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Garments with a Message: Developing an Evening-Wear Collection which Conveys an Underlying Message of Social and Life Issues

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the School of Human Ecology

By
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Under the mentorship of Professor Hope Simpara

Abstract

This research provides some insight to multiple social issues in the American women society and using elements of those issues to develop a collection of evening wear garments. The collection will consist of a 4-look evening wear group, which attempts to represent each code of dress in this design market: cocktail, prom, bridesmaid and bridal, that will be constructed using context that correlates with that specific garment's relative social issue. The following issues will be discussed: the millennials lack of knowledge when it comes to appropriate dress code for events, prom attire through the social media context, the real cost of serving as a bridesmaid and the wave of non-traditional bridal gowns in the wedding industry. The design development process is discussed and documented from conception to execution.

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Honors Director: _____
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I would first like to thank God for allowing me this opportunity to showcase my work. Lord knows this semester has without a doubt been a struggle and I wouldn't have gotten through it without consistent prayer and holding onto my faith.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their tremendous support with career choices. I didn't get a chance to talk to them much or hang out with them because I was completing this project but they knew that and supported me throughout this time.

My biggest thank you goes to my mentor and Professor Mrs. Hope Simpara. She was the greatest mentor anyone could have. She helped me get my project finished on time, stayed with me in the lab for extremely long hours literally everyday this semester including the weekends. Thank you for my putting up with my dramatic design and fabric choices without your help and guidance I wouldn't have created what I did.

Thank you to Dr. Maurer for emailing me and recommending the Honors Program to me, I would have never thought to apply and I am grateful for this preparation and I can't wait to see what the future holds for me!

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Introduction

The issues my project will address are the social and lifestyle issues American women may go through and face every day in life. I will address these issues in the form of fashion evening-wear garments: garments with message to be specific. Each garment in the collection will represent the specific issue related to a social or lifestyle issue. That issue is then portrayed in a way I see fit according to current research and current fashion trends. The project will showcase my designs of four evening wear garments: cocktail, prom, bridesmaid, and bridal gowns. Clothing is seen and worn on an everyday basis, therefore it's a great platform to send or portray nonverbal messages to consumers. The creative challenge is in sending messages related to the garment itself and getting people to understand the messages by asking questions.

It is important to explore these issues because it brings awareness to things one may not see unless clearly brought to surface or gives an issue a voice because no one seems to notice. When an issue arises no one really pays attention to it. It's not until the issue becomes recognized by most people and/or plastered all over social media for the message to become clear, because you're consistently seeing it. Therefore, by creating a collection related to these issues people are prone to pay attention because the message is right there in front of their faces. The issues each garment will portray are as follows: cocktail: appropriate dress code for different events, prom: social media impact, bridesmaids: the cost of being a bridesmaid, bridal: non-traditional bridal garments.

The first design will be a cocktail dress. My original idea was to have underage drinking inspire this design but I decided to change it to compliment my target market of 18 - 27-year-olds. The new inspiration is now the appropriate dress code specific needed

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for events. Millennials seem to lack some knowledge about dress codes when it comes to any event. This idea slightly correlates with my prom dress idea. Prom dresses are now overly exposed, dramatic, and seem to fit more the black tie formal and gala events but throughout the century the expectation has seemed to shift. It still is a defining moment in a young teen's life (Sowa, 2016, para. 3) but the style of the dresses now varies. Before it was the traditional tea length meant for the prom or "tea dance" (Sowa, 2016, para. 3). The event has grown to be the glamorous occasion we see today with the now "traditional" prom dresses varying in lengths, styles, and colors (Sowa, 2016, para 7). Because of this confusion I want to reiterate what is appropriate when it comes to the cocktail dress but of course modernizing the look.

The prom dress will be designed for social media and the teens who love it. Typically, what social media users do is captured with a photo and then immediately posted somewhere on social media. "Prom photos were once relegated to posing for Mom and Dad on the front lawn, and maybe stuffing a disposable camera into your sequined clutch" (Donnelly, 2014, para. 2). Now, everything's on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook. Getting "likes" requires going all out, which means spending money" (Donnelly, 2014, para. 2). The inspiration design behind this garment came from social media, specifically Instagram. Instagram seemed like the biggest platform where social media users were displaying the extravagant looks. So therefore, I took what I saw and designed my own prom ready Instagram look.

The bridesmaid dress will be an upcycled gown created to make a completely new dress. This idea is obviously a trend and can be seen in the article "*12 DIY Ways To Reuse Your Old Bridesmaid Dress says Refashion it into an even better dress*" (Yehle,

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2016) being number eight on the list. Being a bridesmaid requires a lot of purchases related to your appearance on “the big day” (Sloan, n.d., para. 7). Most bridesmaids are responsible for purchasing their own dress, shoes, jewelry, and makeup (Sloan, n.d., para 7). With all the money being spent and the wedding day finally over what are you now to do with the dress? One of the biggest criticisms when it comes to the wedding industry is the money wasted on a few hours of bliss. It’s fine for the bride because it’s their day but no one ever considers the bridesmaid when the wedding is complete. Therefore, I wanted to show women that their money doesn’t have to go to waste; you can get as much use as possible out of your bridesmaid by recreating the dress into something for everyday use

The new idea for the bridal gown goes back to my previous research of the non-traditional aspects of a wedding but more so the bridal gown. Traditionally brides wore their best clothes, irrespective to color (Valhouli, 2014, para. 6). White became the normality of the bridal gown once Queen Victoria chose the color for her 1840 wedding (Valhouli, 2014, para 6). In the 21st century brides are now ditching society’s norms and creating their own style with the type of garment being worn to their wedding. “Some women are saying no the dreamy walk down the aisle in flowing gown of lace silk and chiffon” (Cheung, 2016, para 1). “They will instead take their spotlight stroll in wedding pants” (Chenug, 2016, para 1). The traditionalism of a wedding gown is now outdated, brides are just wanting to be themselves. If that means wearing pants, then that’s what they’ll do. A style of pants will appear in my collection, specifically a bridal jumpsuit with a detachable skirt to still give it the traditional feeling for the ceremony. When it’s time for the reception the skirt comes off the jumpsuit will be the center of attention. It’s having two completely different looks for the same event.

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Background

By definition, fashion design is a form of art dedicated to the creation of clothing and other lifestyle accessories (Manesntails, N.D.). Art is the inspiration a creator or designer finds in things to create the garments and accessories. Art can also tell a story and portray a message if executed well. It can also be used in the creation of the garment and its materials as well. That's the beautiful thing about fashion design: there is no right or wrong but the question why? Why this silhouette? Why is material, fabric, or textile? Why this motif? My collection embodies all these things and takes on the role of getting people to ask, why?

The Cocktail Dress

The cocktail dress came about with the popularity of the actual cocktail drink (Idacavage, 2017, para 3). It wasn't until the Flapper Era during the 1920's when the dress became popular and it was traditionally a short evening sheath dress with a matching hat, shoes, and gloves to complete the look (Idacavage, 2017, para. 4). Much like today's happy hour between 6 and 8 pm was when cocktail hour took place (Idacavage, 2017, para 4). Because of this time frame the cocktail dress was designed to fit two different looks casual and sophisticated while being practical and functional. Millennials don't seem to understand this type of dress code and often wear casual day dresses to more formal occasions. My dress will still have the traditional cocktail look but I'm going innovate the design. With the cocktail dress design I wanted to keep it very traditional but pushing the boundary of the traditional look.

The Prom Dress

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The second dress will be a prom dress. This dress because it's a youthful rite of passage will deal with social media, since that's what most teenagers around the age of the prom are exposed to. Social media plays a tremendous part in a young person's life. Without it they feel they have no connection to the world. When it comes to prom that's a whole different story. "18-year-old Olivia Perrault told the *New York Post* about her \$4,000 prom experience of course, it's a great feeling...I posted my prom pictures on Instagram and one got 143 likes (Donnelly, 2014, para 3). "Teens tell the paper that striving to make a splash on social networking sites puts pressure on them to have the best dress, the best hair, and the best ride, no matter the costs (Donnelly, 2014, para 4). There is so much pressure and a big deal to have and be the best at the prom. The dress I'm creating was inspired from social media and current evening wear trends. Instagram was my go-to place to find the most popular silhouettes, styles, textures, and embellishments. After collecting that research, I created a dress worth of today's dramatic and extravagant prom dresses.

The Upcycled Bridesmaids Dress

The third dress will be upcycled bridesmaid's dress. This dress represents the common quote, "always a bridesmaid, never the bride". If that saying is true, always being a bridesmaid over a couple years will accumulate a great amount of dress being unused and collecting dust. Dresses, accessories, gifts, travel, events, and time all play a role in being a bridesmaid (Sloan, n.d.). With that being said: why are bridesmaids spending so much money on everything when it's not even their wedding day, especially when the dress will be worn only once. That's how the idea of upcycling and recycling was developed. The concept of taking an old bridesmaids dress and creating a new dress

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from the gown. It portrays the message of the consistent need of being a bridesmaid but the waste behind it. The dress is only worn once and for a short period of time so what can you really do with it? My idea is to make a completely new look that can be created and worn once the wedding is done.

The Bridal Gown

My final garment for the collection will be a non-traditional bridal gown. The idea behind this creation is the need for brides to feel comfortable and be themselves on their big day and aligning the design with current fashion trends in the bridal industry. The typical traditional dress is no longer wanted and often not seen in today's wedding ceremonies. Younger brides are now embracing non-traditional bridal gowns, from creating gowns from unconventional materials, gowns of different colors besides the Queen Victoria "white" that become the norm and symbol for purity, separates, pant suits, and jumpsuits. My design fulfills the new modern style for a bridal gown with a different color, style, and silhouette.

Design Development Process

First Concepts

When first deciding my research idea, generally it had to do with the bridal industry but specifically the wedding dress, which I had many ideas for. My ideas consisted of creating a collection of wedding gowns using the concept of upcycling, using unconventional materials to create a collection, and sustainable fashion. Originally the concept had to do with the limitations of the wedding dress in the bridal industry. I wanted to give brides a different and alternative wedding garment besides just having a different color and different silhouettes, the alternative being unconventional materials

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used to make the wedding dress with colors and different silhouettes. My goal with the project was originally to define and create new fashions using unconventional materials and extending prior efforts to diversify fashion options within the bridal industry. The difference with my research compared to previous research I found, was not sacrificing the aesthetics, i.e. some of the elements that the bride may want in the dress such as “something blue”, incorporating the color within the dress or even making the dress that color, or creating the infamous “Princess Dress” every bride assumes they want and innovating it to a higher standard.

The next idea came maybe after the 3rd or 4th idea that I had. I finally realized the ideas needed to be refined and simplified based on limited time, materials, and money. With the help of my mentor Professor Wallace and watching “*Jeremy Scott: The People’s Designer*” on Netflix where the creative director for Moschino designed a *Junk Food Couture* Collection. The garment that grabbed my attention was the final garment; a bridal gown and its fabric had nutrition facts printed on it. Then I thought and asked myself what was the purpose behind that design? It’s a non-verbal message showing that society believes brides should be a certain size. The brides should watch what they are eating to be accepted to what society deems the “norm” or “beautiful”. I loved the idea so much I revised my project changing the entire inspiration and the new element to focus on conceptualizing garments to communicate a social message. The new research question became, “Is it possible to create a collection of evening wear garments using, unconventional methods and unconventional styles that portray a social message?” With unconventional methods including upcycling, relating to the bridesmaid dress and an unconventional style would be a jumpsuit or a jacket and skirt with regards to being a

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bridal garment since that wouldn't be considered a typical or traditional bridal garment. I want to get consumers to see and understand why these issues are important.

Iterative Revisions

The new revisions came about because of the lack of time, money, and local material available but also because it seemed as if the new ideas made more sense and fit the garments and my design aesthetic more than before. The garments will still portray social messages through them but they are now more social or lifestyle issues compared to before and will not feature unconventional materials as a main textile. I wanted the garments' designs and social issues to coincide and be very clear why I chose, what I chose. I also wanted to design all my garments around my age range therefore some of the design concepts and target market changed with it. Most importantly I wanted to see myself in my designs. The type of designer I am requires me to push myself and do difficult work. I wanted surface treatments (i.e. beading or embroidery), drama, and elegance, head-turning designs, because that's how I like to design. If I would have went in the other directions previously stated I would have lost my aesthetic in those designs and I didn't want that.

Description of Garment(s)

There will be 4 garments in the evening wear collection. A cocktail, prom, bridesmaid, and bridal dress.

1. The "cocktail" dress relates to the issue that my generation doesn't understand: dress code and the level of taste in a garment. What I mean by this is, if I invited a group of my fellow peers to a cocktail party or black-tie event, would they know

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what's appropriate for these events? Mostly likely not because adolescents seem to think prom is an Oscars event because of their dress which traditionally is meant for short flirty dresses, e.g., a cocktail dress. They are dressing for the wrong occasion essentially. I want to showcase what is appropriate while also pushing the boundary a bit, what makes a cocktail a cocktail dress? Is it the material, silhouette, length? That gets into my question of level of taste. If I design a dress that looks like a cocktail dress but it's made of t-shirt material, is this still appropriate? The design of the garment will have an asymmetrical one-shoulder fit and flare dress. The bodice has bust darts in the front and waist darts in the back, a half circle cut from the abdomen area to tastefully expose the stomach, and a circle skirt attached to complete the dress. The material is a satin embossed rose's fabric that was originally white in color but dyed to rose gold.

2. The prom dress is a dramatic Instagram show stopper perfect for pictures and "The Gram" (Instagram) as millennials call it. The dress will be gold with a screen-printed rose design on top of the fabric, a trumpet style silhouette, deep "v" sweetheart neckline with a band attached around the shoulders to make the design off the shoulder and detachable dramatic cape sleeves to complete the design.
3. The bridesmaid dress will be an upcycled gown featuring one bridesmaids' dress re-created to make a completely new garment. The silhouette will be completely transformed into a two-piece set from the plain satin aqua blue bridesmaid dress. The top being a sweetheart bralette with seams running horizontally across the bust. Two mini circle skirt pieces will be seamed together and attached at the side

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seams of the bralette to give the off the shoulder design and finished with cover buttons as the closure. The bottoms of the set is a high-waisted pencil skirt with cover buttons as the closure to match the top.

4. The bridal gown is very non-traditional compared to what society deems normal in the bridal market. It is a two-piece garment to show differentiation from the other garments and the typical bridal garment. Baby blue 3D embroidered flowers sheer lace is the jumpsuit's fabric with a solid colored similar baby blue one shoulder piece wrapping only on one of the shoulders. The skirt is a cascade skirt with a somewhat bell shaped, detachable stomacher skirt that has a curved opening in the front to see the pants and fabric of the jumpsuit underneath. Because the fabric is sheer there will also include a nude boy short panty to cover one of the erogenous zones as well as bra cups covered with baby blue bias tape to finish the neck line and keep the bust covered as well.

Fabrication Process

Sourcing is very limited in the Statesboro area but I made it work by sourcing as many outside places as possible. I got the bridesmaid dress from the local goodwill, the fabric for the cocktail dress came from Joann Fabric store in Savannah. All the fabrics being used will be purchased online from different fabric websites including Moodfabrics.com, etsy.com, and fabric.com. Most of the garments will include an invisible and cover buttons specifically for the upcycled bridesmaid dress to up my skill level on evening wear finishes. The upcycled bridesmaid and cocktail dress costs are significantly lower compared to the prom and bridal dress which are the most dramatic

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and pricey of the collection. I purchased many different swatches from many different places before deciding on the final garment fabric. This is common in the design process because the fabric that you see online may not work for the garment you want and the color may not be exact as well.

Target Market

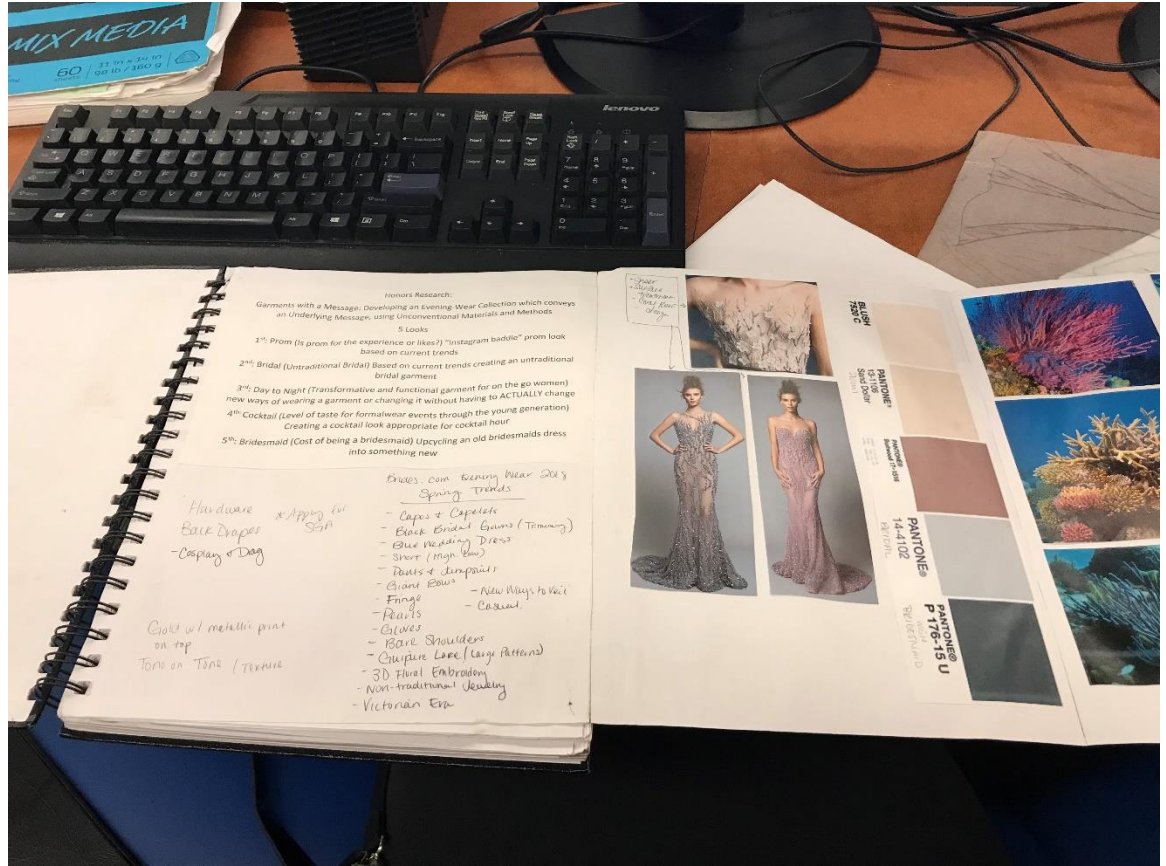
1. Cocktail dress: Ages 17 – 25. Single with a middle-class income. Enjoys dressing up when an event is happening but not too dressy. Very simple but a little extravagant at the same time. The young lady has lots of energy and slightly corky personality. Likes to sew herself.
2. Prom: Ages 16 – 19. A high school student who loves social media and fashion. She wants to be the center of attention so that at prom her dress gets noticed by her peers and social media followers. Very outgoing personality, could be a cheerleader, spoiled and very popular in school. Parents will have a high income.
3. Bridesmaid: Ages 20 – 25. Loves DIY and doesn't mind sewing a dress together for her friend's big day. Middle class income and doesn't want to always spend money, she would prefer to save if she can. Very organized and creative.
4. Bridal: Ages 20 – 27. Wants to be different and stand out from the crowd. Doesn't like the typical bridal attire. Loves DIY as well and finding materials to create things. Creative and very outgoing personality, wants to feel comfortable, and find a median between traditional (for her parents) and non-traditional (for herself) elements for her gown.

Conception to Reality

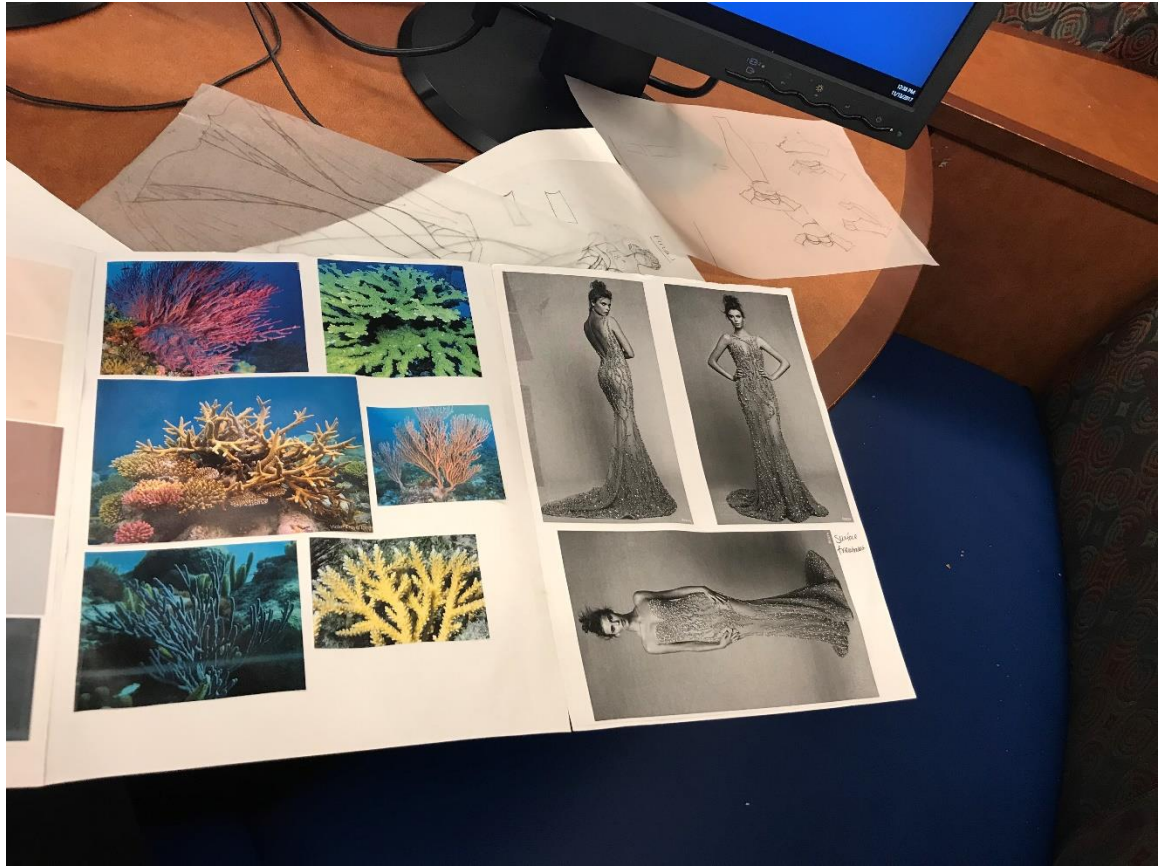
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Starting this process, I had find things that inspired me. My biggest inspiration and overall concept design was having the social messages issues correlate with my designs, but now it was time to design each garment piece. Therefore, I searched online for things that I liked which included, fabrics, silhouettes, colors, surface treatments, and even smaller details such as sleeve shapes, high slits, pleats, etc. basically any and everything that I could use to complete my collection. I also had to some trend research to find things that would be trending for my Spring/Summer 2018 Eveningwear Collection. Brides.com had plenty of information of trends for the upcoming year which included, **Capes and Capelets**, Black Wedding Dress, **Blue Wedding Dresses**, High Necklines, **Short Dresses**, **Pants**, Giant Bows, Fringe, Pearls, Gloves, **Bare Shoulders**, Guipure Lace, **3D Floral Embroidery**. So, taking those things bolded previously I designed my line. I found pictures of things I like for each piece and combined what I liked to create the new garment.

