them.
- 60% of students are female and 92% of students are from Michigan.
- Almost 1/3 of Grand Valley students are low income and first generation, which implies they have less academic confidence, weaker social connections, and are less likely to persist and graduate.
- Priorities of faculty reflect in the outcomes of student development, with a mainly academic focus

### **Evidence**

About 95% of faculty believe the ability to write effectively is very important, while student development in this category is almost 75%. In contrast, the faculty priority of their students developing personal values is only about 60%, and only a little over 50% of students believe they have developed a personal code of values.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- First Generation students are students who are the first to attend a university in their family, and will be the first in their families to graduate. Grand Valley classifies these students, as



well as low income students, as having “less academic confidence”, “weaker social connections”, and are “less likely to persist” and “less likely to graduate”.

- Faculty values “the ability to write effectively” and the “ability to think critically” as their goals for undergraduate education.
- Faculty does not find helping “students to develop personal values” and enhancing “students’ knowledge of and appreciation of diversity” to be as essential.

**Strengths:**

- Gives breakdown of student demographic, general student goals and outcomes of these goals.

**Weaknesses:**

- Focuses on all of Grand Valley, not solely the Honors College.

**Connections:**

- Student development is mainly academic, in critical thinking and writing skills – a constraint in our design thinking challenge.
- Student demographic is mostly made up of undergraduate females from Michigan, which is important when understanding what students Grand Valley elicits with current programs and marketing.
- Faculty goals directly correlate to what skills students gain in Grand Valley – their priorities shape how the students learn.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- What other skills can be integrated into class curriculum and how?
- How can we integrate more than just academic values in the curriculum?
- How can we continue to grow the retention and graduation rate of Grand Valley students through the Honors College?

## Research Bibliography 10

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*Frederik Meijer Honors College Curriculum Overview [Brochure]. (n.d.). Grand Valley State University.*

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

This is the current curriculum which will be the base piece of research that we will be using in order to decide on what we change and keep in the coming years.

### **Main argument:**

The main point in the Honors College Curriculum Overview is to show the different approach that Grand Valley's Honor College takes in order to give students a higher education that allows them to complete their general education requirements faster. It also includes the importance of community and integration within the college in order to make students feel welcome.

### **Important ideas:**

- Students are challenged to take charge of their education with team taught classes and active participation within the Honors College classes
- The Honors College is a tight knit community that is driven with thoughtful, intuitive learners that support each other
- Honors sets students up well for Graduate school, and many students get into top universities

### **Evidence:**

In order to get into the Honors College, students must have above average grades and evidence of higher level thinking. This paves way for scholarships, easier integration with peers, and provides a social community in which most fit in.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “In fact, students in every field graduate in good time, and Meijer Honors College graduates quickly see that the challenge, community, and support they experienced at Grand Valley provided them with a true competitive advantage in their careers as well as skills an understanding that enrich their whole lives. “ (Section about The Honors advantage)
- “The Meijer Honors College is a learning community where all participants are focused on learning and leading in an atmosphere that is supportive, enriching, and fun.” (Section about Be A Part Of A Community)
- “The unique approach of our Honors courses — integrated, active, and often team-taught — creates a special atmosphere where you are challenged to take charge of your education. With help from engaged peers and faculty members, you’ll dig deeply into a subject through multiple perspectives, participate in collaborative problem-solving, and develop the critical-thinking and writing skills you’ll need to thrive in today’s world.” (Section about Decidedly Different Delivery)

### **Strengths:**

- Supports Study abroad, tries to create a community feel, has skilled, fun professors.

**Weaknesses:**

- Is not inclusive with all majors, with two separate housing centers they don't have the community feel with both centers.

**Connections:**

- We want to get away from the general education path, which currently is what the Honors College is completely incorporated with.
- The brochure talks about connecting with the rest of the Honors College community, which is not evident as of now, and something in which we would like to change as well to be more inclusive.
- The brochure talks about how they work well with any major. We don't see this inclusiveness as much as we feel we should, and want all majors to be able to feel like it is worth putting in the extra effort of completing the Honors College.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How is a tight-knit community when there are two separate housing facilities that don't do much together?
- How does Honors work well with any major when there aren't any classes built towards helping Art majors, or not as large majors?

# Research Bibliography 11

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Kelley, T., & Kelley, D. (2015). *Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All*. William Collins.