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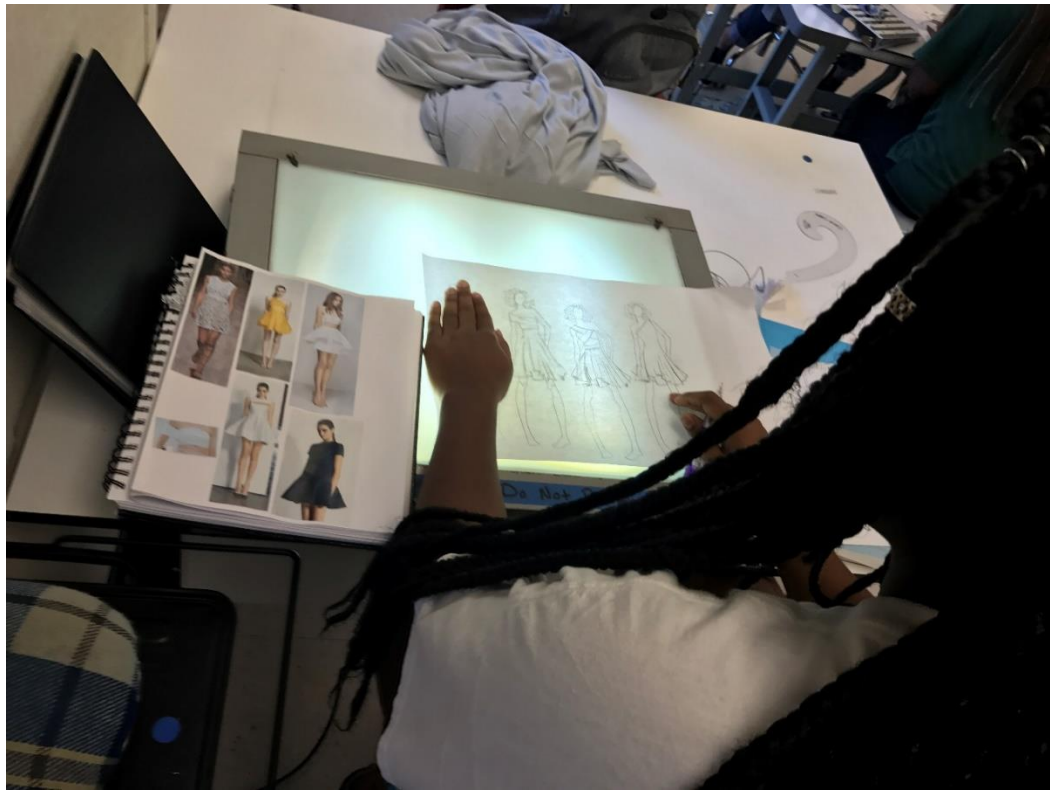
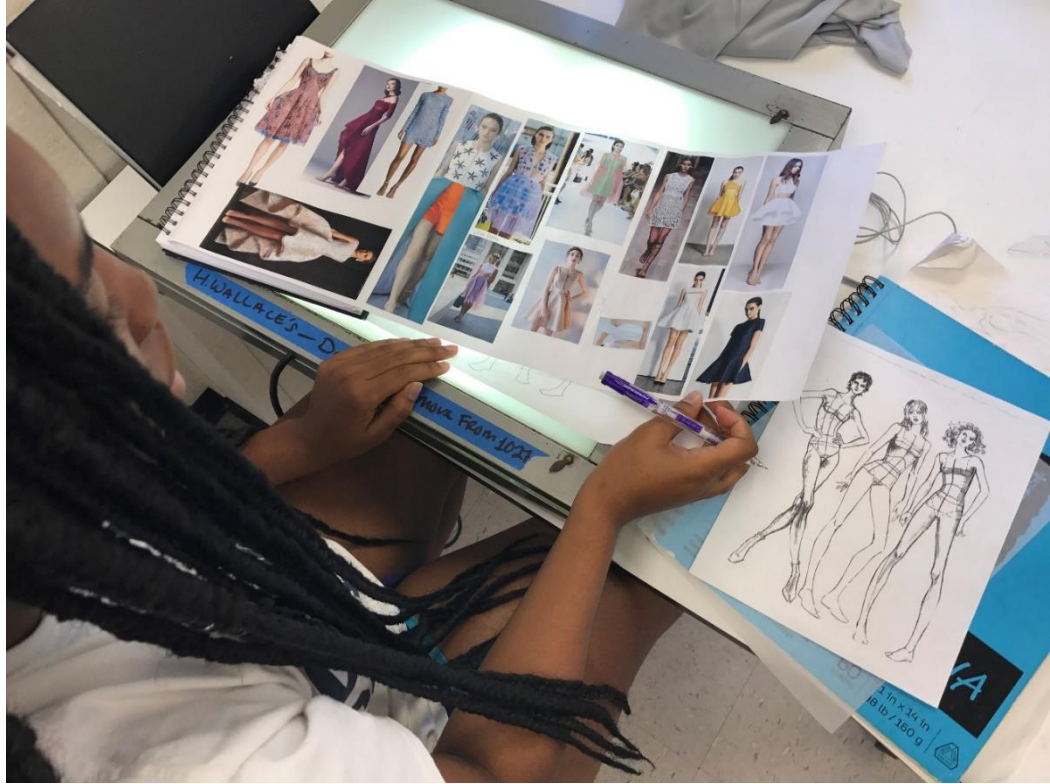
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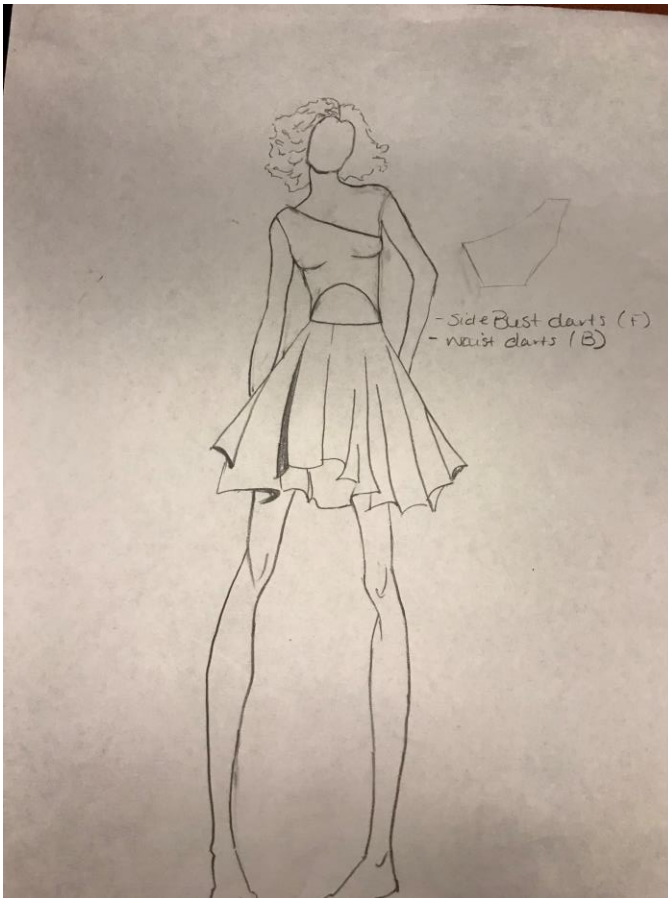
The Cocktail Dress

When I started designing the cocktail dress I knew that I wanted it to be short. A lot of the research I found in the beginning I really liked the high low look so that's what I originally wanted. After further research about the cocktail dress and my social issue changing with it I decided to keep it short and sweet but tweak the bodice of the garment. By the time I started designing the cocktail dress I had already decided on my prom dress and wedding gown. I knew I wanted the bare shoulders but I wanted change the consistent sweetheart neckline into just an asymmetrical one shoulder still allowing for the *bare shoulder* trend.

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I started with drafting the circle skirt portion for the bottom of the dress by taking my fit model's measurements. The main measurements I needed were her waist measurement and how long I wanted the dress to be including the hem and seam allowance. From there I created the bodice shape of the dress form by finding the closest dress form to her size and using draping tape to visualize and mark where and

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what the bodice look like once it was completed.



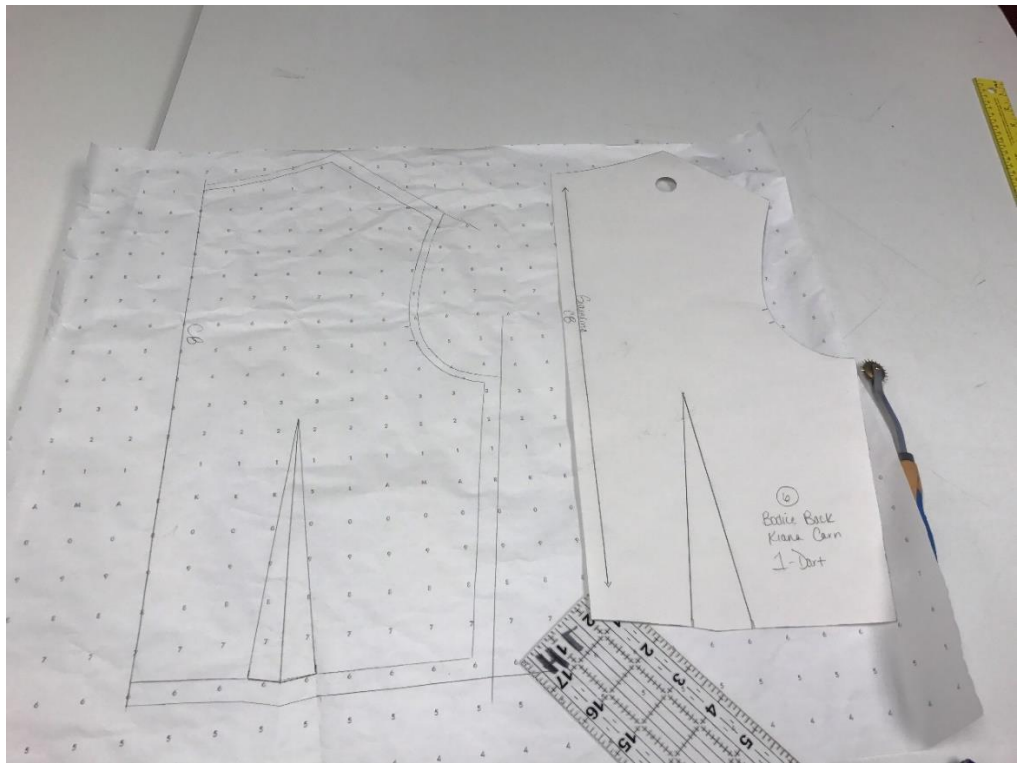
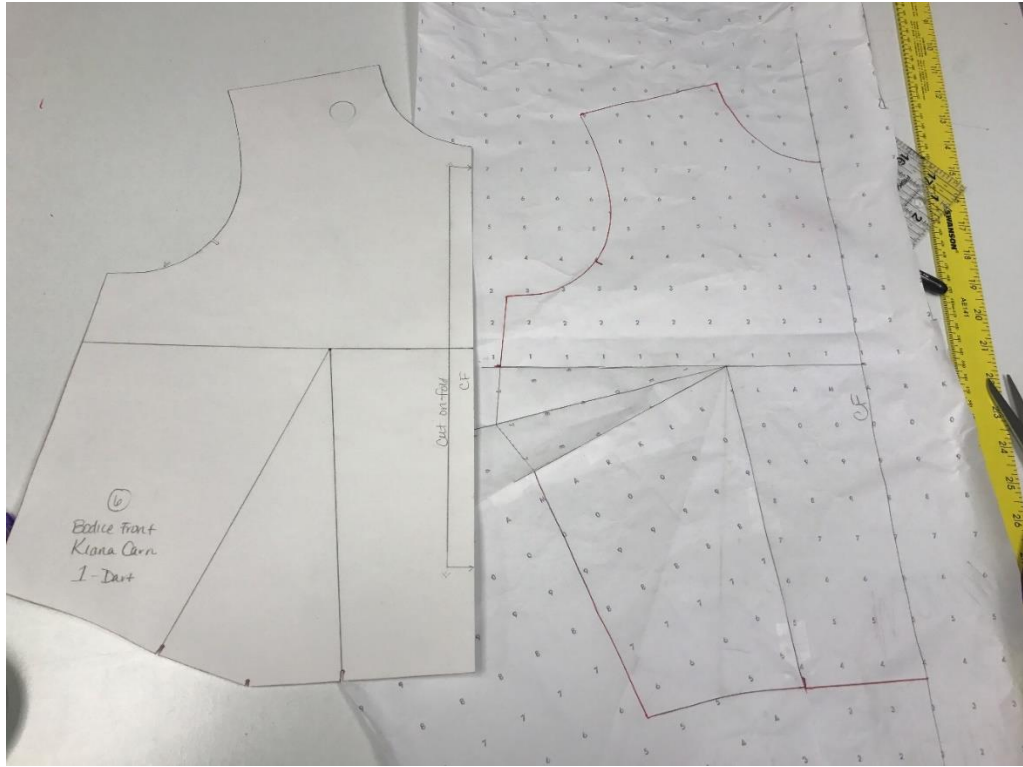
After seeing what the garment would look like I knew that I needed some type of darts to have the bodice sit close to the body especially since I decided that I wanted part of the stomach to be exposed, therefore I decided on bust darts in the front and waist darts in the back. Referring back to my Design Analysis 1 class from the previous semester I knew I didn't have to drape the bodice on the dress form but flat pattern the bodice with the darts and draw where on the pattern to cut for the shape of the bodice. So I did that and sewed a muslin together for the bodice. A *muslin* is a

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sample of what the garment will look like before it's actually cut on the fabric of your choice. You always want to create a muslin before cutting your actual fabric to see what the garment will look like and for alterations if there is a fit model. You can't see errors on a flat pattern but you can see them on the muslin.



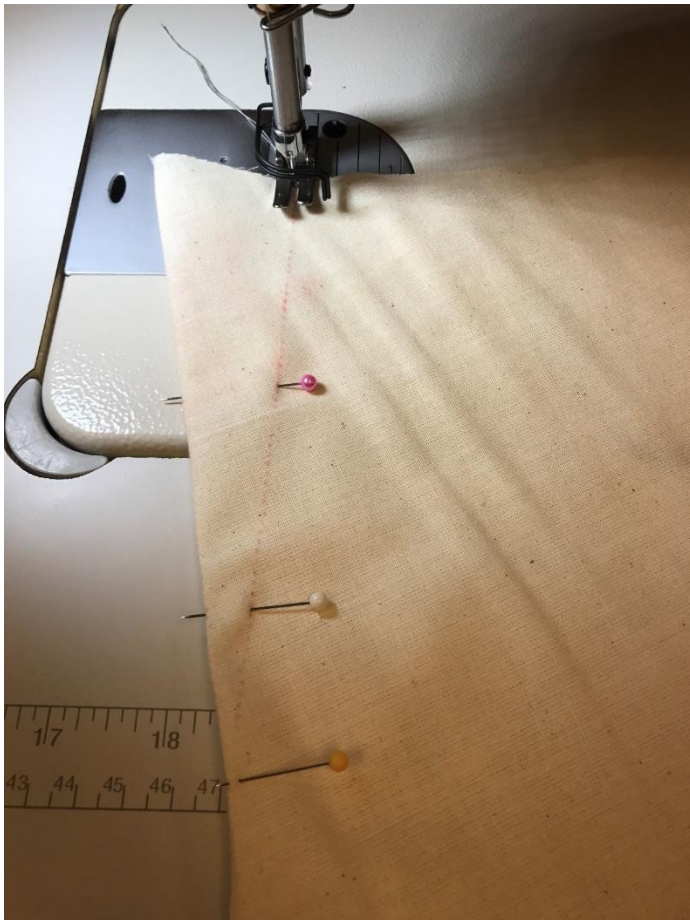
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Once I had the muslin of the bodice created I put it on top of the dress form to see where my draping tape would have to be traced off for the shape that I wanted.

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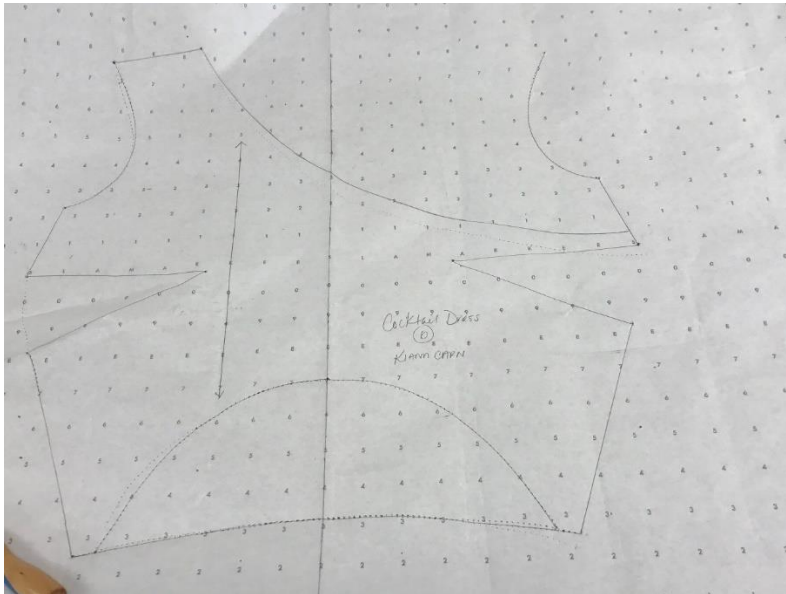


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Once I traced off the shape of the bodice I removed the muslin from the dress form to create the pattern for the bodice. A *pattern* is basically a template for each piece and shape of garment that is traced onto fabric for cut and sew.

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Now, that I had the patterns for the entire dress created it was time to sew up a muslin of the entire dress. So, I recut the bodice patterns out again on the muslin fabric and cut the skirt on the muslin fabric as well. I sewed each of my darts, side seams, shoulder seams together and sewed as much of the waist seam as possible

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since that is where the stomach is exposed. I also *stay stitched* my severe curves that way they wouldn't stretch out, this included the waist of the skirt, the neckline of the bodice, and the arch of the expose stomach area.



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The muslin is now complete and it is time for a fitting with my model. My model was too small for the dress form size I chose but, that was completely fine because

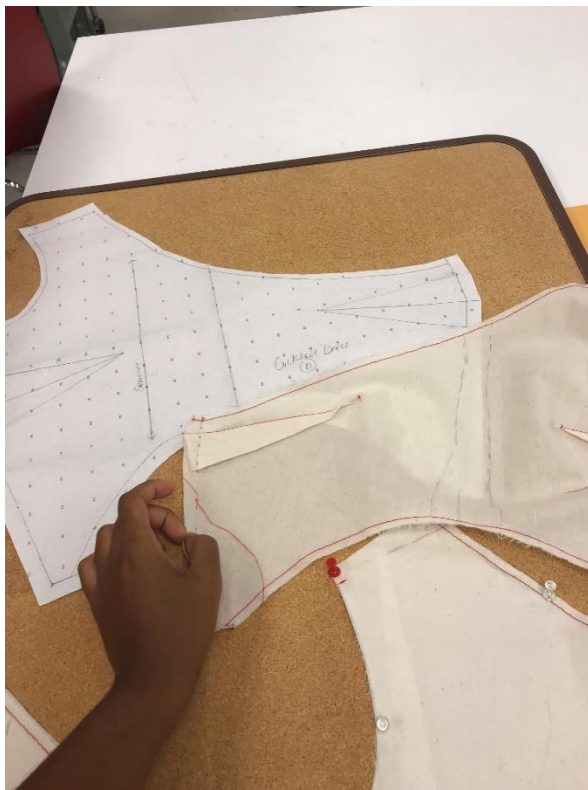
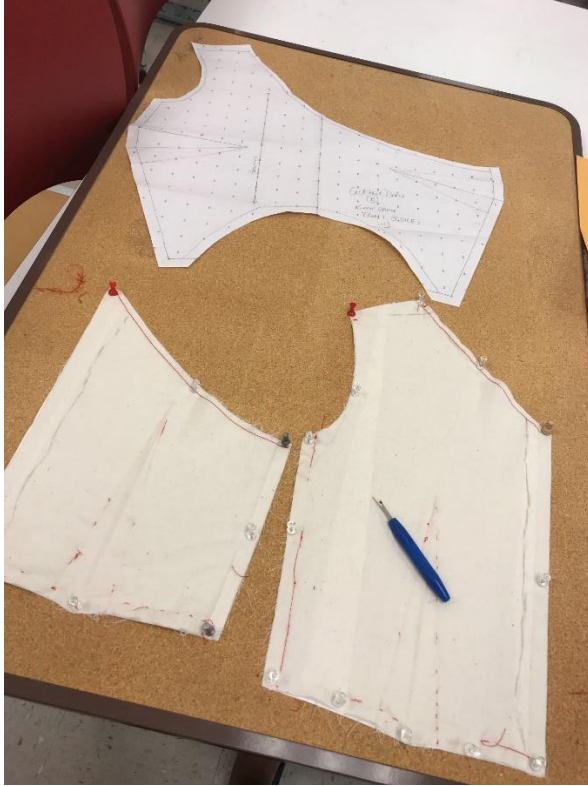
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it's easier to take in a garment than let it out. So, I marked in the places that the dress needed to be taken in and converted those markings to my pattern. Because my bodice is asymmetrical it was a little difficult changing the pattern because the sides are not even on both sides of the bodice therefore I had to add paper and redraw a new line to blend the current lines with each other. The circle skirt was also slightly too big as well so I took about 1-1/4 inch out the center back of the skirt pattern to adjust the size.