## **Reason for including this source in your work:**

It is the central reading for HNR 231, and helps us shape how we will continue in this project.

## **Main argument:**

Each and every one of us is creative is what the authors main point is. The book identifies the principles and strategies that allows people to tap into their creative potential in their work and personal lives.

## **Important ideas:**

- Empathy for people makes observations powerful sources of inspiration.
- Noticing that something is broken is an essential requirement for coming up with a creative solution to fix it.
- The goal in life is to find a career that you're good at, that you enjoy, and that someone will pay you to pursue.

## **Evidence:**

Rahul Panicker, Jane Chen, Linus Liang, and Naganand Murty used design thinking methods to move from blank page to insight to action. They turned a routine class assignment into a real-life product: The Embrace Infant Warmer, an easy-to-use medical device that costs 99 percent less than a traditional baby incubator and has the potential to save millions of newborns in developing countries. (Chapter 3)

## **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “If you want more success, you have to be prepared to shrug off more failure.”
- “Almost every annoyance, every point of friction, hides a design opportunity.”
- “When you are in a state of flow, the world around you drops away and you are fully engaged.”

## **Strengths:**

- Gives examples in each chapter on how to improve the innovation design for the problem given

## **Weaknesses:**

- There tends to be only one or two examples per chapter, so if someone is trying to relate this to their problem, they have limited resources in the book to do so.

## **Connections:**

- It connects to our challenge because there is feasibility, viability, and desirability for change in the Honors College which is the basis of what this challenge is about
- It connects to our team problem statement because we need to come up with a change for the curriculum for the Honors College in a way that is desirable for everyone.
- Connecting to both, it gives an example of a class project where they had to innovate for something that impacted a lot of people as well, and talks about failures and overcoming obstacles that we will face in the future.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How might we be able to overcome obstacles put in our paths in an efficient manner when our challenge is only 15 weeks long, whereas professional design challenge researchers have a longer time, and therefore more buffer time should obstacles arise?

# Research Bibliography 12

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“Our Mission.” *About / Honors College / Michigan State University*,  
honorscollege.msu.edu/about/index.html

## **Reason for including this source in your work:**

It is one of the large universities with a prominent Honors College in our vicinity.

## **Main argument:**

Students gain an upper-edge to those who don't take Honors through having a personalized Honors program that allows them to flourish academically and socially at Michigan State University.

## **Important ideas:**

- The Honors program is tailored to the student, so students can go on their own path unique to what they are majoring in.
- Social and academic integration is a large part of the Honors program
- There is a lot of diversity throughout the Honors College in which they hold to a high standard due to the diversity “we are in experience and composition”.

## **Evidence:**

“The new year and start of a new semester provides an opportunity to remind ourselves that like the broader MSU community, the Honors College values a diverse and inclusive community of students and scholars.” -Honors College Dean Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore wrote on January 15, 2018 for the beginning of the new semester and the year.

## **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “Through some of the initiatives below you'll see that we are not resting on the College's strong history of inclusion, but continually challenging ourselves to grow to meet the needs of our students and celebrate the diversity of their experiences and backgrounds.”
- “The Honors College strives to ensure an enriched academic and social experience for its members and to create an environment that fosters active, innovative learning.”
- “Key objectives were to allow students to be challenged by the appropriate level of academic work specific to each student and to meet the needs of each student by providing substantial academic flexibility.”

## **Strengths:**

- Says in many different spots that the Honors College program is tailored to the student.
- Doesn't say this follows the flow of the general education path like most Honors Colleges.

## **Weaknesses:**

- For such a large university, it says that there is a strong emphasis on social integration, but none of that is shown on the website, at least easily.

**Connections:**

- It connects to our design thinking challenge because they are a fellow university that can give insights on what their students like or dislike about their Honors program.
- Since their program, at least from looking generally at it, seems like it is more focused on the individual student and what they desire to learn, instead of following the general education program with classes solely based on getting those credits done with.
- It connects to our team problem statement because their Honors College program website is filled with how they a big on integration and social and academic inclusiveness.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we take what we see and learn from MSU and broaden it even more so students desire to be in the Honors College here at GVSU while also making sure that it keeps to the key student learning objectives?