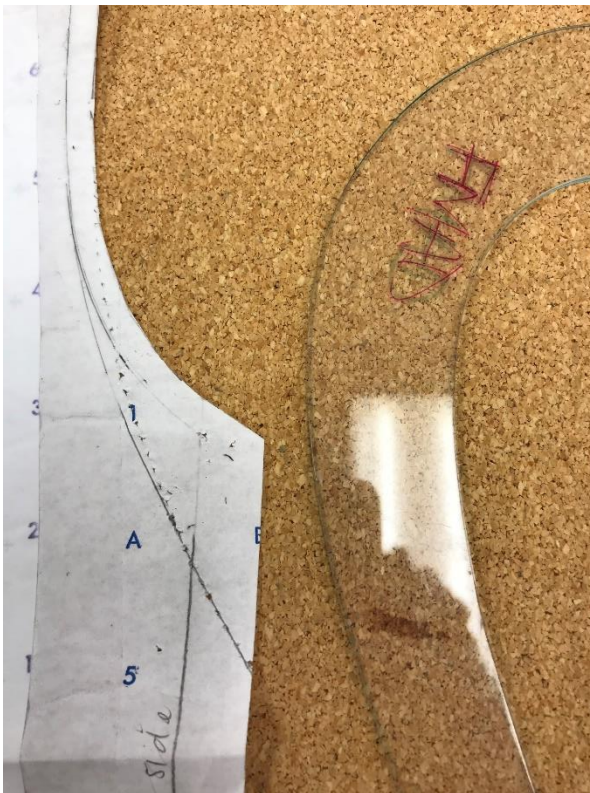
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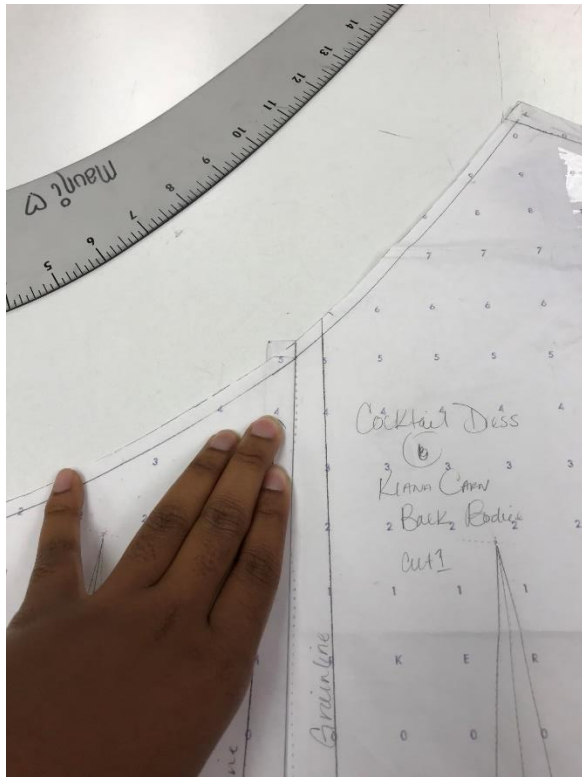
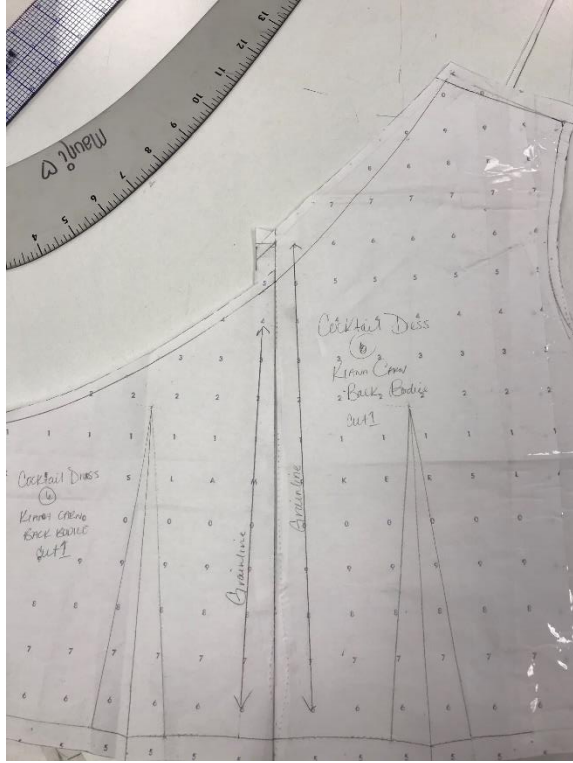
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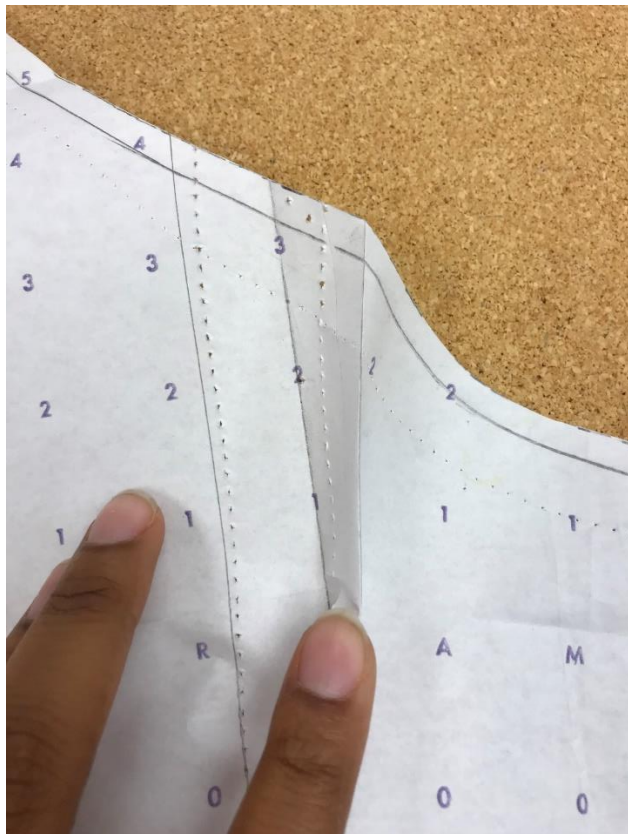
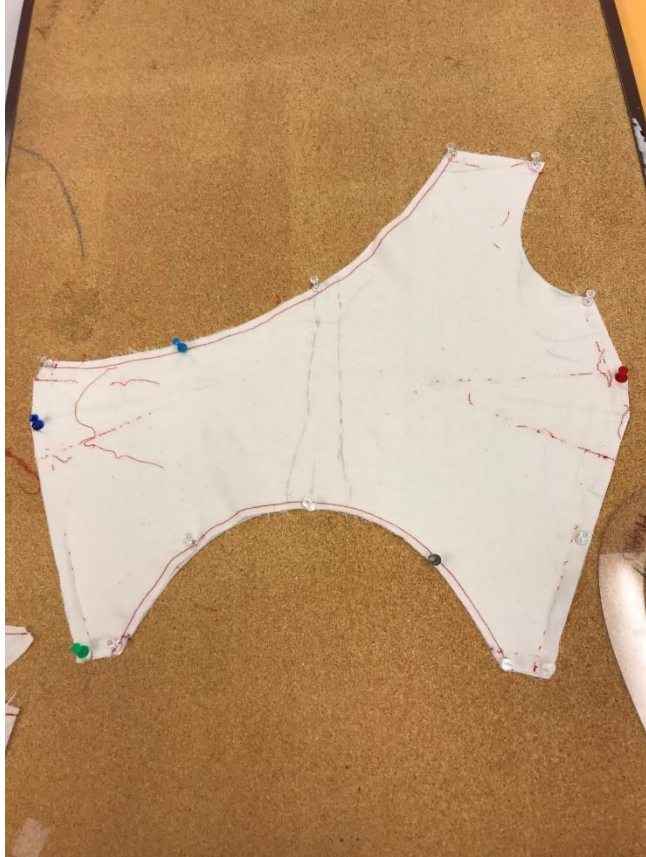
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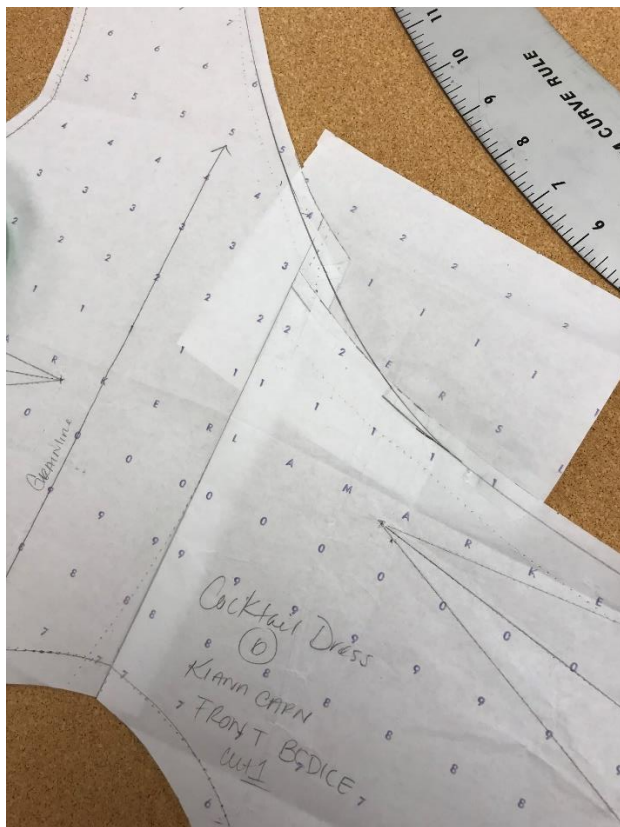
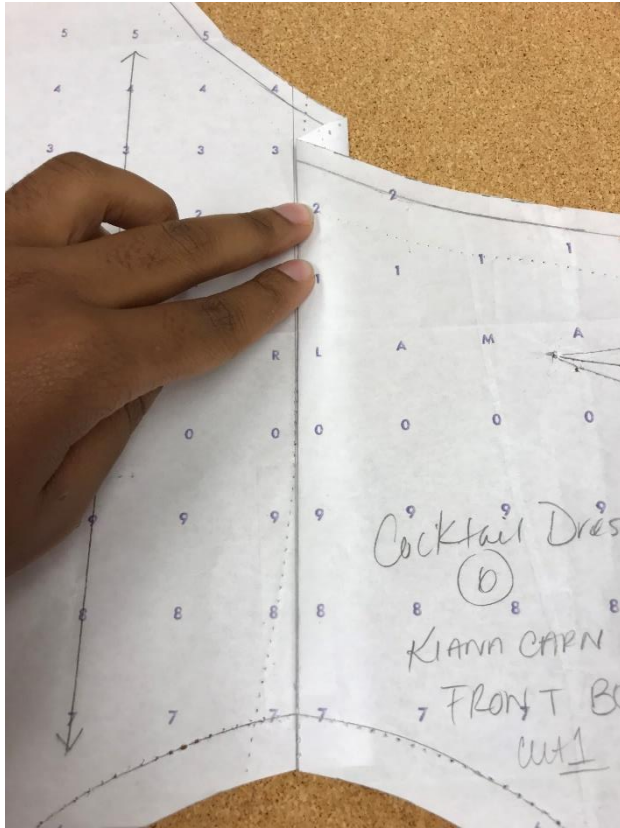
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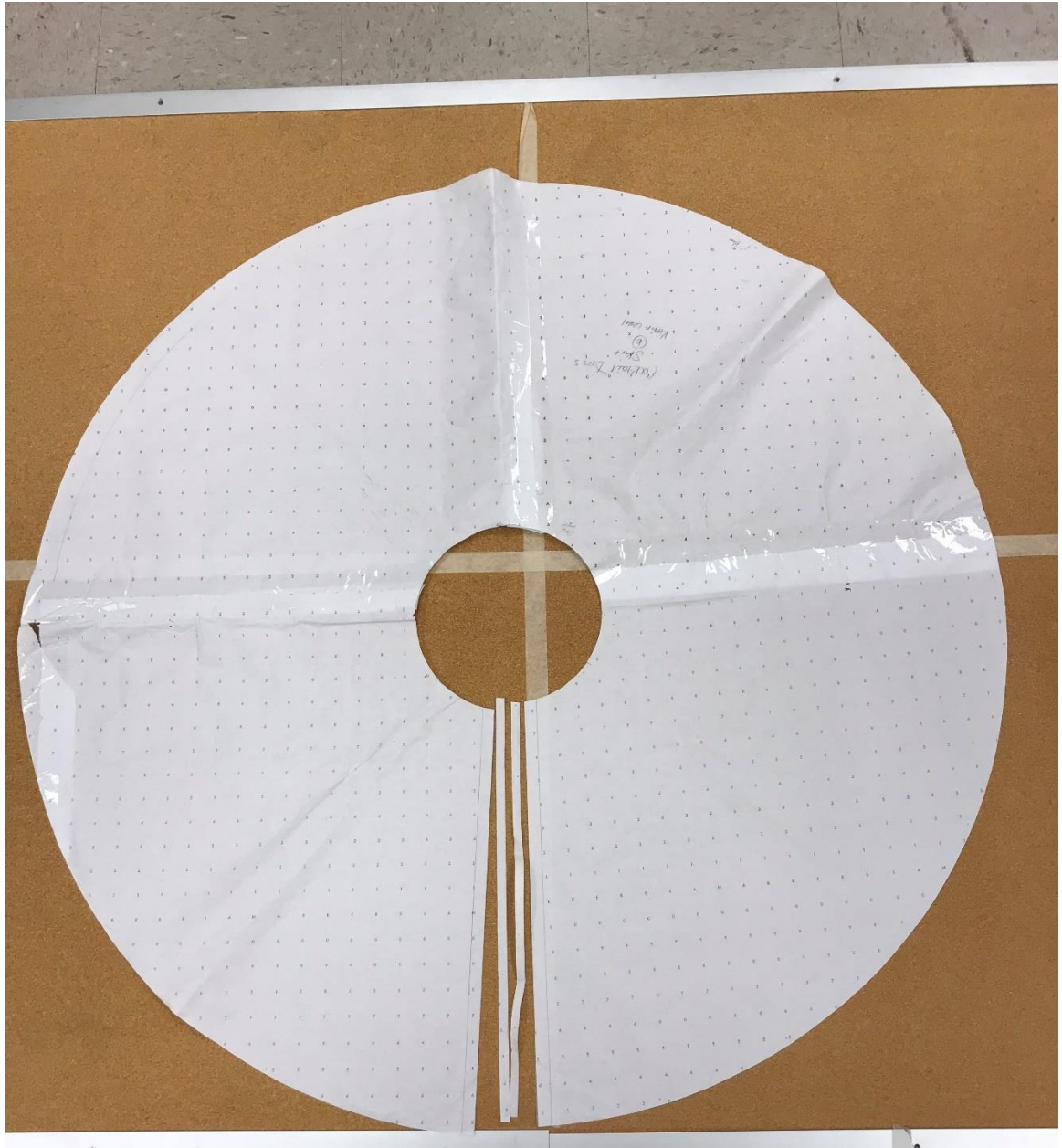
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Originally designing my cocktail dress the idea of using paper as the textile for the dress was thought of but after doing some research I decided not to go that route. I was told that it was very time consuming to create the actual paper to sew on. I thought of laser cutting paper but the person I emailed about it locally never got back to me so I decided to go with a fabric. The fabric I chosen Professor Wallace saw at Joann's in Savannah she sent me a couple different fabrics but it was one that I liked

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very much except that fact that it was white. So, that's when I thought I would just dye a fabric the color I wanted to give it some uniqueness. Because my color scheme were neutrals I wanted a pink as the color for the dress, to make it different and vibrant. So, I did some sample swatches before dyeing the fabric to see what color I liked best. The color, pink in the bottle was too pink and didn't go with the other fabrics that I had chosen. So, I went back to the store and bought a tan color to help better match with the gold fabric for the prom dress and mixed those colors together, to get a rose gold color instead of hot pink. The process of dyeing the fabric was also a bit much. The fabric is a polyester so I had to use a synthetic dye which is more expensive than a plant based fabric such as cotton, so it had to be heated up on the stove.

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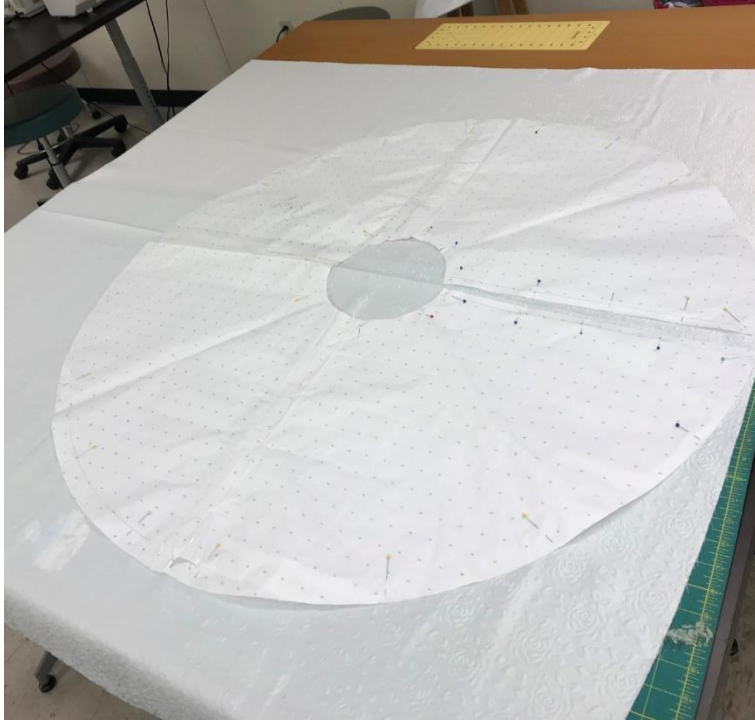
When I finished with my samples I decided that I wanted to sew up another muslin just to make sure the alterations were correct before cutting my actual fabric. And my model fit the new muslin perfectly. Once I saw that it was now time to cut my fabric and begin the assembling the dress together.



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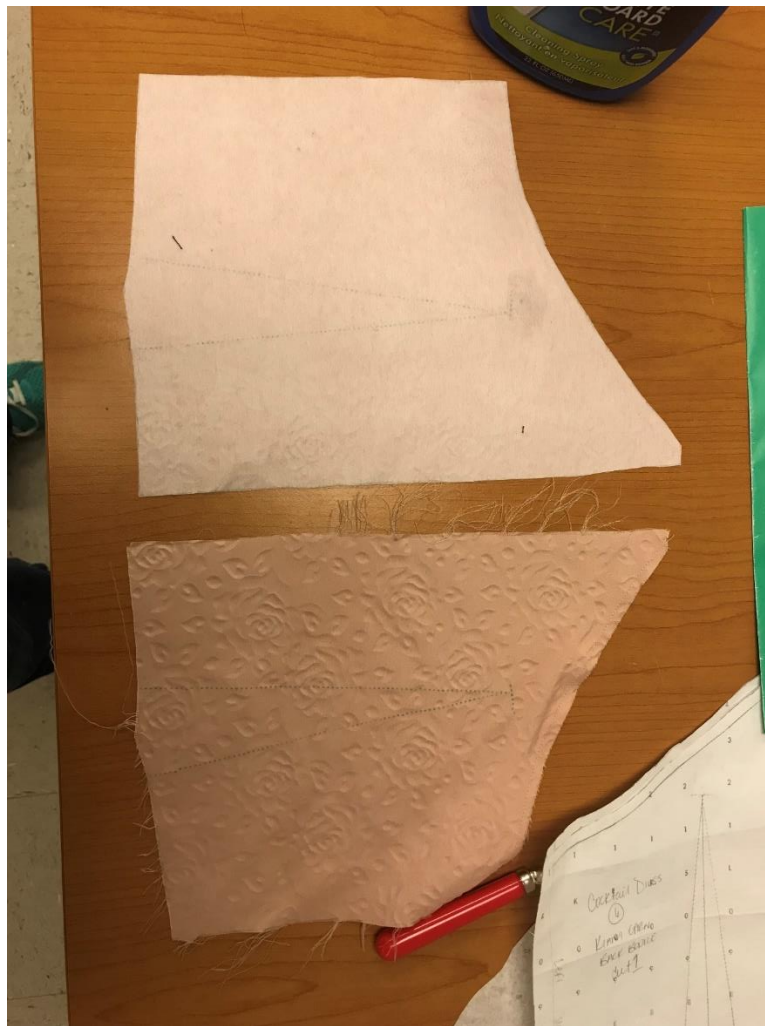
Thinking about construction of the garment, the bodice needed to be *self-faced*, meaning the bodice pieces had to be cut twice and assembled to make two bodice pieces one for the outside layer that everyone would see and one inside layer that will sit closest to the body to finish the raw edges. The circle skirt would just need a 2 inch facing to finish the raw edge of the waist seam. Again I made sure to stay stitch my severe curves. And once I had my pieces all cut I went home to dye the fabric.

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So, because I needed facing pieces for the garment the facing pieces had to be interfaced, serged, pressed out, stay stitched to make sure the seam wouldn't roll and not lay flat on the body. Once that was done I assembled the 2 layers of bodices together, again stitching my darts and seams together. The shoulder was left out due to that fact that it had to be turned right side out first then right sides together to hide the stitched seam inside of the 2 assembled bodices.



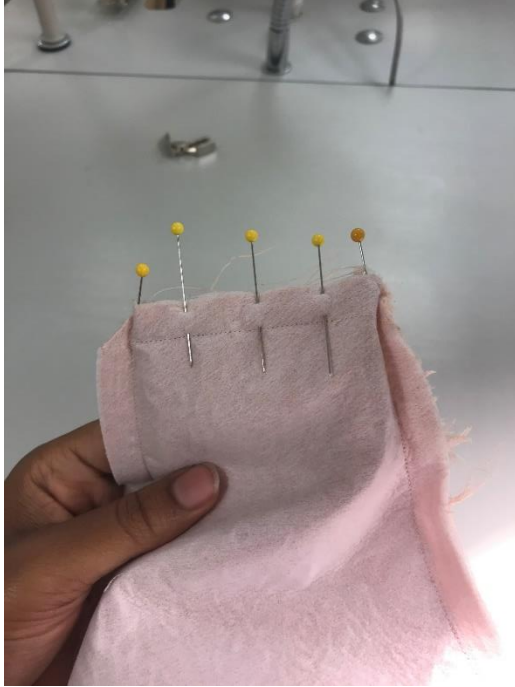
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I also had to make sure I clipped the inside stomach arch and side seam corner of the shoulder to make the fabric lay down completely. Because I stitched the 2 bodice pieces together the new assembled bodice piece needed to be pressed to lay flat on the body. I also now needed to serge the raw edges of the skirt which included the center back and the hem of the skirt before combining the bodice and skirt together. Once all that was completed I flipped the bodice the correct way and now it was time to attach the skirt.

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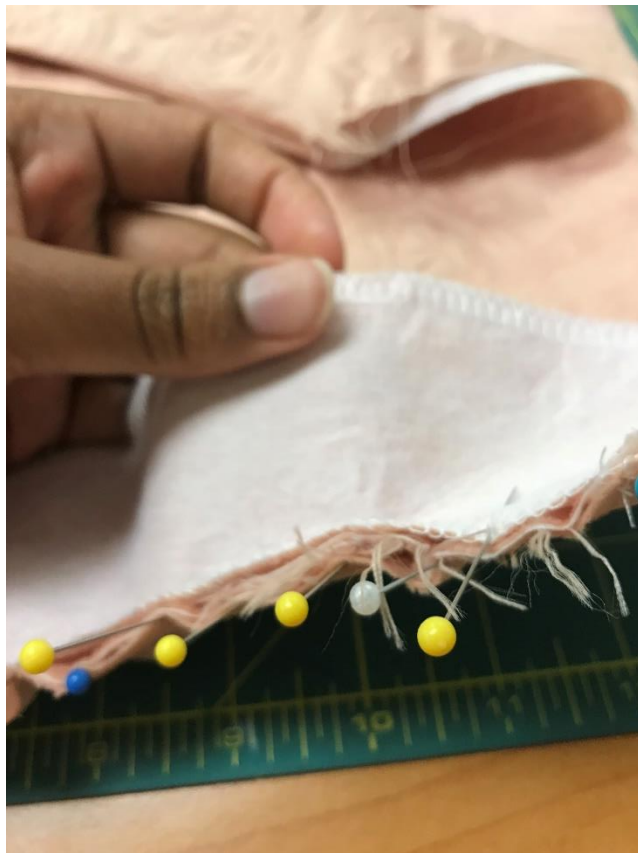


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Attaching the skirt and the bodice was very easy. I had to first lay out the skirt and bodice on top of each other right sides facing each other then add the skirt facing on top of the bodice so it will hide inside the dress. Essentially the bodice was sandwiched in between the skirt and skirt facing. I stitched those layers together and then stay stitched the skirt facing piece.

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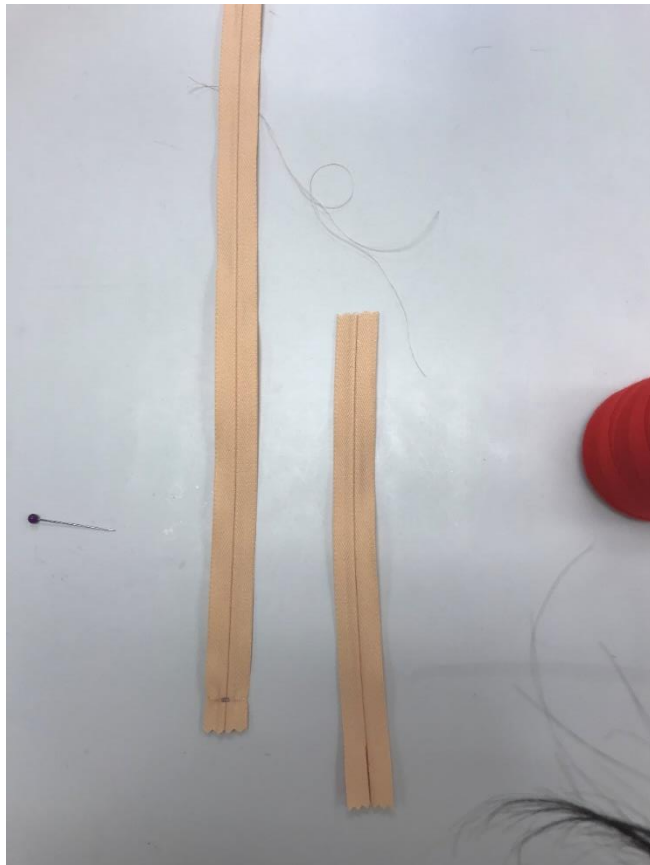
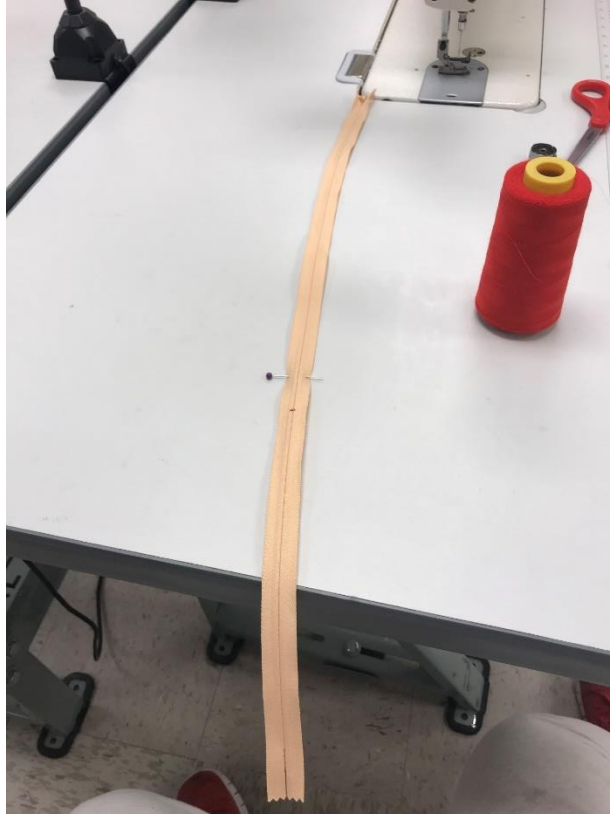


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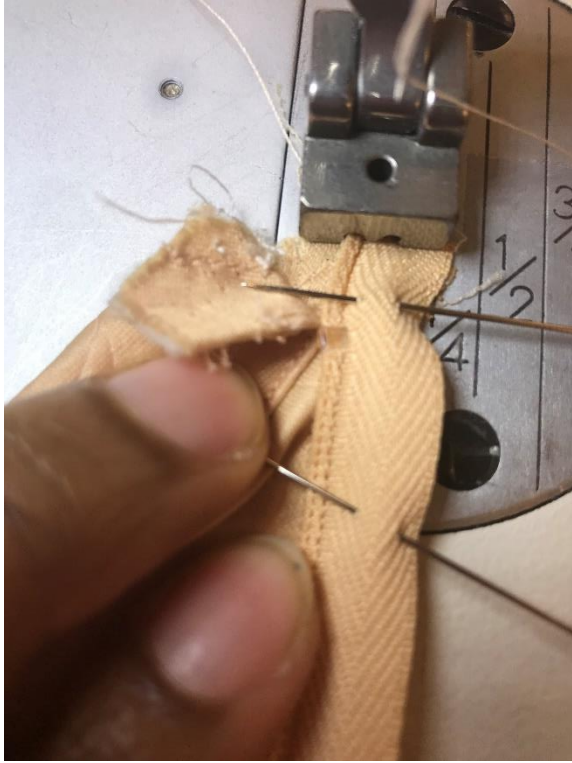


For the closure of the dress I wanted an invisible zipper. I found one the color I needed at a local alteration shop here Statesboro. The zipper I had gotten was too long therefore I needed to shorten it. After that I put the zipper in using an invisible zipper foot for the sewing machine and stitched the zipper to the outside layer of the dress. The bottom of the dress got hemmed and because the zipper was only stitched to one layer of the bodice portion of the dress, the inside layer of the bodice had to be turned $\frac{1}{2}$ inch between the outside and inside bodice layers and whipped stitched. The garment is now completed.

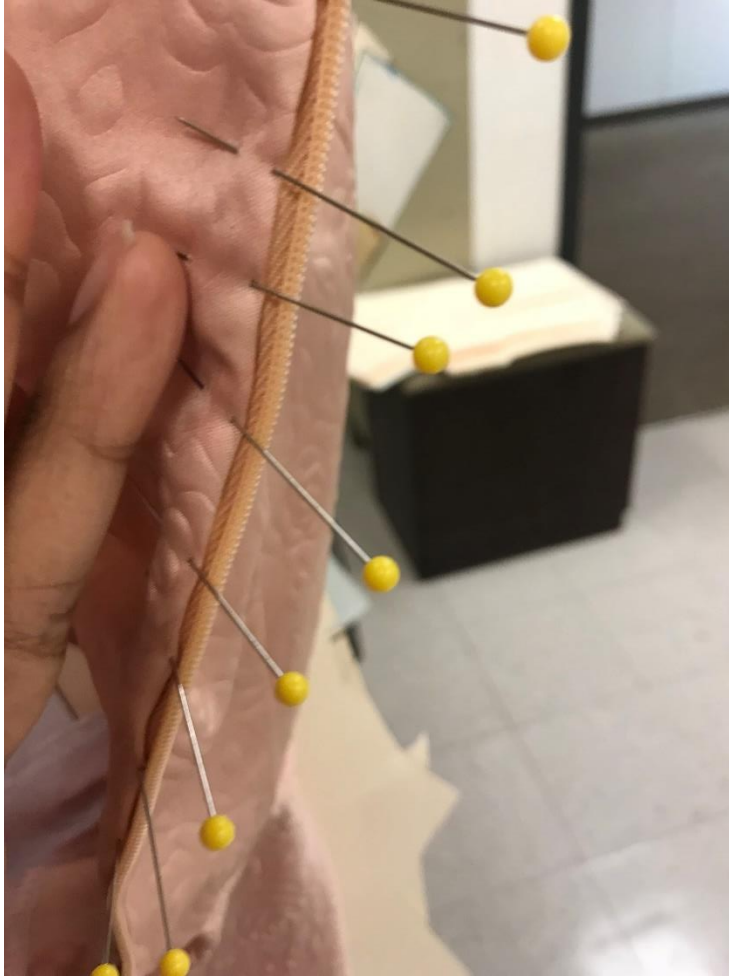
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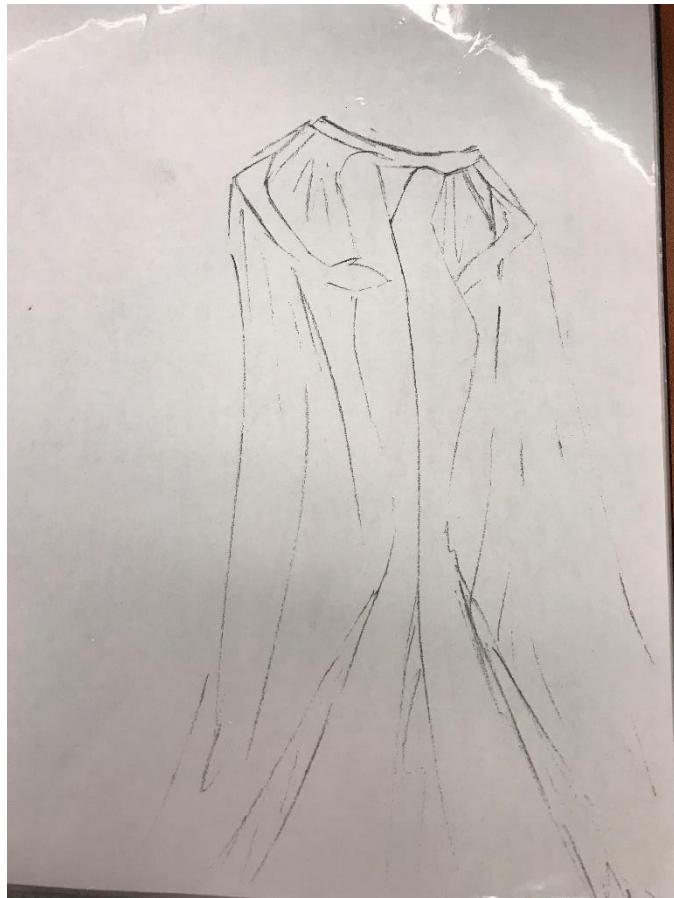
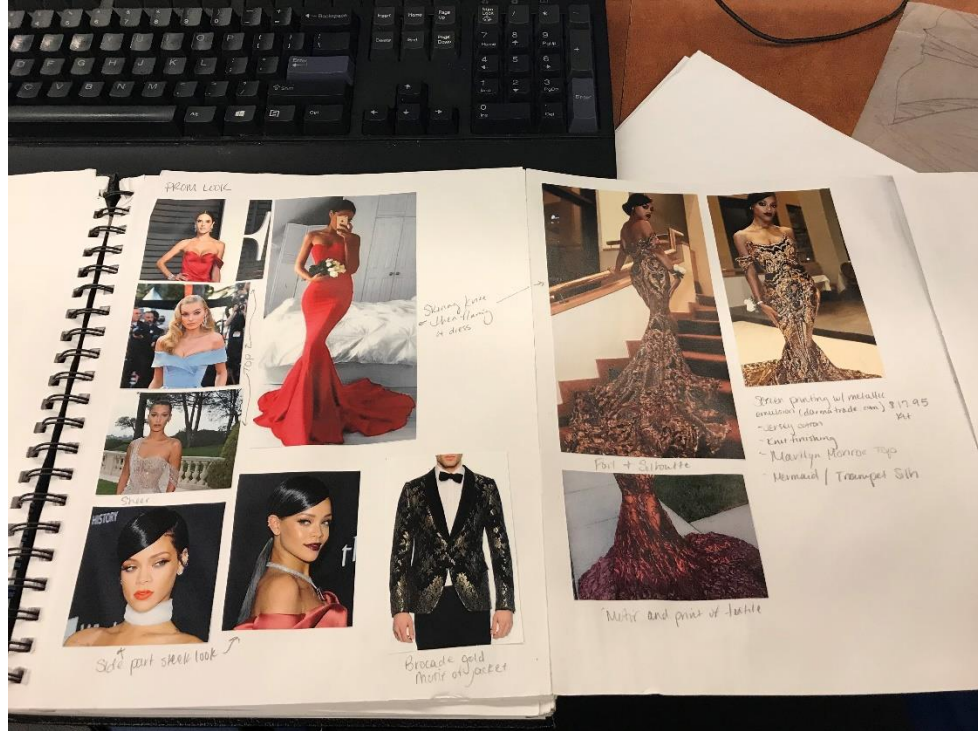
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The Prom Dress

I knew for my design idea for the prom dress I wanted it to be dramatic. I was really inspired and loved one dress I had seen last semester from a designer by the Instagram name of @marquette21. The fabric he used really inspired the design for the prom dress. I also wanted to of course make sure I stayed on trend when it came to the design as well. Once I figured out what I liked I did a quick sketch and started the process.

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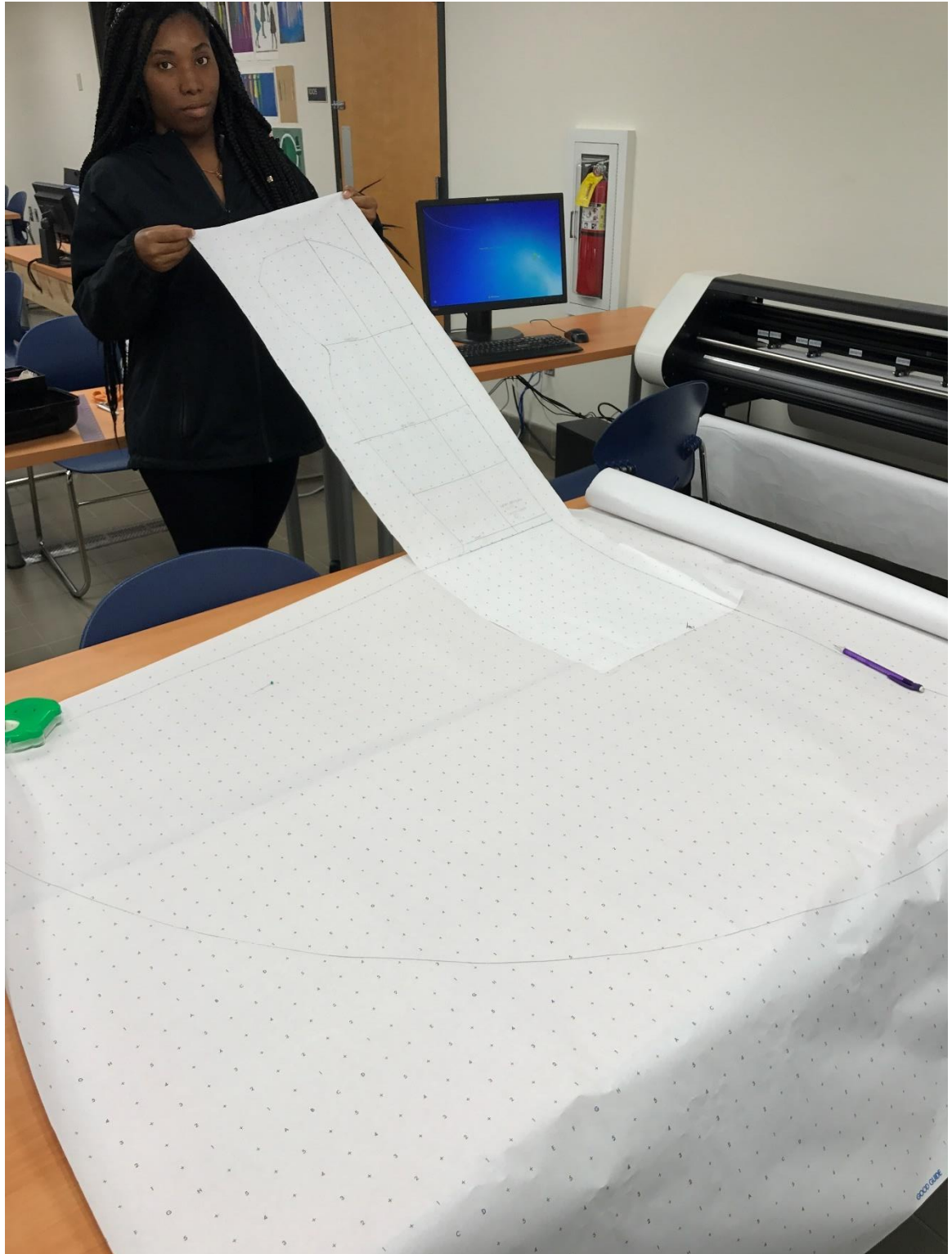


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I first started by completely draping the garment on the dress form. The reason was because I was going to be using a knit fabric after looking for swatch samples at Moodfabrics.com it was one swatch I liked very much so that's the one I decided to go with. Whatever fabric your final garment will be, that's the fabric you must drape with. So, because my final fabric is a knit I draped in a knit fabric otherwise my garment wouldn't stretch like I needed it to. Again, I picked a dress form closest to my model's size and draped the dress on the form. I only draped to from the knee up because the trumpet style skirt can be trued on paper. I then took my drape off the form and transferred it to pattern paper. With eveningwear, the reason garments are so expensive is because more paper is used, more difficult work it being done, and you can't see what or how the garment will react until a muslin is completed first. I also created the shoulder band and wrapped it around my model's shoulders to see where on the band it will touch the neckline and how long it needed to be.



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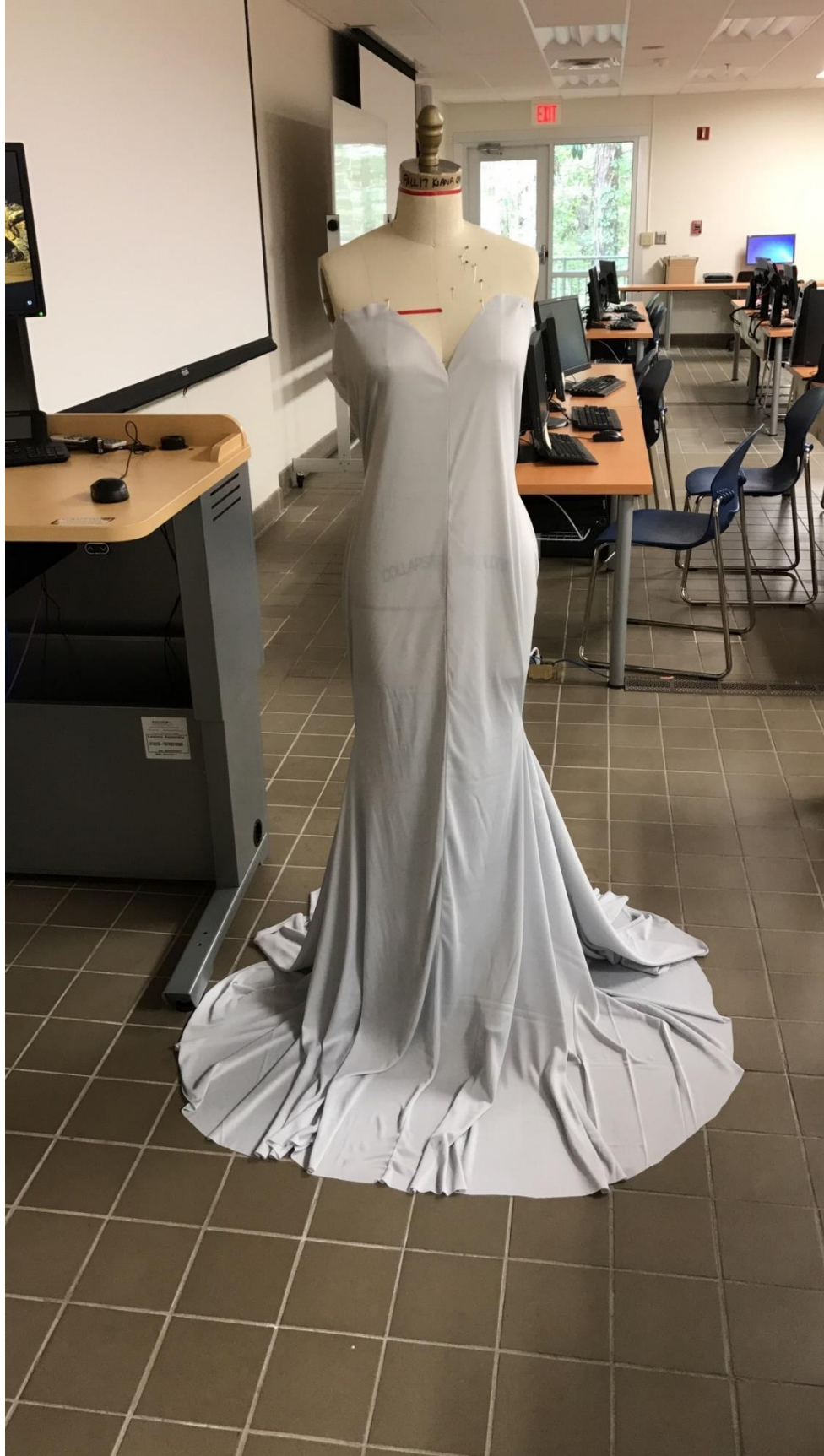


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Once I had my patterns completed I cut a muslin from a knit fabric to see what the dress looked like and did a fitting with my model.

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The dress fit perfectly in the hips with just a little needing to be taken out. The torso and bust area were the biggest problems because my model's torso and bust are

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much smaller than the dress form. I marked where it needed to be taken in and adjusted those areas on my pattern. I waited to do the cape sleeve to see where according to the shoulder band piece with my model's measurements would touch the band and draped that using a dress form arm.



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After getting the sleeve to look how I wanted it to I put it on pattern paper and tried it. By this time, I was ready to cut my fabric. I order 10 yards of the gold foil fabric

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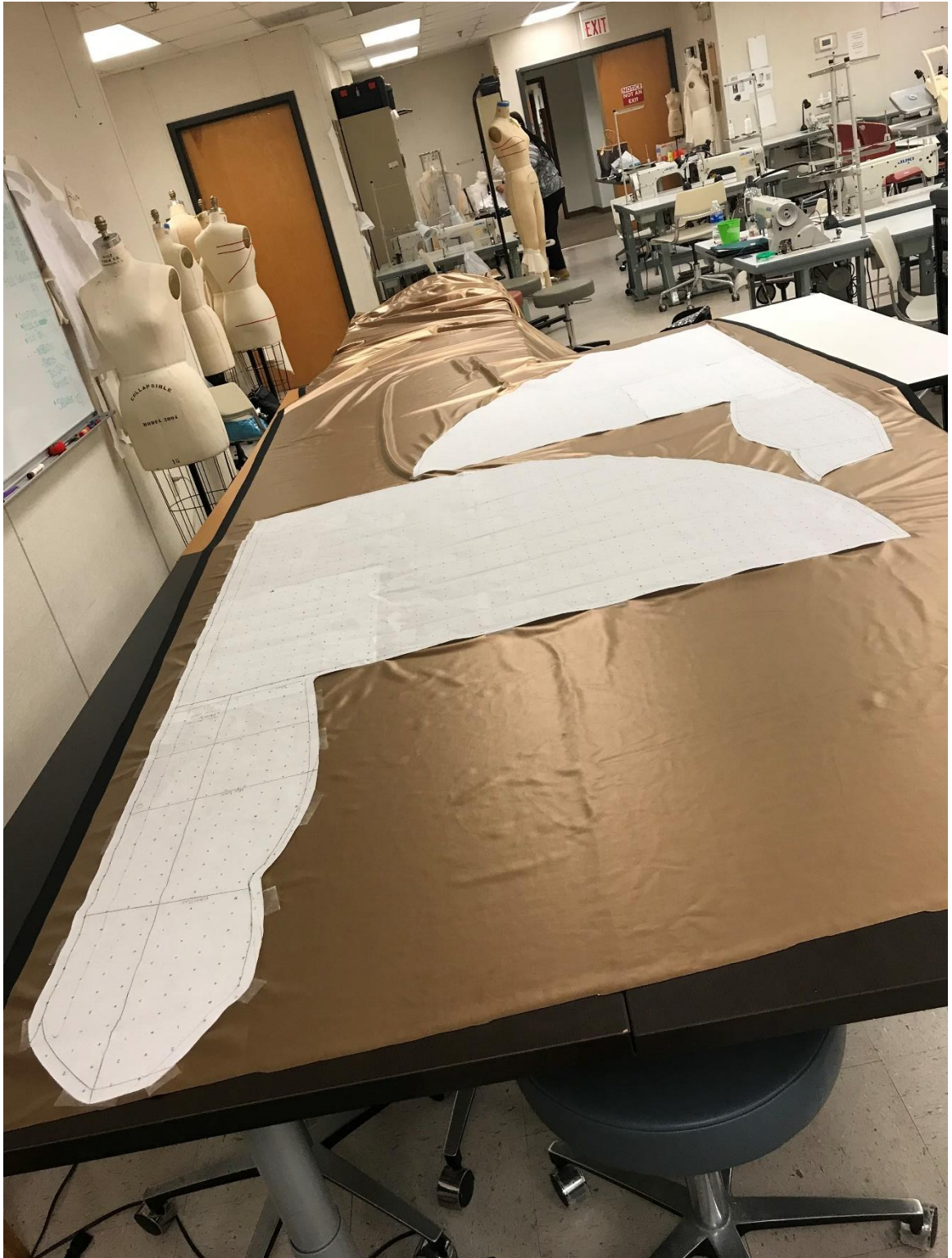
I liked and begin cutting. I had to put together about 3 or 4 tables to accommodate for all the fabric I bought. And because my fabric wasn't wide enough to fold I had to cut to front pieces and back pieces separately to mirror as if it was on the fold, that way I would have a left and right front and a left and right back. I also had to tape my patterns down to the fabric instead of pinning because this fabric could get damaged really easily with puncturing; it would destroy it.



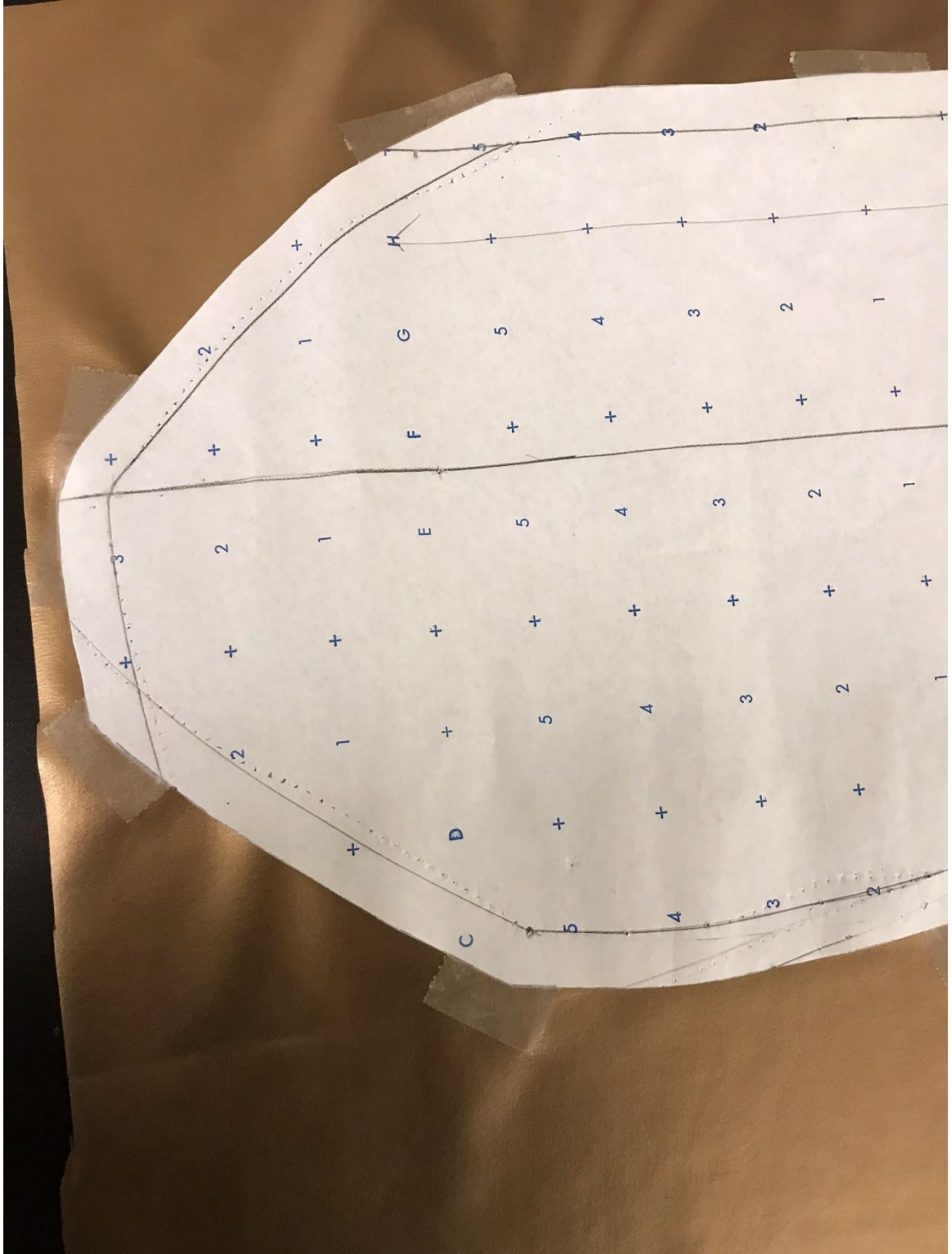
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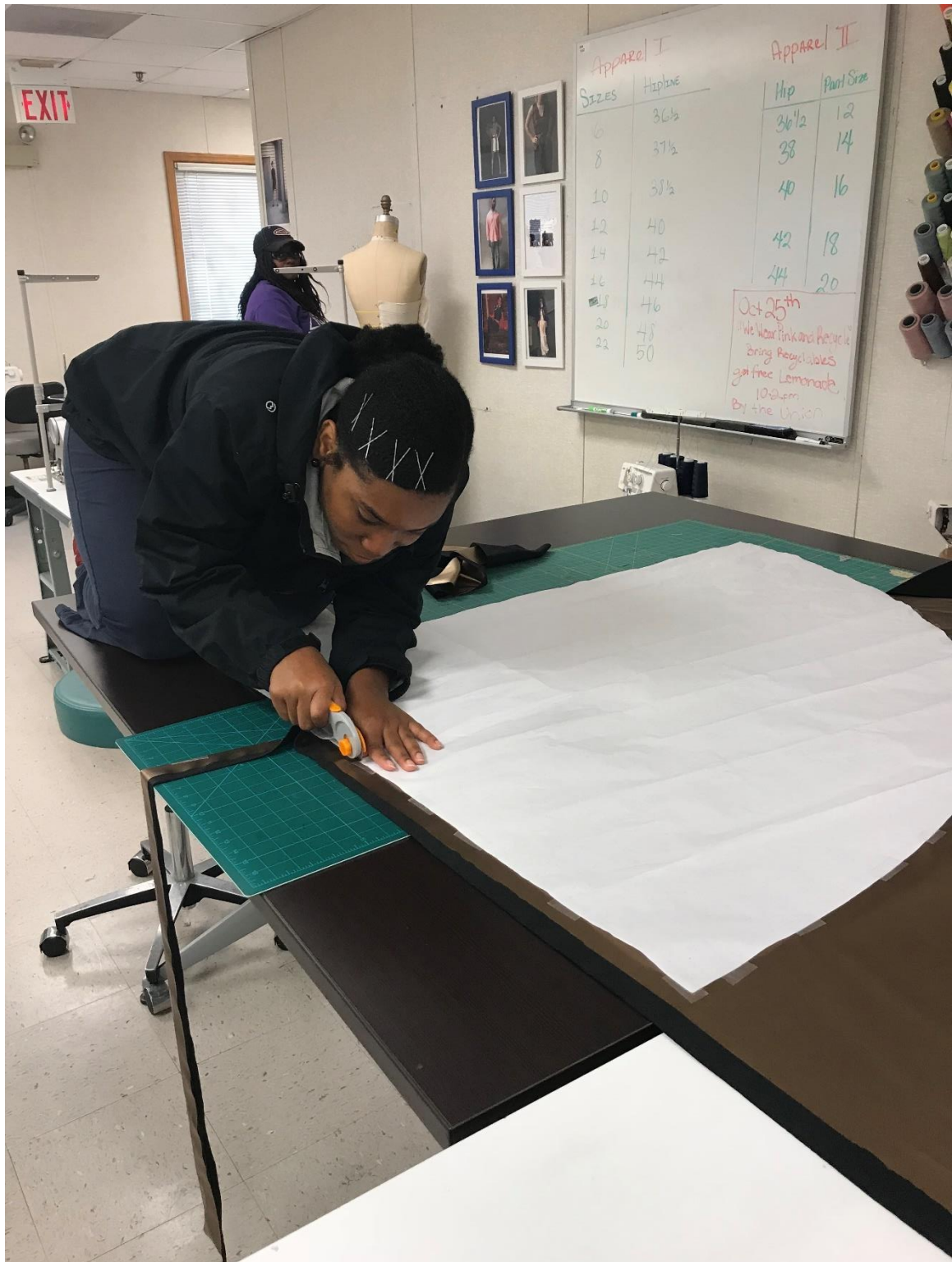
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Once I had all my pieces cut because I couldn't pin them together I had to use binder clips to act as pins to put the pieces together. I also serged the seams together

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because it's a knit and there is a special wooly nylon bobbin needed for sewing knits, which I purchased but it wasn't necessary for the front and side seams. Also, because the dress is a knit a closure isn't necessarily needed because knits stretch unlike woven fabrics so it's easier to get in a knit. Instead of serging the center back I stitched it a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to make sure my model had room to get in the dress and do another fitting. She had room to get in the dress but we struggled to get her in it because her hips are wider than her torso, so it made it more difficult to put on, so I decided it needed a closure to make it a little easier to get in.