## Research Bibliography 13

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Altman, Matthew C. 2010. "Beyond the Great Books: Increasing the Flexibility, Scope, and Appeal of an Honors Curriculum." *Honors in Practice*, vol. 6, p. 125+. *Academic OneFile*, [http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A226630265/AONE?u=lom\\_gvalleysu&sid=AONE&xid=fd6e2eba](http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A226630265/AONE?u=lom_gvalleysu&sid=AONE&xid=fd6e2eba). Accessed 19 Feb. 2018.

### **Reason for including this source in your work**

This source delves into the failures and successes of the Honors curriculum at Central Washington University, and the major restructuring process the Honors College underwent. It details the changes that were made to make the curriculum more effective at meeting the needs of the students, which can give us ideas for redesigning FMHC curriculum and insight into what works and what doesn't.

### **Main argument**

The William O. Douglas Honors College (DHC) at CWU made progressive changes to its curriculum in order to better appeal to students. They adopted a more flexible curriculum structure and encouraged more engaging pedagogy.

### **Important ideas:**

- The DHC faced low enrollment due to its rigidity—students who transferred in or had other obligations like study abroad or student teaching had to play “catch up,” and many left the program when their majors became more demanding.
- The Honors College now has a two-tier structure. In the first 2 years, students take courses to fulfil a core curriculum to satisfy general education requirements that are unique to honors. If the student chooses to continue in the program, they move on to pursue advanced research in the sciences, arts, or humanities as an upperclassman. This allows for multiple entry/exit points and tailors the experience to the student.
- If a student completes the core Honors curriculum and one additional course (History of Science), they receive an Interdisciplinary Honors Minor.
- The DHC is embracing a more integrated approach, drawing connections across disciplines and tying the traditional Great Books approach to the present by relating classic materials to more recent/relevant work.

### **Evidence**

The author has provided the DHC learning outcomes and a visual showing the present curriculum structure in the appendixes. The author quotes the CWU general education mission statement.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

**Great Books:** A collection of books deemed valuable for their relevancy to contemporary ideas and issues.

- “First, the program was inflexible, requiring students to take four years of lectures and colloquia, preferably in order and preferably every quarter. This requirement interfered with some demanding majors (with many required classes and possible time conflicts),



study abroad, and student teaching...” (Altman)

- “As students completed their general education requirements and were expected to dedicate more time to advanced courses in their majors, or when they had to resolve time conflicts with Honors courses, typically students abandoned the DHC. Although the DHC became a minor-granting program a few years ago, the bottom line is that there was not enough incentive to remain with the program as other obligations became more pressing.” (Altman)
- “The new program provides the flexibility and academic diversity that is needed to attract a wider variety of students while retaining the advantages of the old program: small class sizes, innovative pedagogy, student-led discussions, and an exposure to the great works of world literature.” (Altman)
- “Low student numbers eventually forced a new group of faculty to make a radical break from the traditional model. A faculty committee was charged with creating a more flexible program that would allow existing and transfer students to join, be more enticing to students while continuing to challenge them in writing-intensive courses (including the completion of a senior thesis), draw participants from throughout the university, and integrate with an already established science honors program.” (Altman)

#### **Strengths:**

- The inclusion/flexibility issue relates to many students’ experience within FMHC.
- The article will help us better understand how to appeal to students—DHC had an enrollment and retention issue and was forced to do

#### **Weaknesses:**

- This article is mainly focused on one school only and not all of it will apply to FMHC.

#### **Connections:**

- Many FMHC students (such as transfers) have to jump through hoops and take additional LLL’s or junior seminars to keep “on track” and fulfill their honors requirements. The DHC had a similar flexibility issue and this article explains how they dealt with it.
- The article also explains what in a curriculum is enticing to students. Things like making a Minor available for Honors students, offering research opportunities, and allowing students greater maneuverability within the program are appealing. These things draw in and help retain students, as demonstrated by DHC. These are interesting ideas to consider when moving forward with our project.
- According to this article, Honors curriculum should not be rigid. At the DHC, classes are proposed each year and developed by faculty. The core classes themselves have no set topics or reading lists; rather, they are more general categories like “Humanistic Understanding,” within which topics are chosen to cover the appropriate learning outcomes. An important thing for us to think about when redesigning FMHC curriculum will be how rigid—or elastic—that curriculum should be.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Might a segmented curriculum like the one implemented at the DHC allow FMHC to be more inclusive?
- How should the Honors experience differ from an underclassman to an upperclassman?
- How can we incentivize the Honors program?
- How might we offer opportunities beyond a simple general education replacement?