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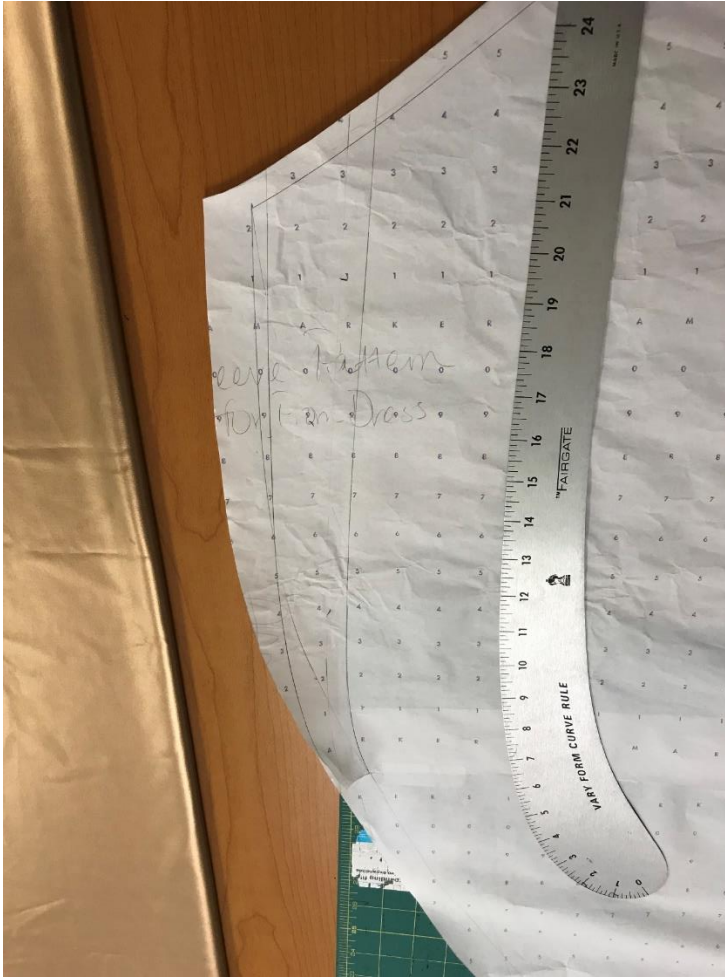
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I then cut my sleeves on my fabric but the sleeve pattern was too wide for the fabric and it need to be cut on the fold therefore I had to trim some of the wideness of my

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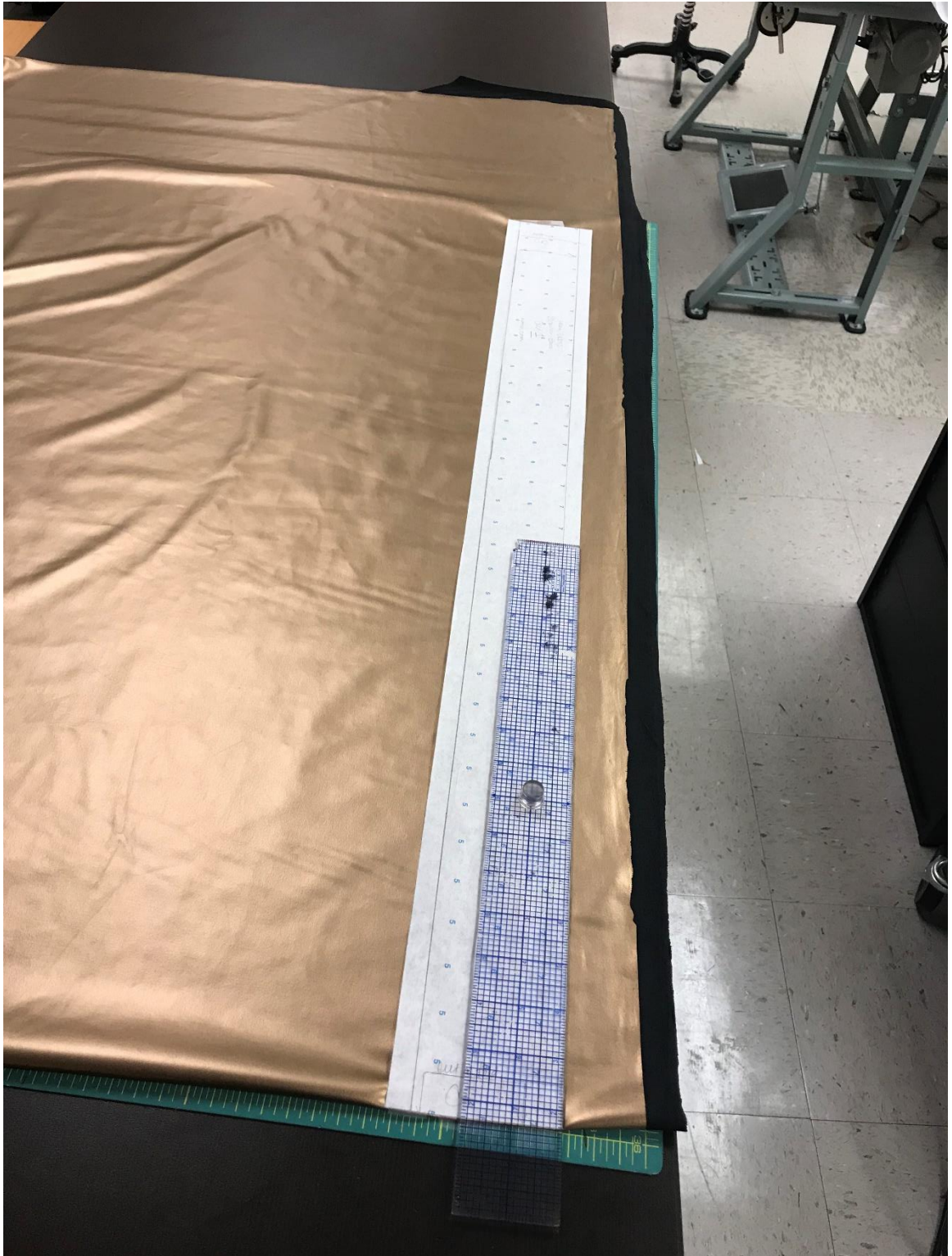
sleeve pattern down to be better size to be cut. My sleeves also needed 2 inch facings to finish their raw edges at the top and I cut the shoulder band pattern twice for a self-facing as well.



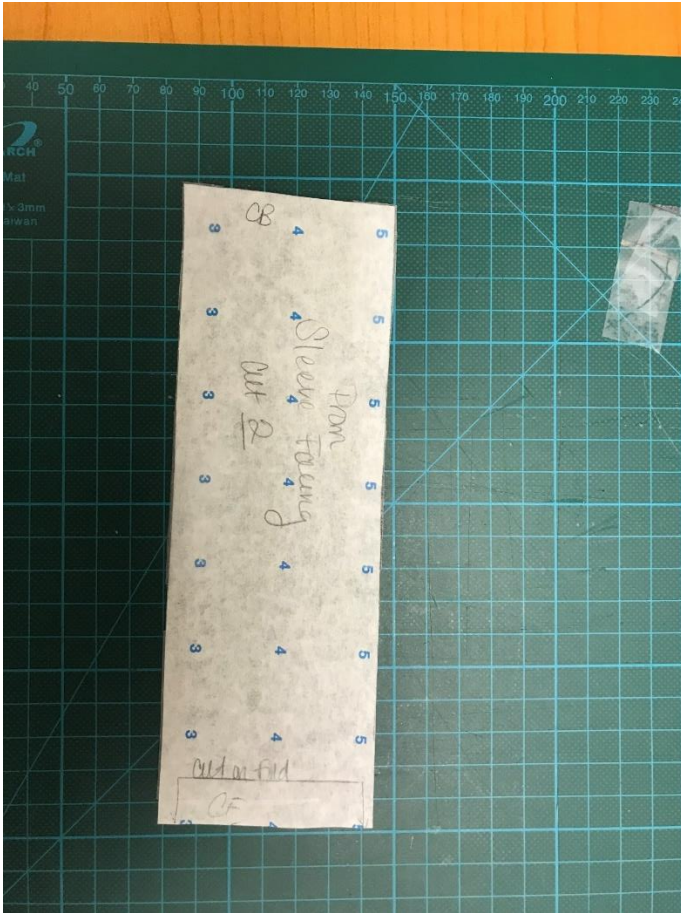
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I wanted to do another fitting with my model to notch where the shoulder band would touch the neckline on her and hem the dress because it was entirely too long for her. By this time, I had taken the ¼ inch stitch out the center back and inserted the invisible zipper for the closure and I wanted to see if the fit had altered any because of the closure. It didn't, it fit her even better than the previous fitting before. Once everything was notched and marked all was left to do was hem the dress, finish all the raw edges, sew the shoulder band to the neckline and attach the sleeves. To finish the raw edge of the neckline of the dress I attached a mini dress to the inside of it and stitched it like a self-facing piece. You'll notice in the pictures the dress is inside out, this do to the fact that you don't want markings to show so you turn the dress the wrong way to mark and when it's the right way you don't see markings.



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The Upcycled Bridesmaid Dress

This garment was the most cost-efficient garment out of all of them because I bought a used bridesmaid's dress which came with the main thing I needed fabric. I wanted to switch up the design with this garment by making it a 2-piece set. I so decided on the style of the design because of the limited fabric I had, being that the

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fabric was already cut. I wanted to completely transform the unflattering bridesmaid's dress.

I started by finding a dress form closest to my model's size. The model for this garment was 3 different sizes, each different in the bust, waist, and hip, the main measurements I looked at when choosing the dress forms to drape on for that specific model. So, I needed two different size dress forms to complete the look for her measurements. I first took apart the old bridesmaid's dress to see what was on the inside of the dress, where the dress was cut, and how much fabric I would have to use.

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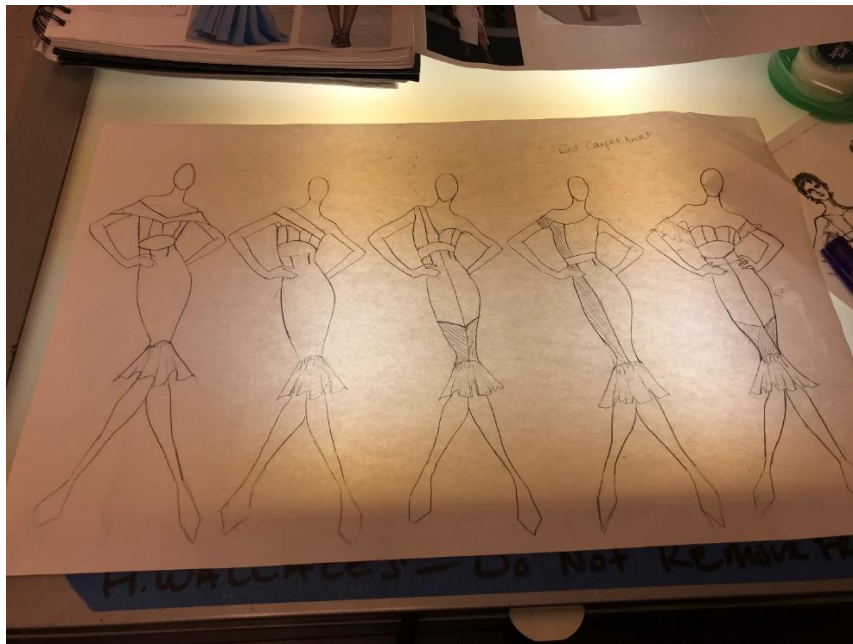
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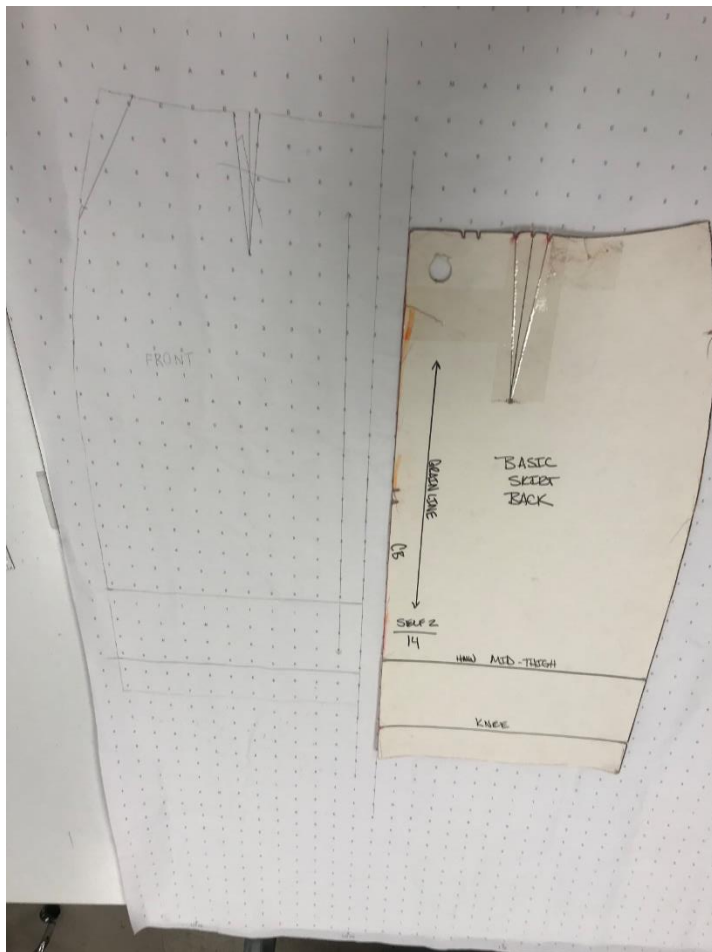
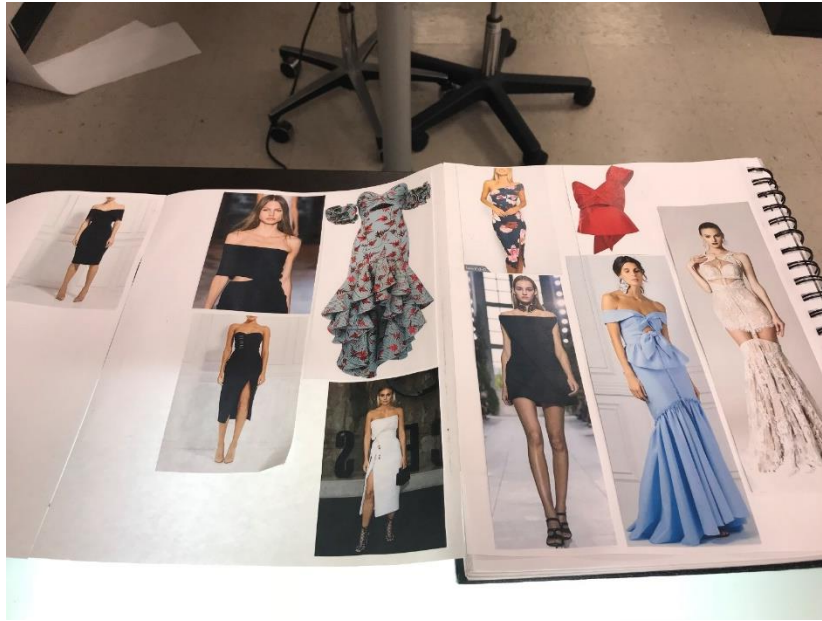
After accessing what I had to use to did some research and rough sketches of what I would like my design to look like. When I decided, I used my draping tape to create the shape for the bralette top. Instead of doing a typical princess seam bralette where the seams run vertically across the bust I decided to have the seams run horizontally across the bust to give it youthfulness. Typically, vertical princess seams are targeted for a much older market and I didn't want that. To keep the curved lines consistent with the circle skirt from my cocktail dress and the curves of the hems of the prom dress. I wanted another bare shoulder garment but instead of a band going around shoulder, I decided to have it somewhat drape around the back and attached and the side seams. Because the skirt piece was basic, I used a basic skirt pattern block to first

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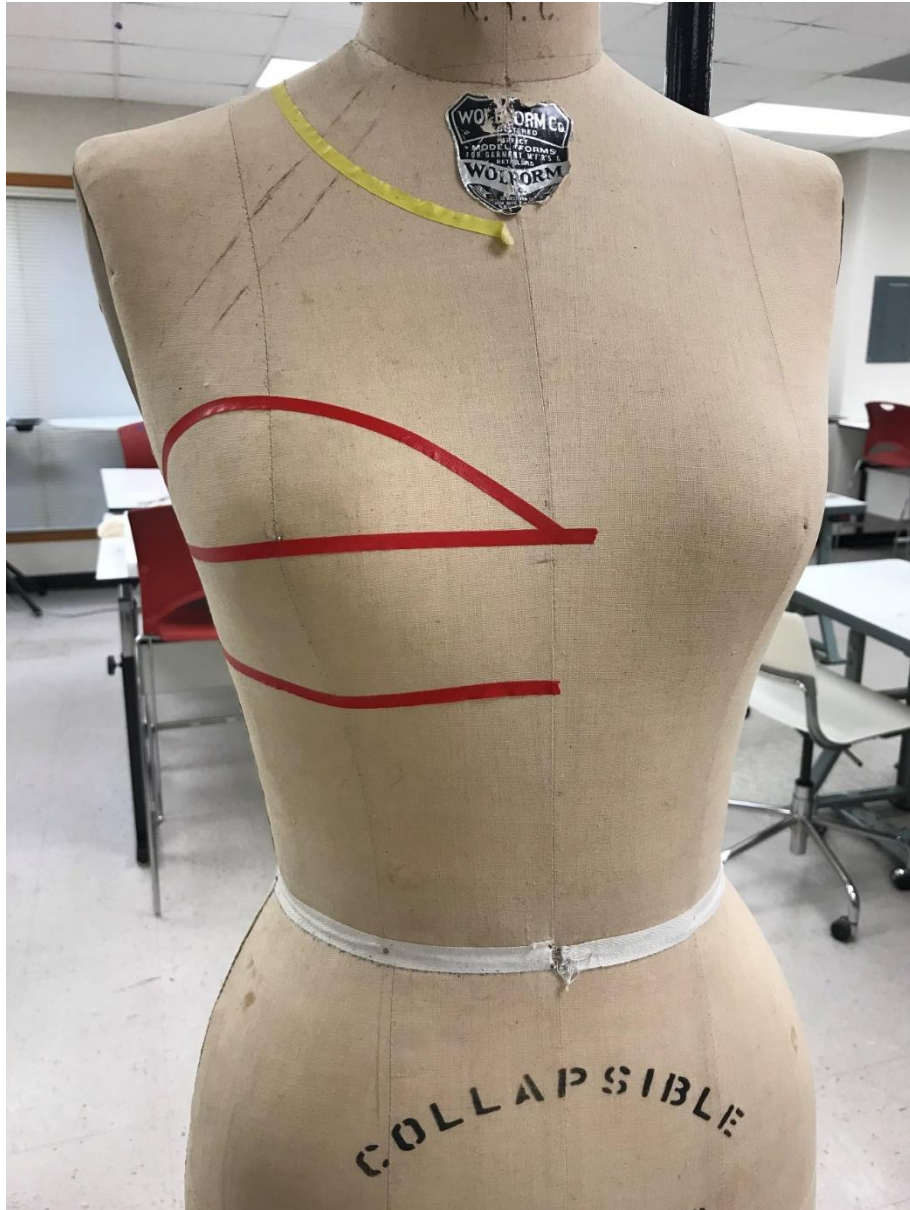
create the shape and size then altered the pattern to give it the high-waisted shape I wanted.



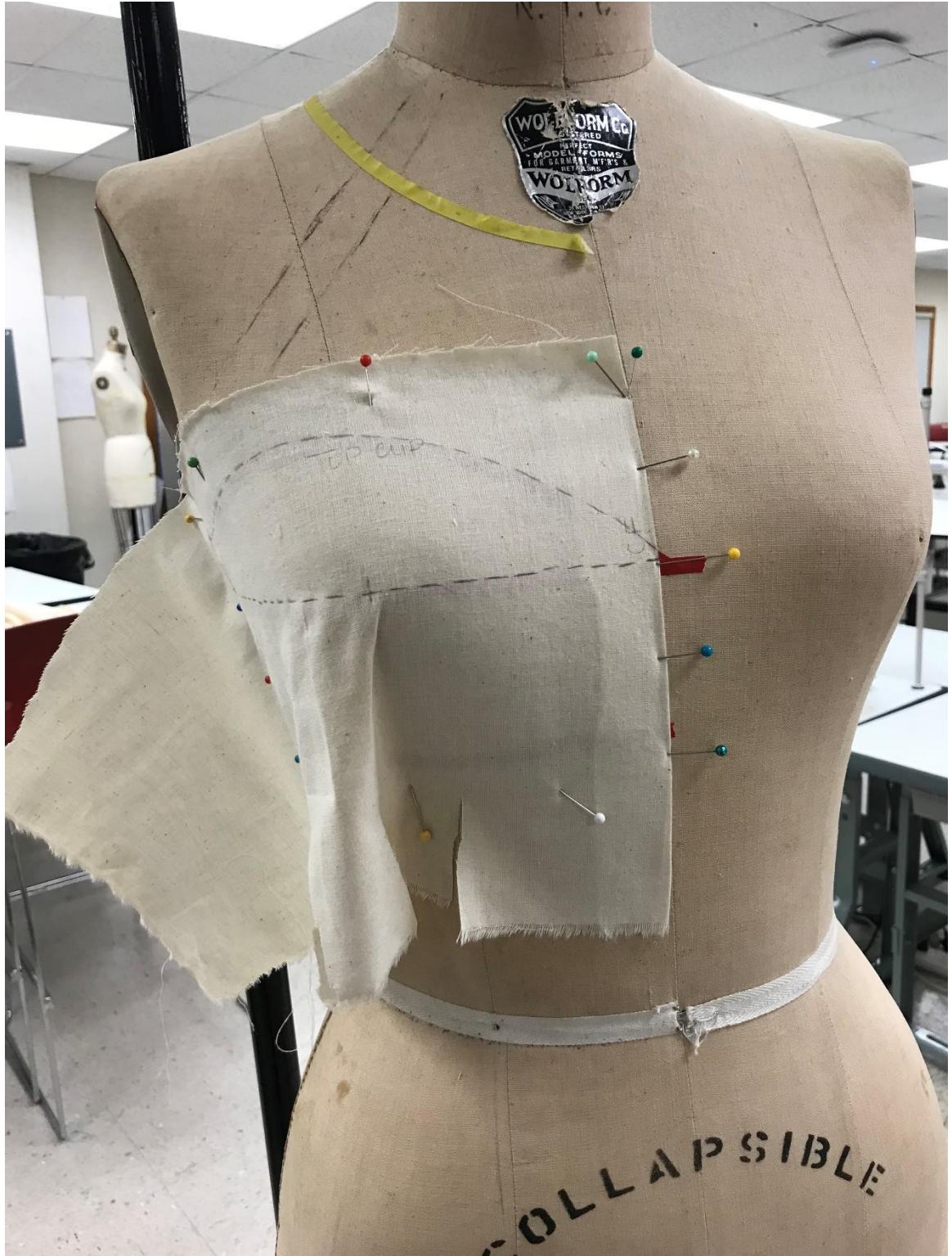
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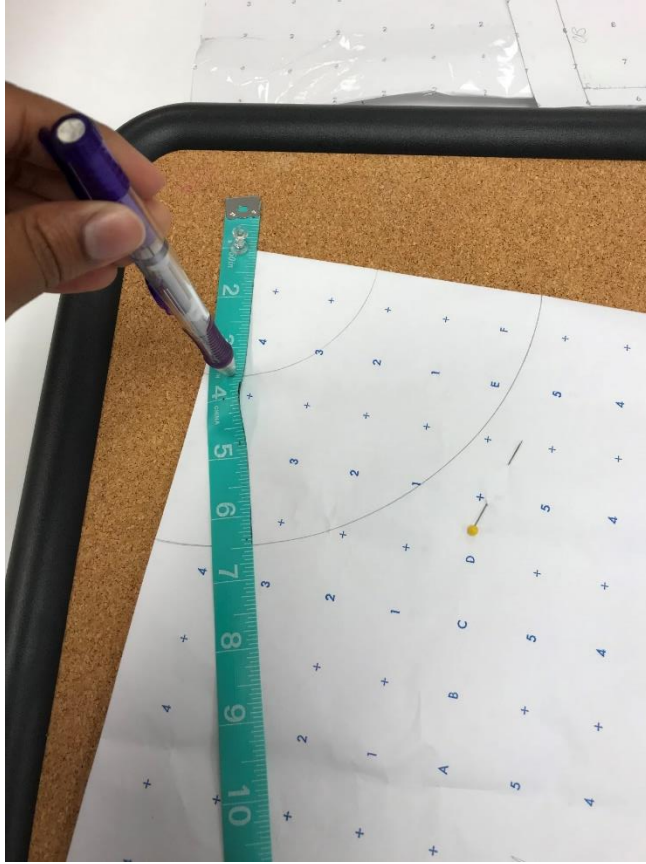
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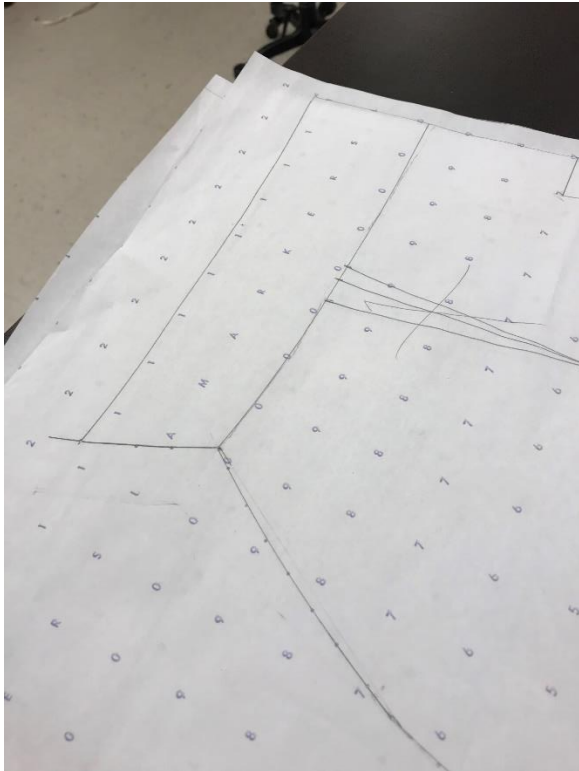
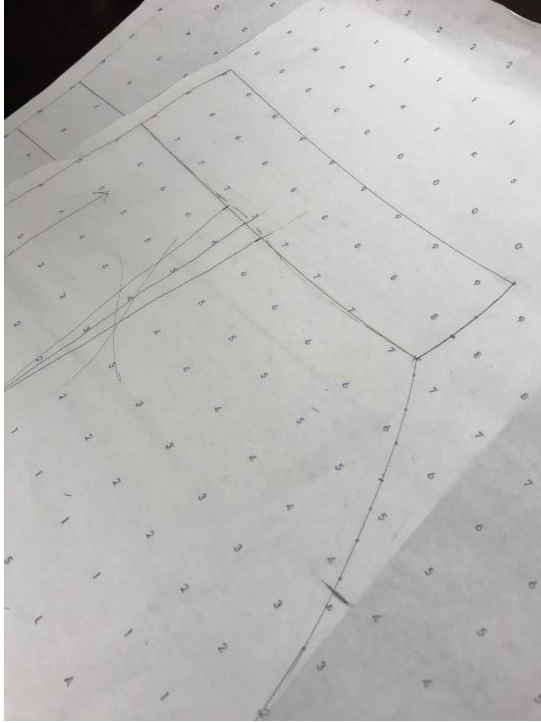
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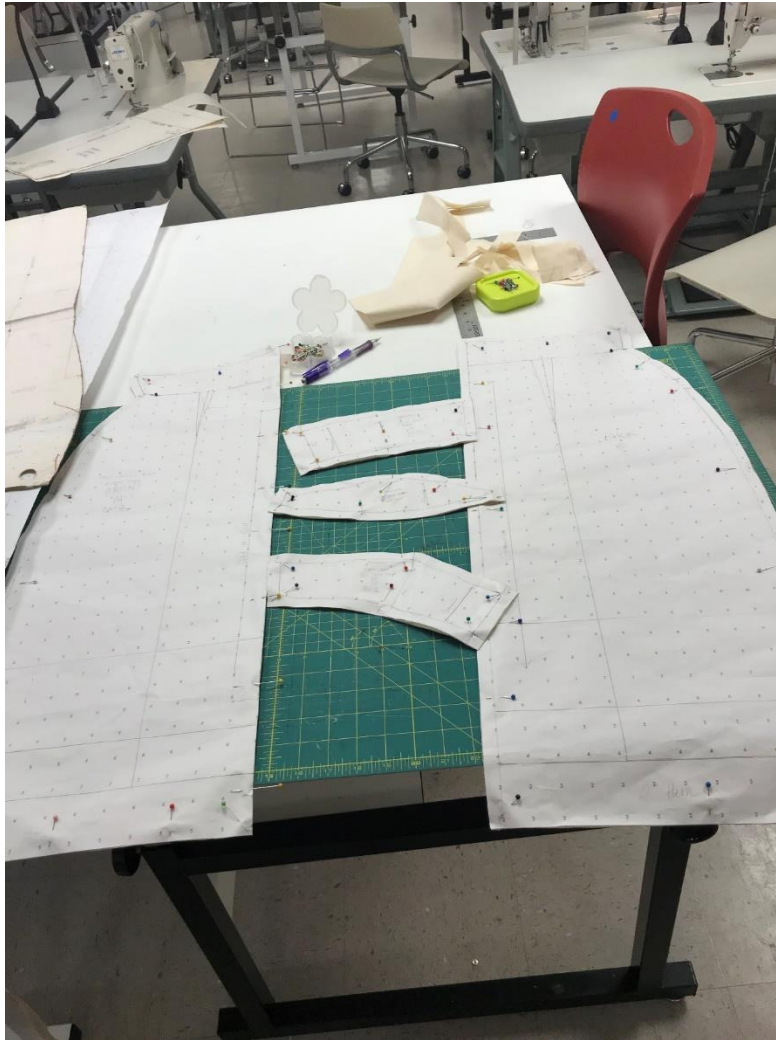


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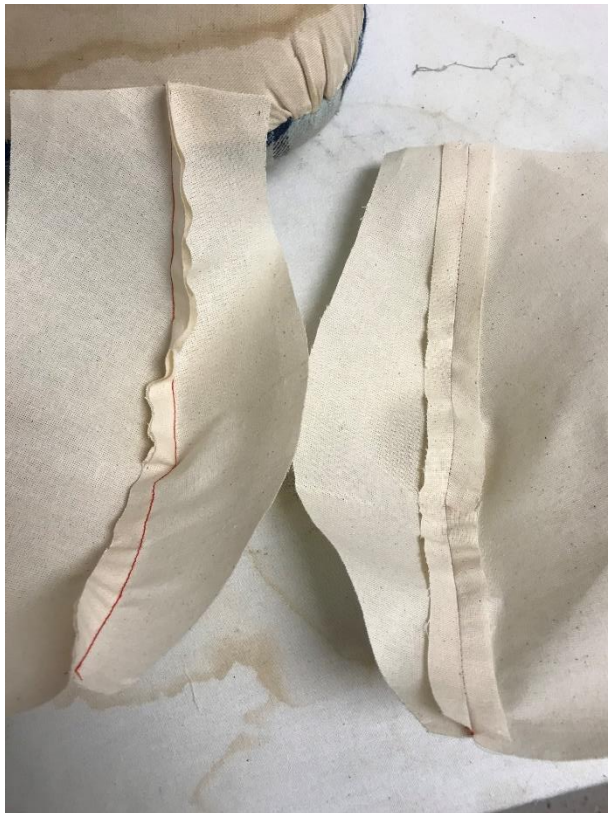


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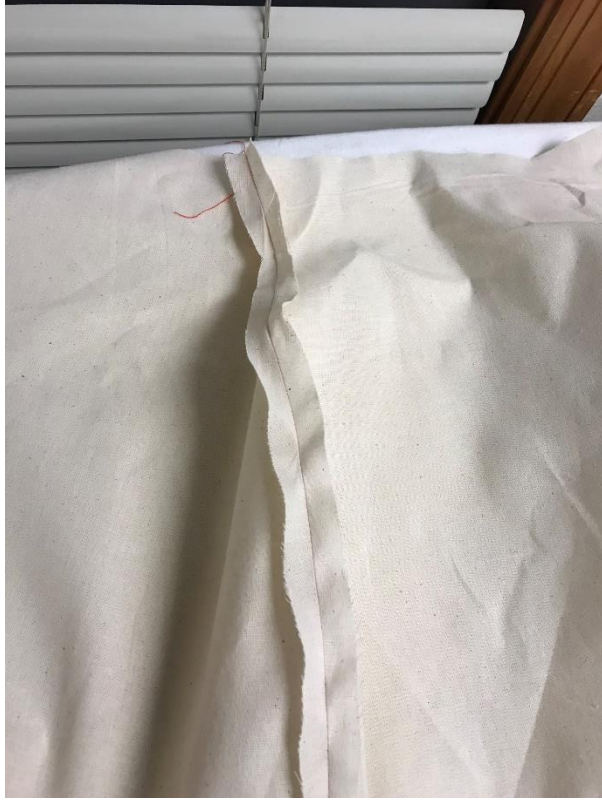
Once the bralette was draped and transferred to pattern paper and the new high-waisted skirt was created I sewed a muslin together to see what the garment looked like.



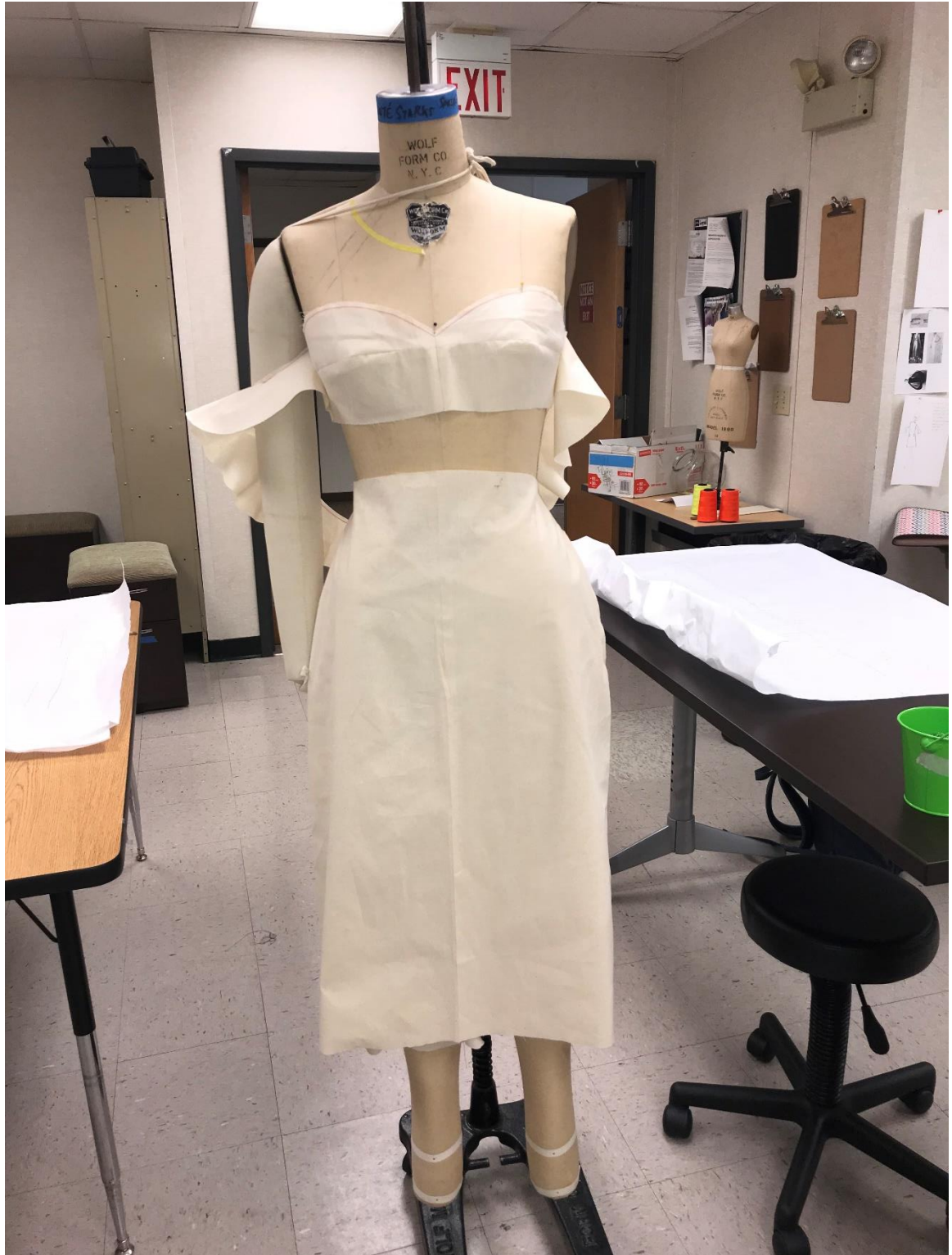
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After the muslin was created it was time to do a fitting on my model. The bralette needed the most work do to the fact that it didn't lay down properly on her body and

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needed to be taken in on her center front which helped the bralette contour to her body more. The center back of the bralette was about 1-1/2 too long. The skirt fit great in the hips but the extended portion to give the high waisted effect needed to be trimmed slightly on the side seam. The skirt was too long so, the hem needed to be taken up and the center back of the skirt had too much fabric towards the bottom past her hip so that needed to be taken out as well.



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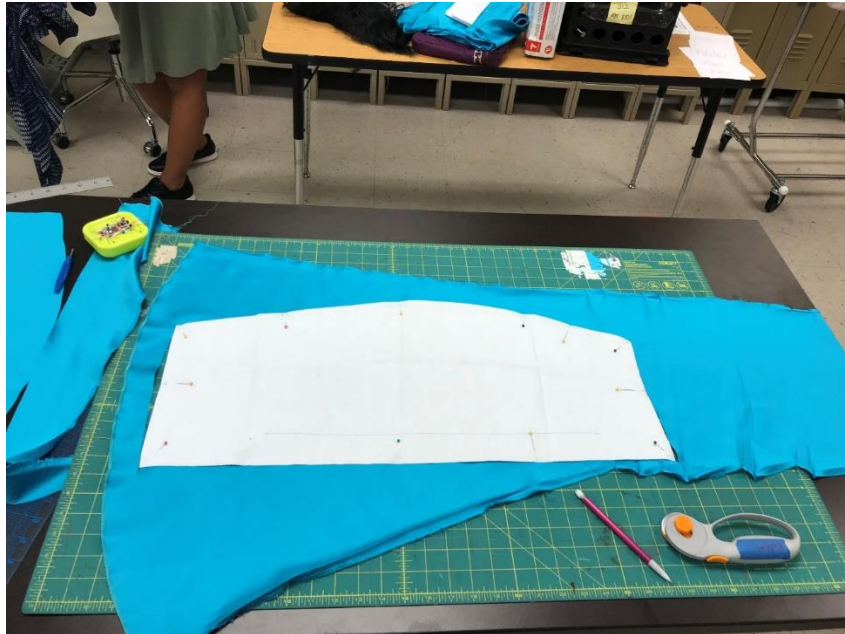
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Once I had all those alterations pinned and marked I adjust my patterns to match those markings and started to cut on my final fabric. The fabric was tricky to cut my patterns on at first because previously the bridesmaid's dresses' fabric was cut on the bias. On the *bias* means the pattern for the dress was cut at an angle to allow the dress to stretch more. Woven fabrics don't stretch, knits do, unless you cut a woven on the bias to give it some stretch. Because of this I had to figure where my cross grain and lengthwise grain would be on the fabric to make sure my fabric is on grain. *On grain* refers to the cross grain and lengthwise grain making a right angle of each other. I made sure every garment was on grain if I used a woven fabric like with my cocktail dress. If the fabric is off grain so will the pattern and the fabric will warp and distort. To fix the problem I did what is called a *1 thread method*, where you clip a piece of fabric and pull 1 thread. It will then create a line in your fabric because a thread is missing, you then cut down that line. If that line's thread starts to fray that is your cross grain, if it doesn't fray that's the lengthwise grain and that's the grain that should be parallel to your pattern piece. I had to do that for every piece of fabric I used to make sure my pattern was on grain, except for the front skirt piece because it was on the fold. I also washed the fabric first to get out wrinkles, eliminate any future shrinkage, and to clean it of course.

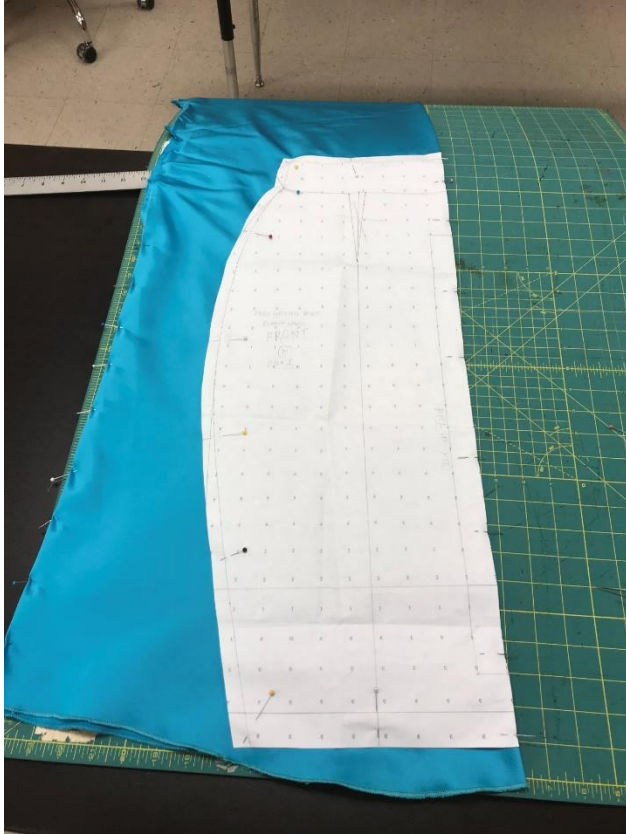
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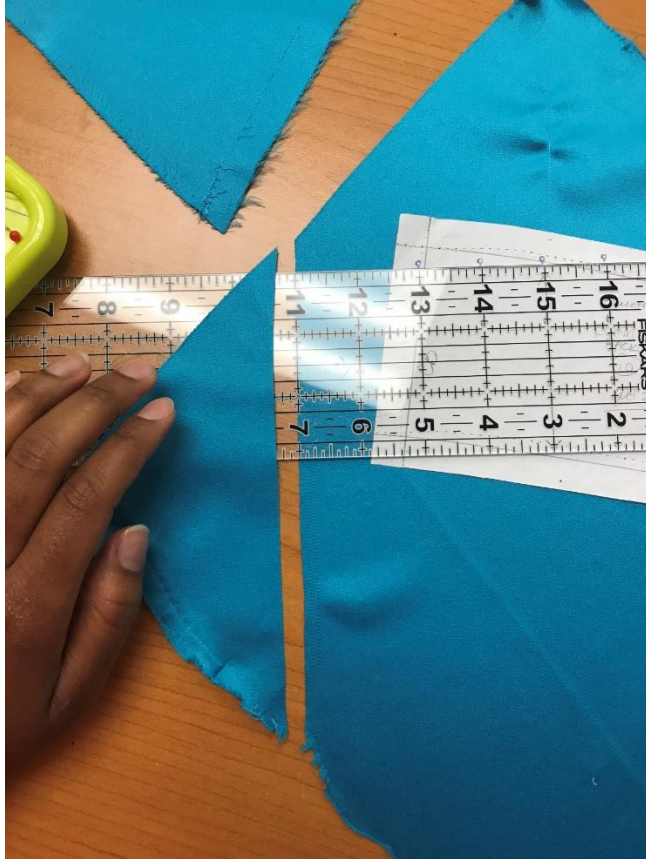
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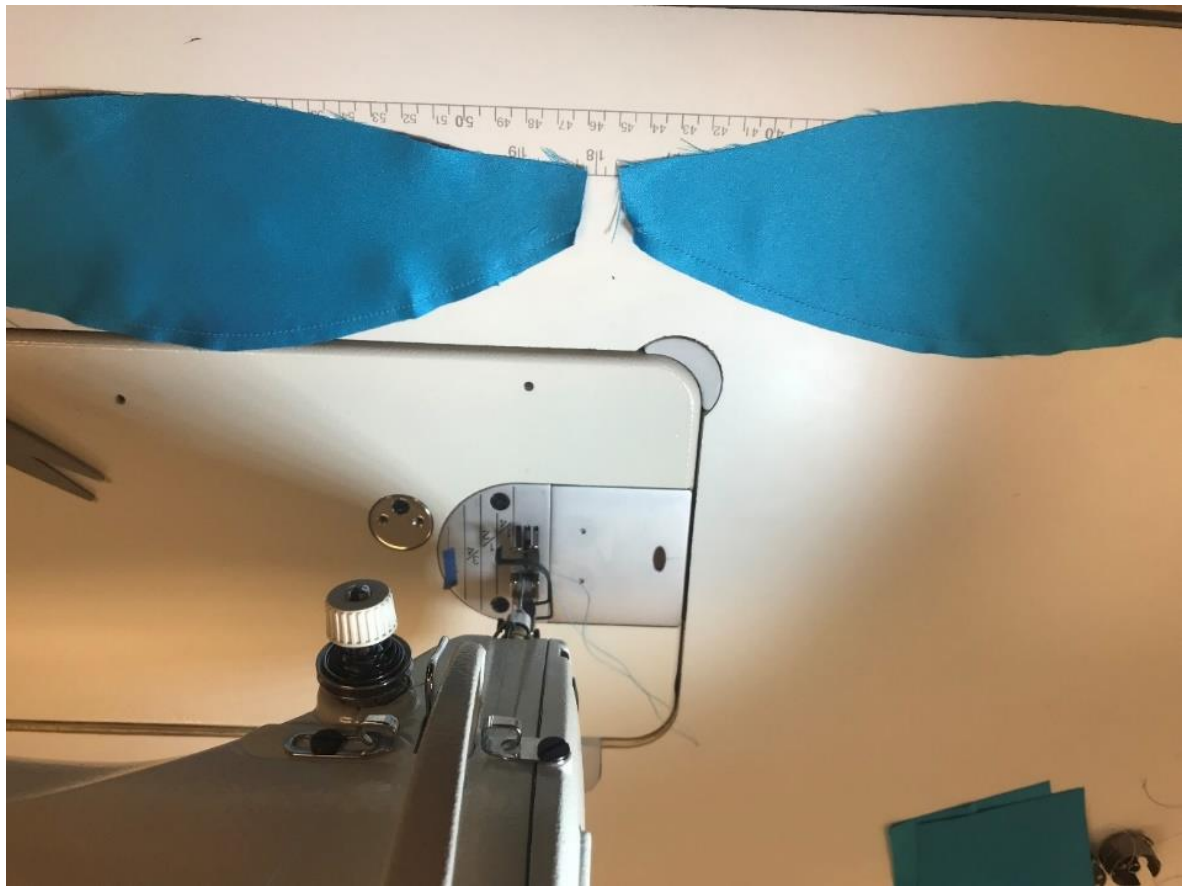


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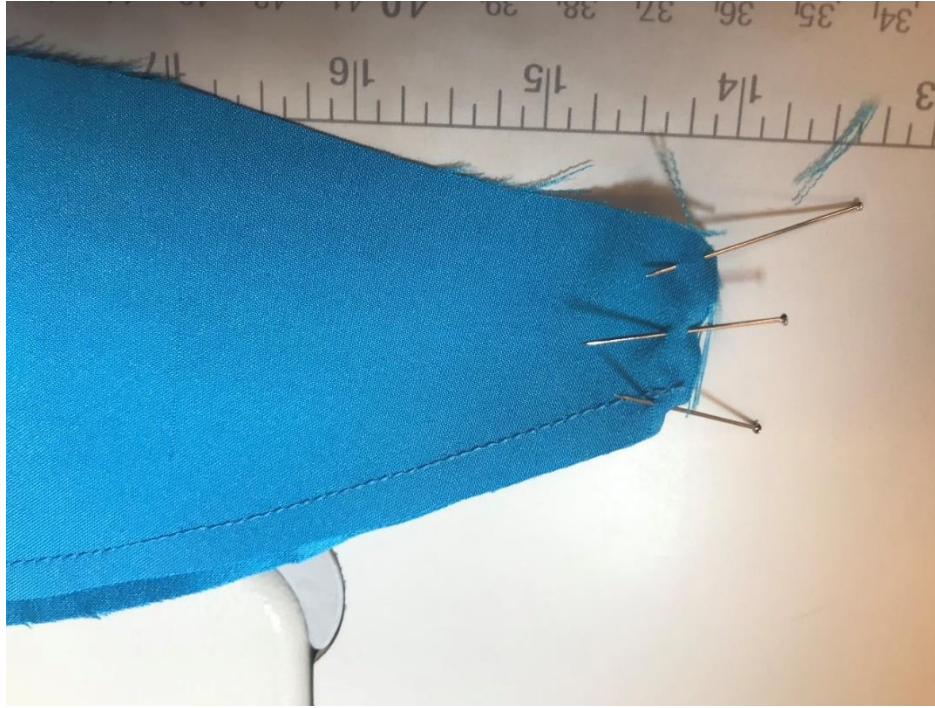


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Once I cut all my pieces out it was time to assemble them together. This process was basically the same as the cocktail dress, having to self-face the bralette and add a 2 inch facing to the skirt. The 2 mini circle skirt pieces were cut leaving the raw edge free and burning the edge to keep it from fraying. Once again, I stay stitched my severe curved pieces to keep them from stretching out and assembled all the pieces together.