## Research Bibliography 14

Nachbar, Stuart. "The Pros and Cons of Honors Colleges." *The College Solution*, The College Solution, 22 Feb. 2013, [www.thecollegesolution.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-honors-colleges/](http://www.thecollegesolution.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-honors-colleges/).

### **Reason for including this source in your work:**

It provides an unbiased view of the good parts along with the bad parts of joining an Honors College nationwide. The author has talked with many Honors students around America in order to compile the list of likes and dislikes of the Honors College.

### **Main argument:**

Honors Colleges nationwide are all different in the ways they include their Honors students in the University, with what they provide exclusively to them to if they are sought after in high school. However, while there are numerous small differences, it can be agreed that most honors colleges around America are only following the general education path of getting credits done faster.

### **Important ideas:**

- State-supported schools have Honors programs to attract and retain students who might have otherwise chosen another school
- Every University gives different allowances to Honors students i.e. separate housing, scholarships, etc.
- The amount of influence on the campus is different for each Honors College. Some Universities have a large Honors College, while others have small Honors Colleges.

### **Evidence:**

Pro: An Honors program of respectable size, up to 10 percent of the student body, paints a positive picture on the academic reputation of the greater university community.

Con: Not all courses at a larger school will be Honors courses. Honors work would be combined with traditional large lecture courses in the first two years.

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- The Honors program is strictly a set of academic courses, usually including a senior thesis or research project with a faculty member.
- The Honors College is a learning community as well as an academic program within a large university.
- While we do not believe that such programs will detract a well-to-do student from attending a private school, nor can they deter a student from an economically disadvantaged background from going to a well-endowed school that can meet their financial needs without leaving them with a large pile of debt, they do get the "thumbs up" from thousands of excellent students.

**Strengths:**

- Gives an unbiased view of the Honors College from someone who has done research around the nation.

**Weaknesses:**

- Really only gives a couple examples of Universities throughout the whole essay.

**Connections:**

- Gives a broad overview about the general pros and cons of Honors Colleges nationwide, so by connecting this with our research, we can see if our findings are similar or not for Grand Valley.
- It talks about the different levels of immersion with Honors College and the rest of the campus depending on what their Universities provide for them, in which we want to improve our Honors College immersion with the rest of campus.
- It will be interesting to see if our findings for our design challenge match up with that of what people dislike about Honor Colleges nationwide.

**Questions/Concerns:**

Should housing be separate? Would this create a more inclusive feel in the Honors College with the rest of campus, which would then allow for the Honors curriculum to be known more?

# Research Bibliography 15

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Frederik Meijer Honors College. 2017. Honors Mission and Annual Report.  
<https://www.gvsu.edu/honor/honors-mission-annual-report-68.htm>

## **Reason for including this source in your work:**

It is the mission statement of FMHC and is the foundation on what the Honors College purpose is.

## **Main argument:**

The main point is that when a student has graduated from the Honors College, they will be inspired, culturally competent people that change the world.

## **Important ideas:**

- Motivated students- meaning that students who are in FMHC go above and beyond with their learning
- Lifelong learners- meaning that once graduated, the learning doesn't stop there or anywhere. Students are always out there trying to understand all that there is.
- Active global citizens- meaning that students are culturally competent and are able to grasp and work with people of every industry there is.

## **Evidence:**

Whenever an alumni, or current student, of the FMHC does something amazing in the community, it is published and displayed all across GVSU's website and the FMHC's Facebook.

## **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- Inspire and empower motivated learners
- Intellectually curious lifelong learners
- Leaders and active global citizens

## **Strengths:**

- It gives the exact definition of the types of students in the FMHC, due to the increased motivation level in order to succeed.

## **Weaknesses:**

- It doesn't really talk about inclusivity within the small community of FMHC, with peers and professors. It only talks about how people will be impacted in the community.

## **Connections:**

- It is the basis of what the FMHC is founded on, in which we are trying to change a major piece of.
- The curriculum needs to have the outcome of the mission statement that is in place.
- As this is GVSU's Honors College mission statement, how does it compare to other Universities mission statements and what their curriculum is?

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Write 1-3 questions or concerns this research raises for you and your team's work this semester.
- Do we need to revise the mission statement in any way to reflect the changes of the curriculum?