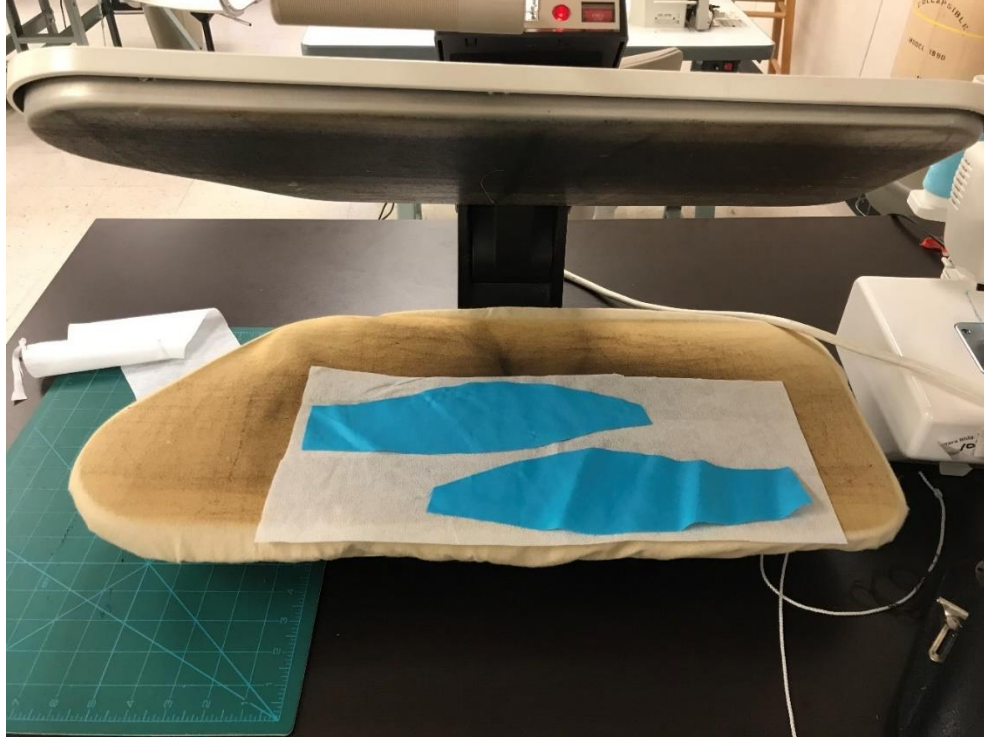
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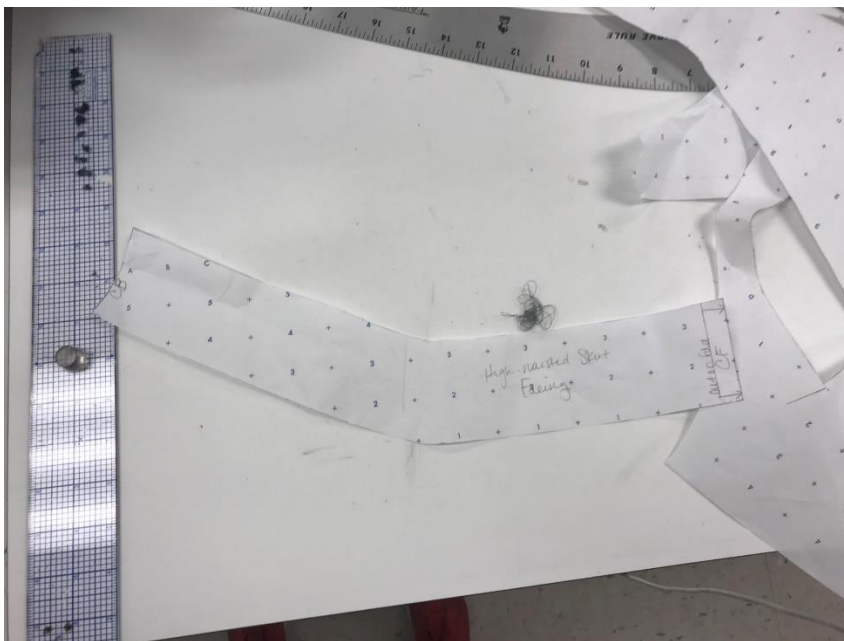
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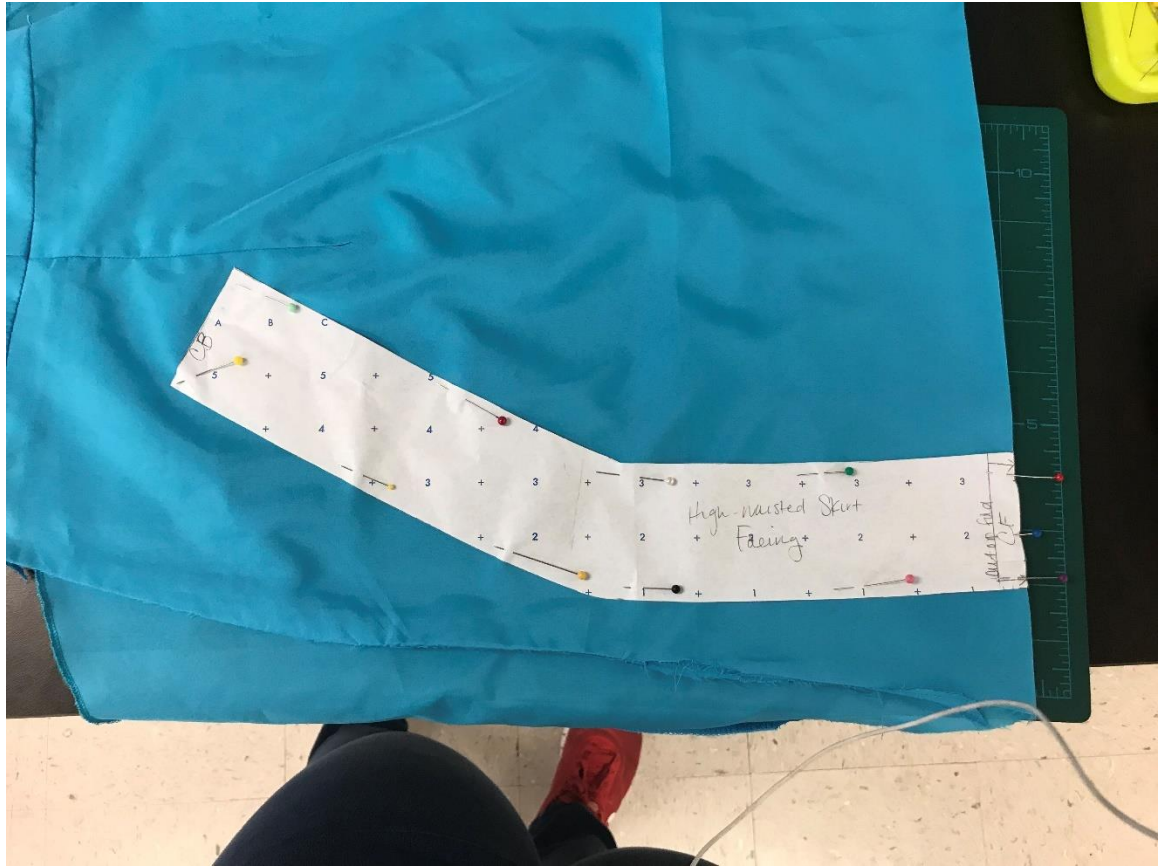
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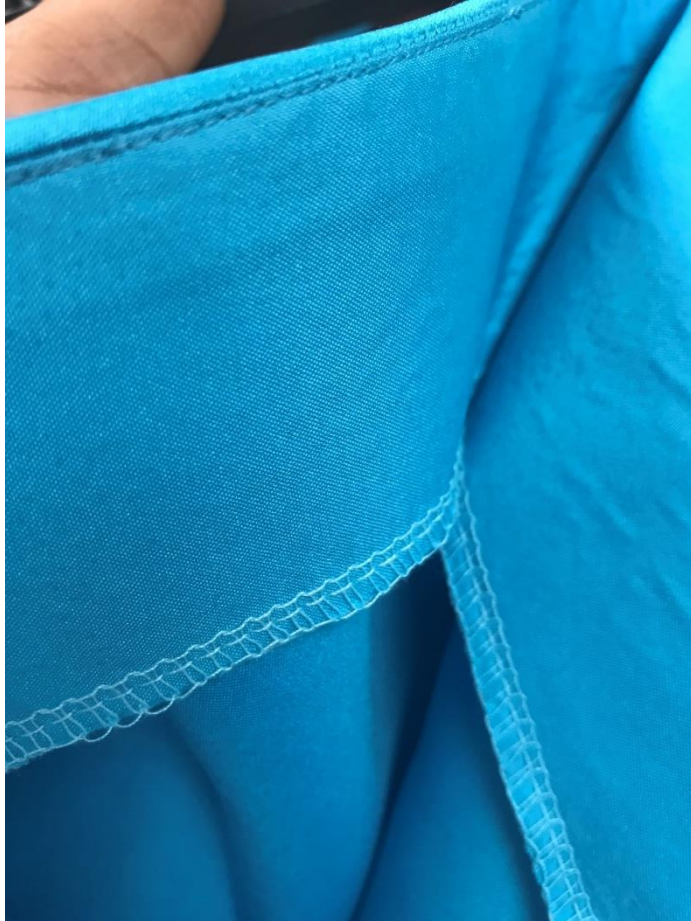
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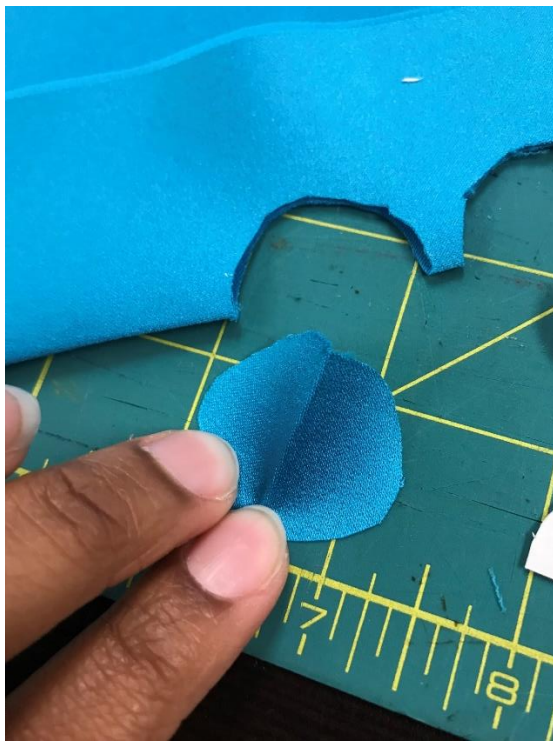
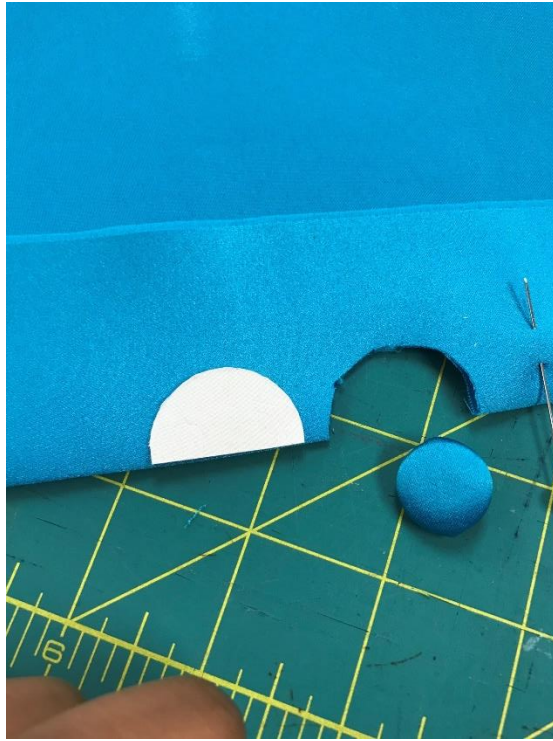
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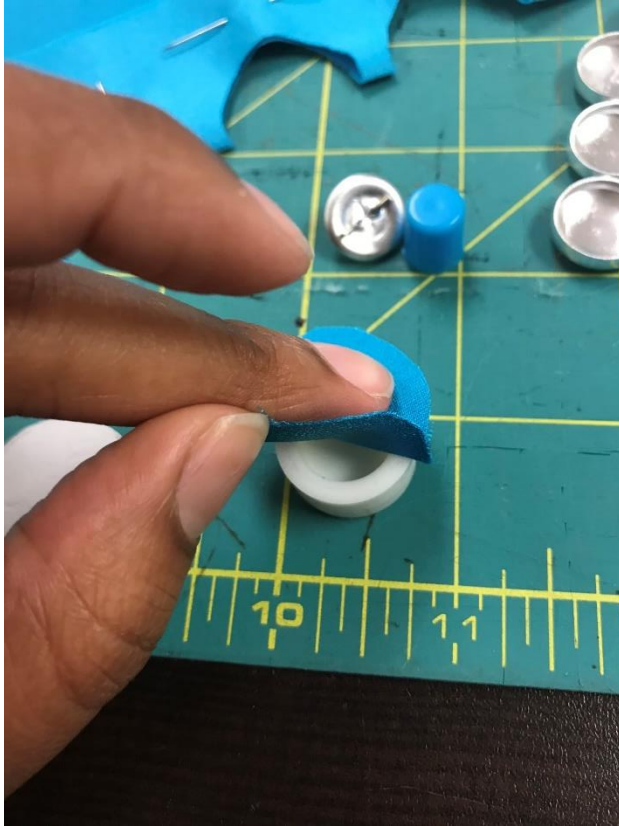
I wanted a traditional and different closure than my previous garments so I decided to do cover buttons instead of zipper. I believe it added a more romantic and classy feel to the garment. Making the cover buttons is a process itself. I had to buy a cover button kit and cover buttons to make the cover buttons. You start by cutting a template for the size of the button, it's printed on the package so I just cut it out. Then I placed a piece of my fabric on the fold and used the template to cut it that size. Once that's cut you take the mold of the cover button and place the fabric on top. Next, you add the front of the cover button on top of the fabric and push them down into the mold. Next, I placed the back of the cover button on top of the mold to close it. I then took the pusher and pushed the back of the button in the mold. When I heard it pop,

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that means all the air was out of the mold and the cover button was complete. I made a total of 9 cover buttons, 4 for the bralette and 5 for the skirt.



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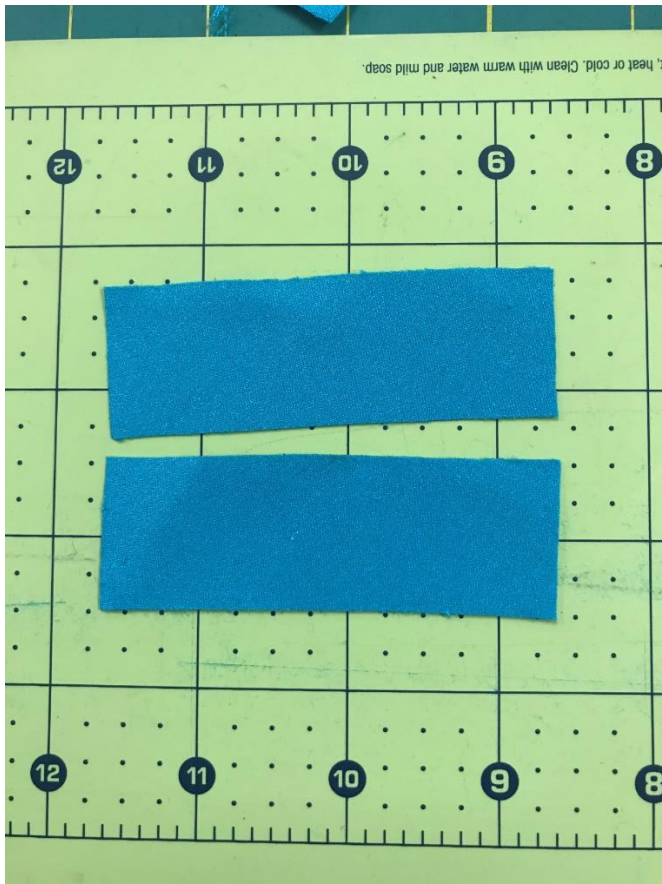
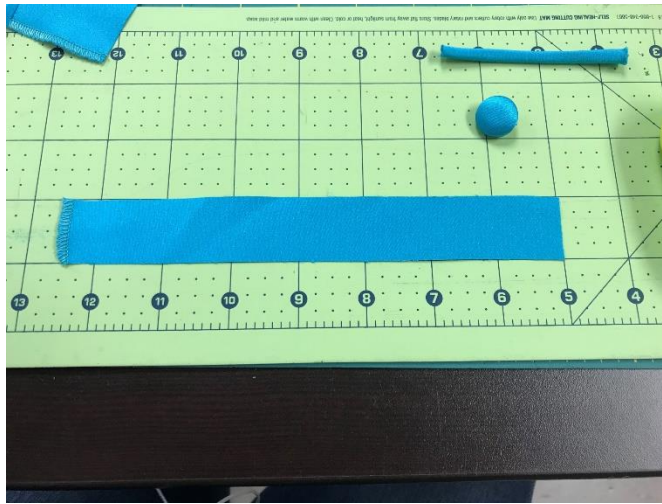


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I now had to make loops for the cover buttons to attach to. I decided to make them 3 inches long with $\frac{1}{2}$ seam allowance for when they were sewn to the skirt and bralette. I sewed them at a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on the machine and used a loop turner to turn the loops inside out since my fingers are too big to do it.



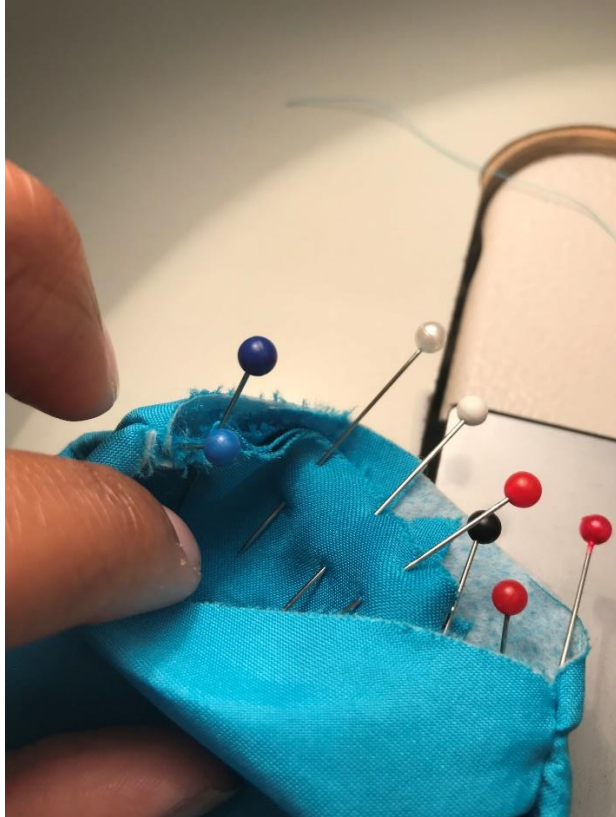
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Once that was done all left to do was sew the buttons on and attach the loops. For the bralette the loops are stitched inside the center back. The side seams had to be turned inside out and machine stitched closed with the loops being caught inside. The side seams were left opened to be whipped stitched together. For the skirt another facing piece was created for the loops to get caught and that was also machine stitched to catch the loops.

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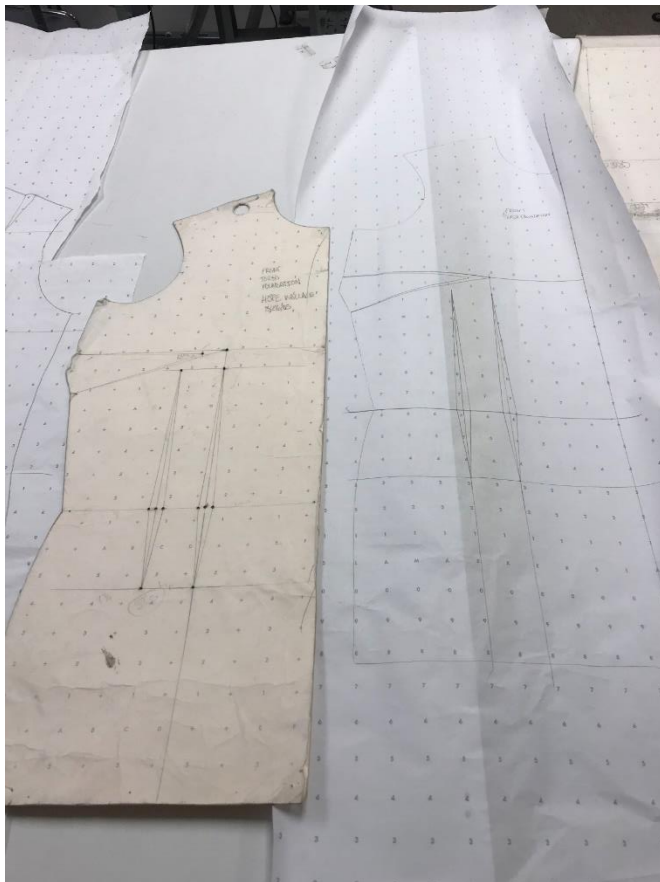
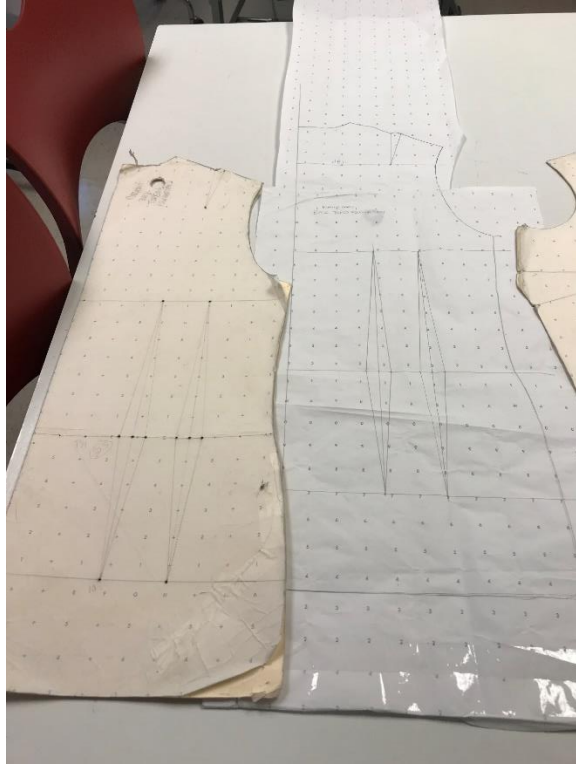
The Bridal Garment

The bridal garment is my favorite garment amongst all my garments and the most difficult to make. I knew immediately that I wanted an untraditional bridal garment; not white and not a dress. After my trend research, it made sense to create what I had already been thinking which a blue jumpsuit. I decided to take up the design process up a notch by using a fabric I had never worked with before which was mesh lace. 3D Floral Embroidery Lace is a trend for the upcoming season and that was the fabric I

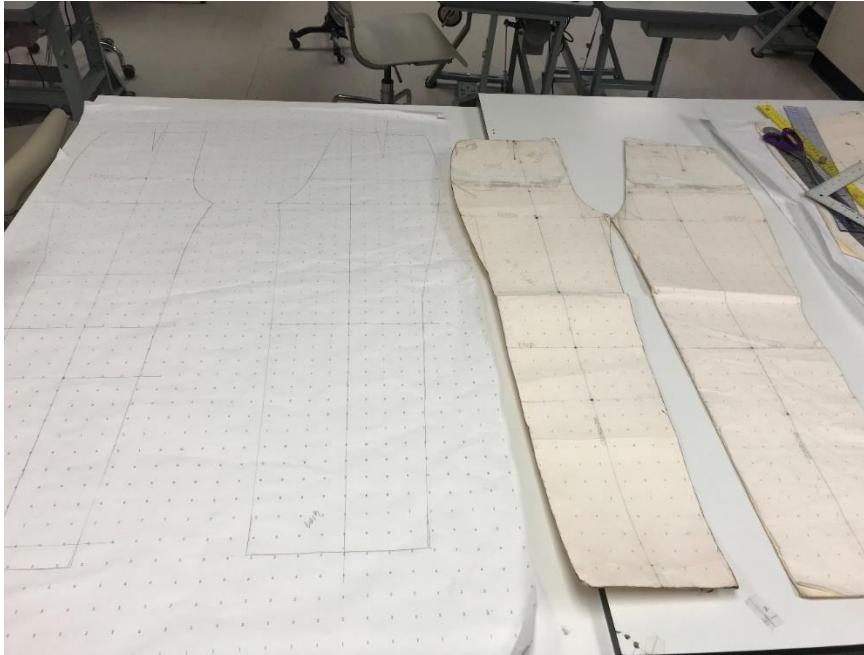
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the model I planned to wear the garment but it was fine due to alterations that would be made anyway. The torso block was one size bigger than the pant block so that had to be adjusted to match where side seams are on the pant block. The torso and pant block also had darts on them and they needed to be taken out of the pattern except for 2 darts on the torso foundation which would be used to create a princess seam line look on the pattern.

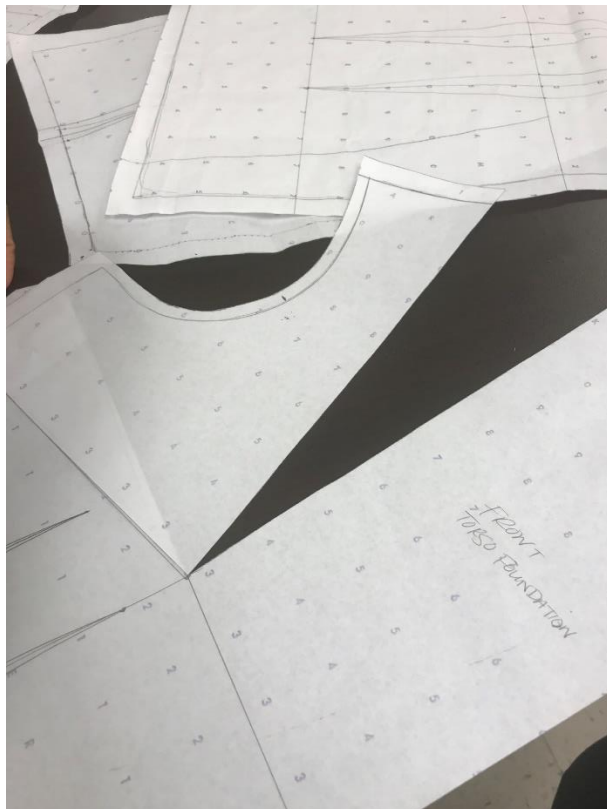
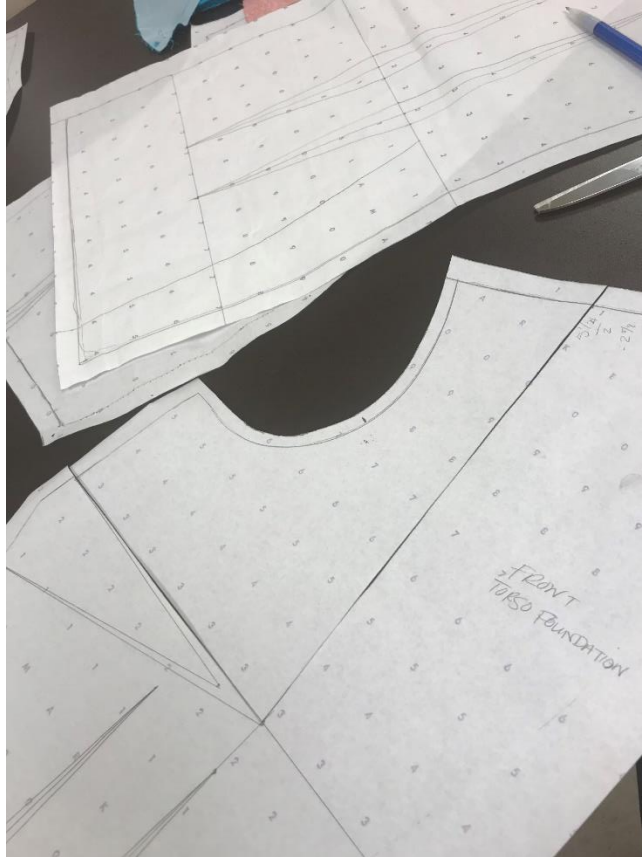
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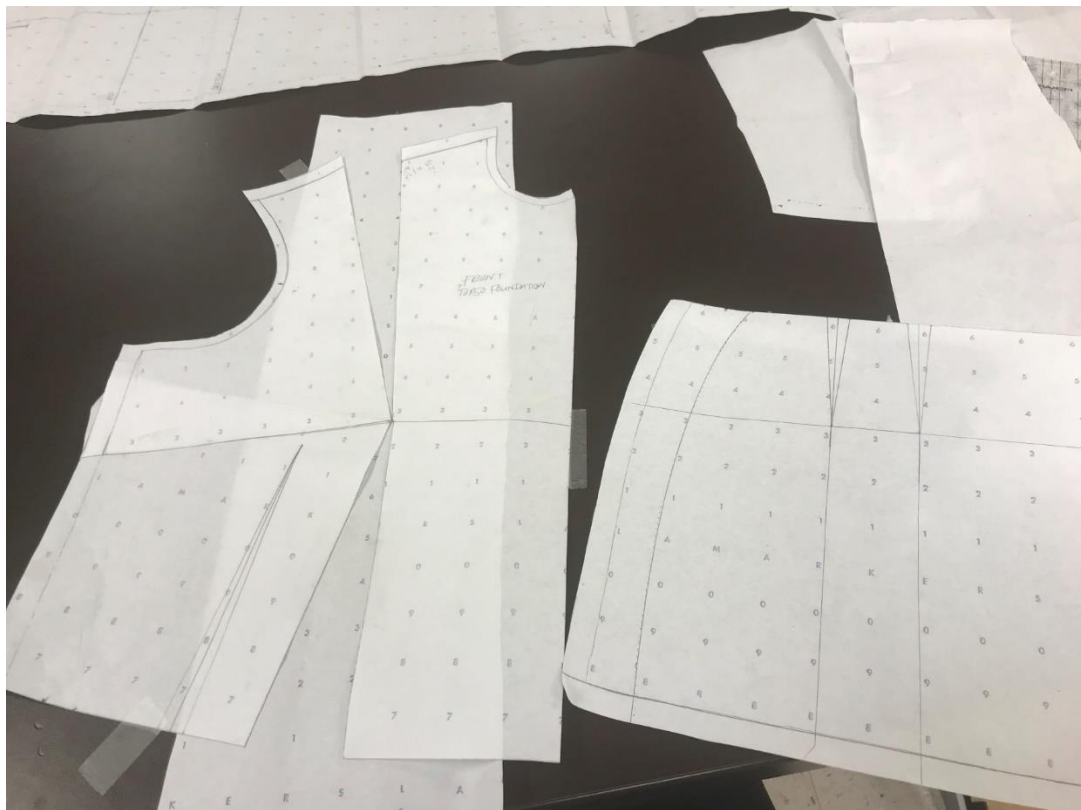
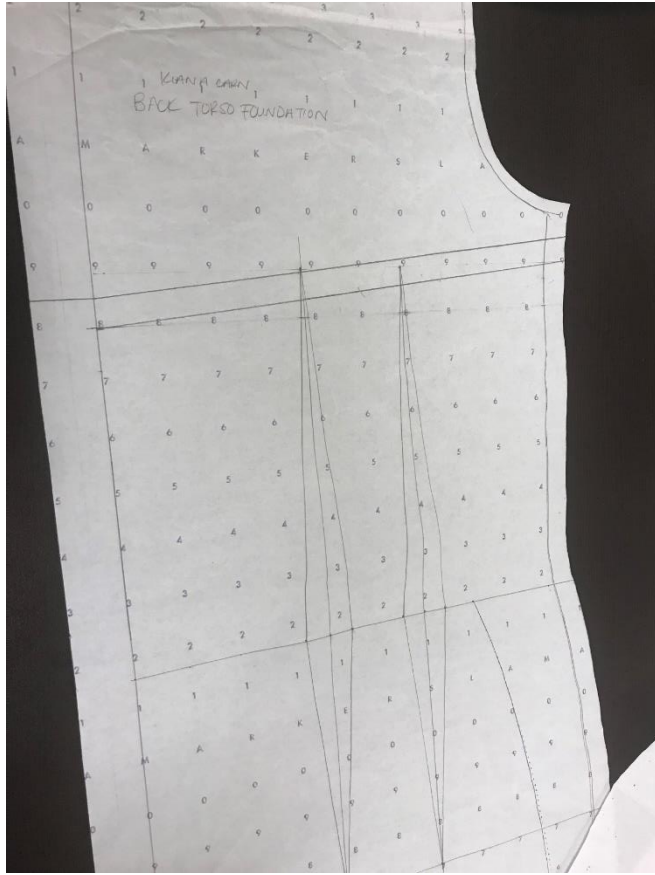
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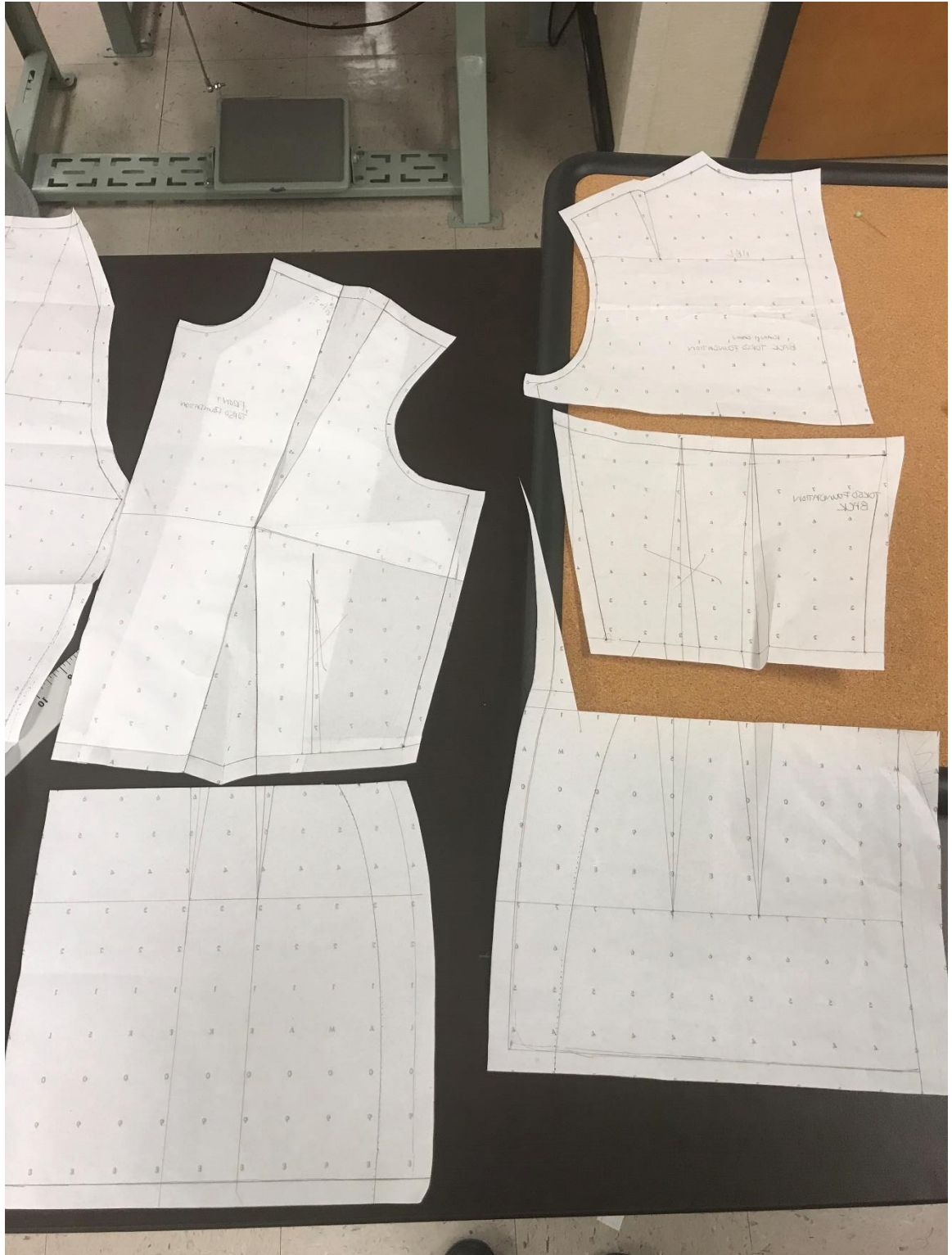
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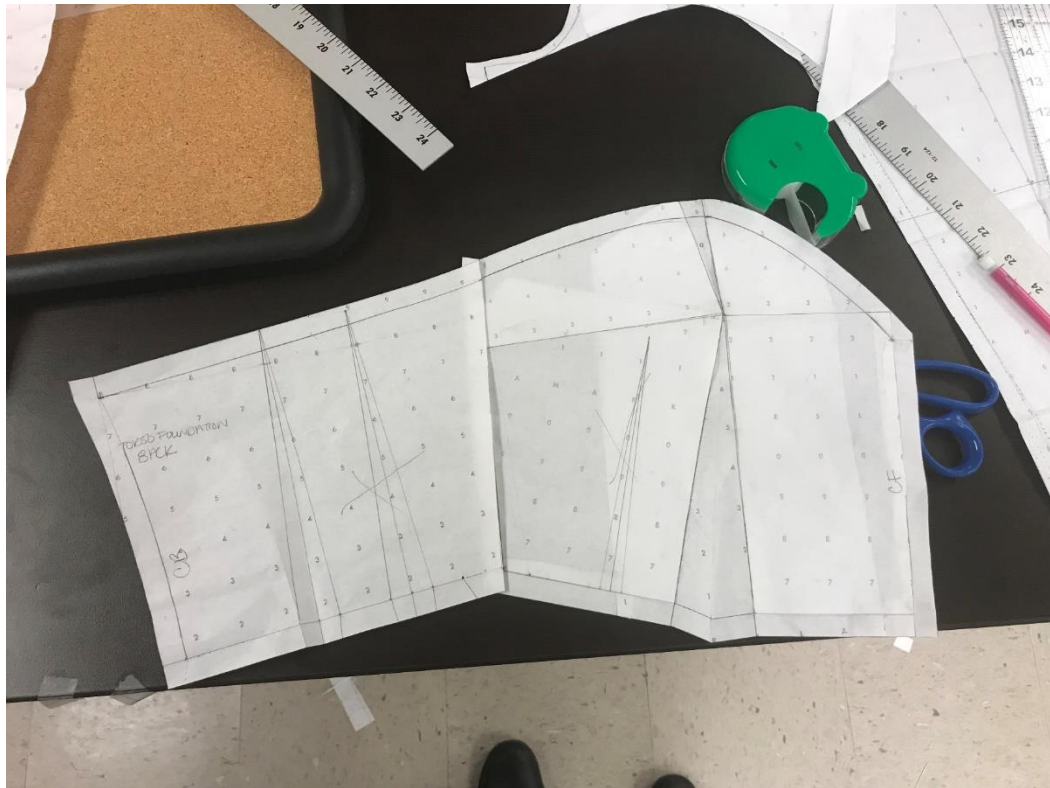
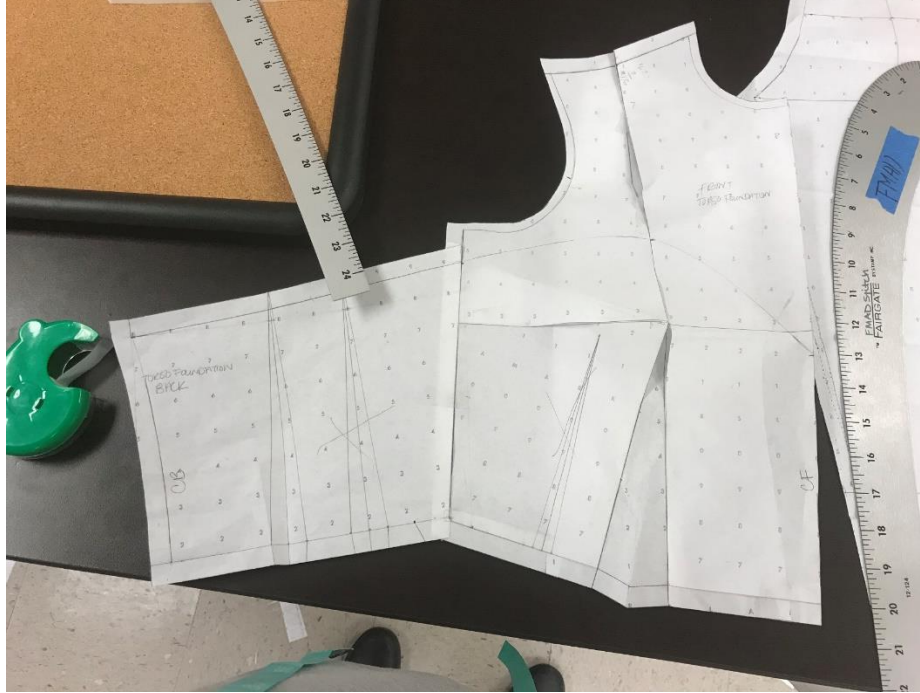
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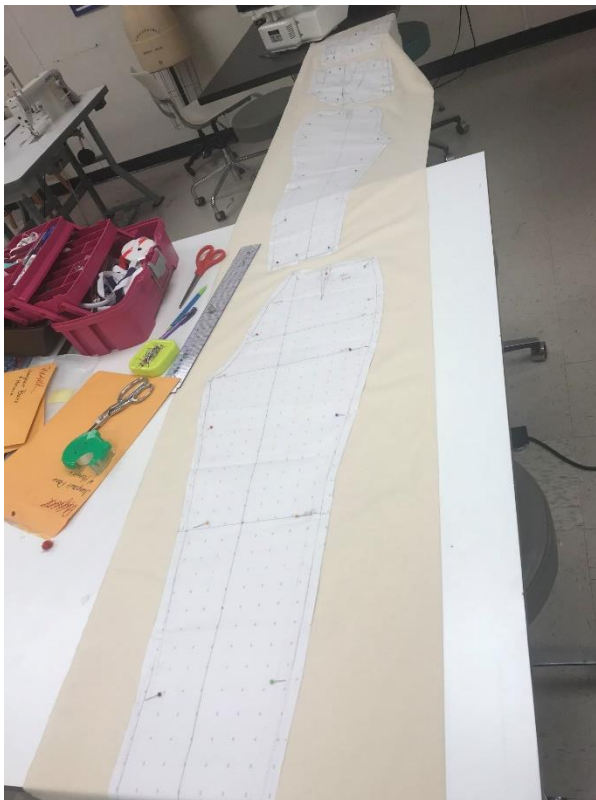
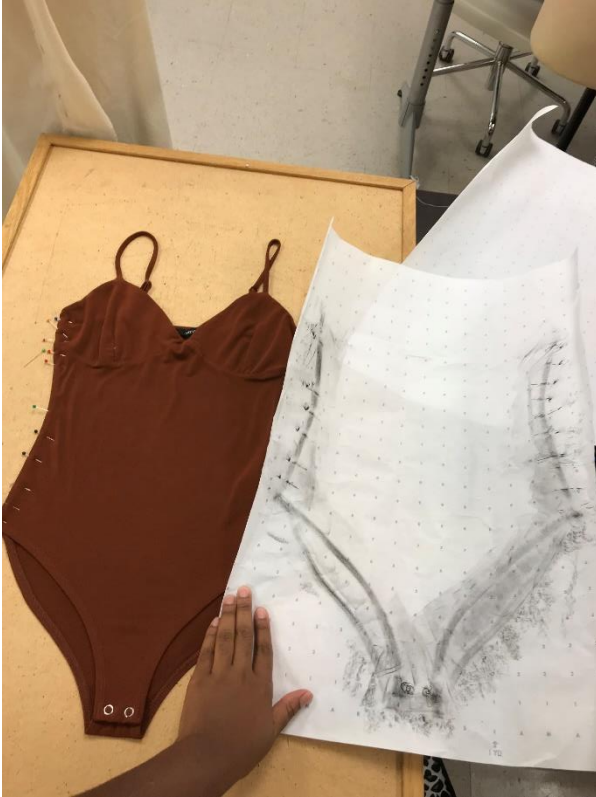
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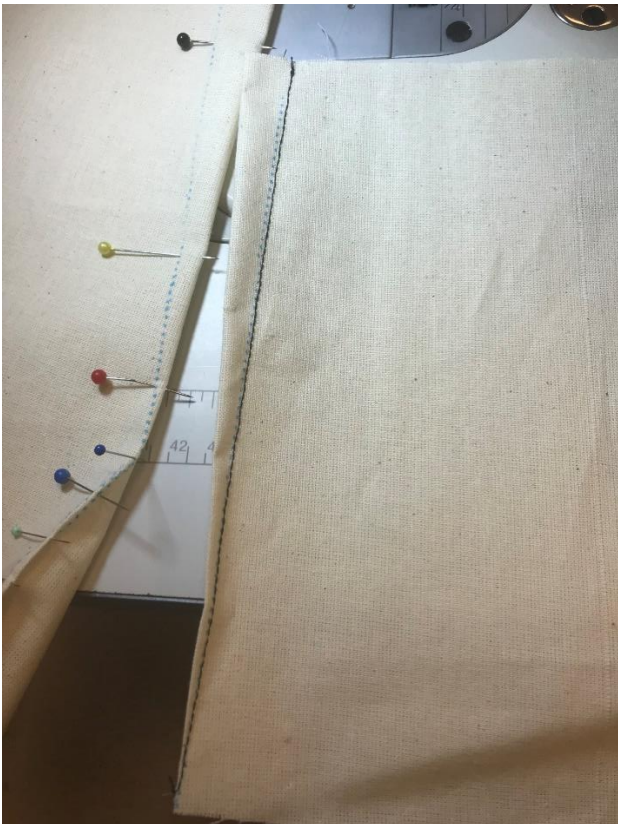
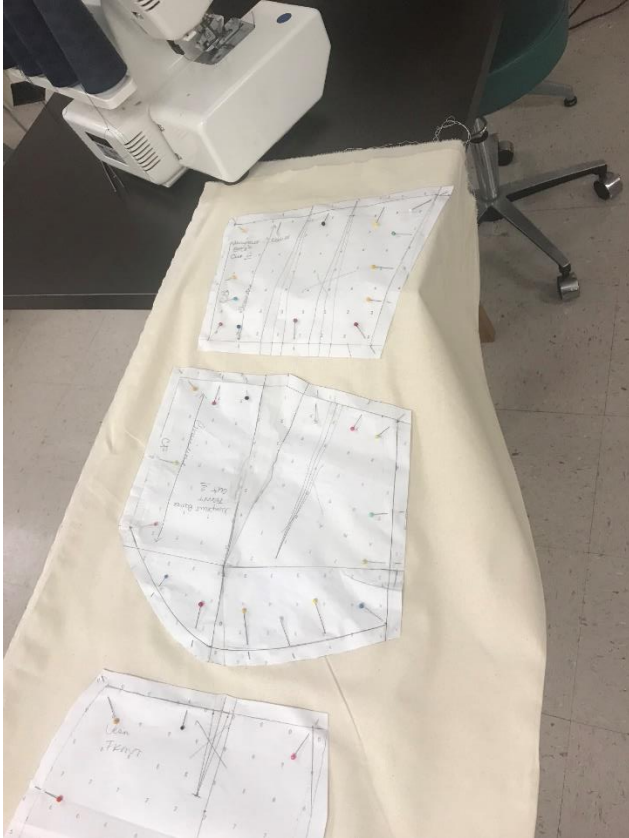
I also knew my model needed something cover her lady parts since the fabric is sheer so, I did a rub off pattern of a bodysuit that was her size to create a boy short panty

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and a bandeau in a knit for stretch. I then sewed the jumpsuit muslin together and the panty muslin for a fitting. I made sure I stay stitched my severe curves once again matched my seams together where needed and then marked all my alterations.



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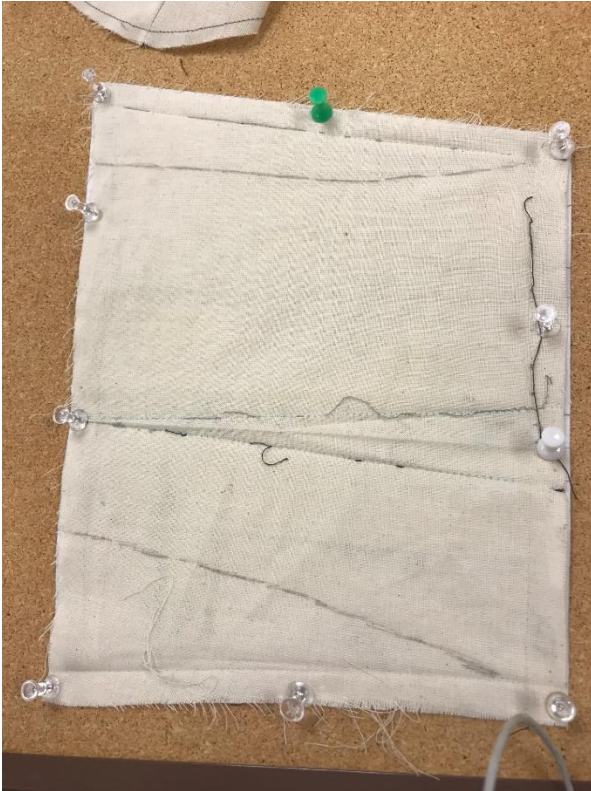
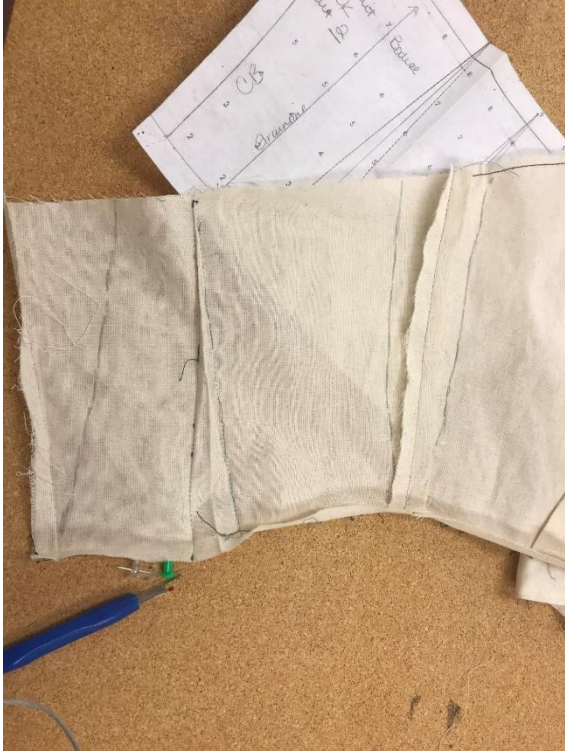
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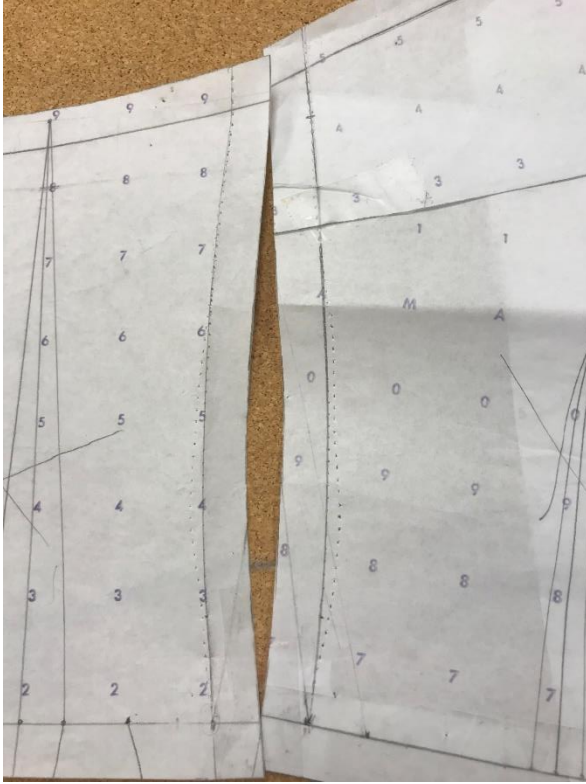
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After I corrected my patterns I wanted to sew the bodice portion of the jumpsuit again to draft a one shoulder piece for my model that would be the correct size since the jumpsuit is now her correct size.

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With that completed it was time to start the detachable skirt drape. I draped the skirt like a cascade skirt adding draping tape above the waist line to account for the

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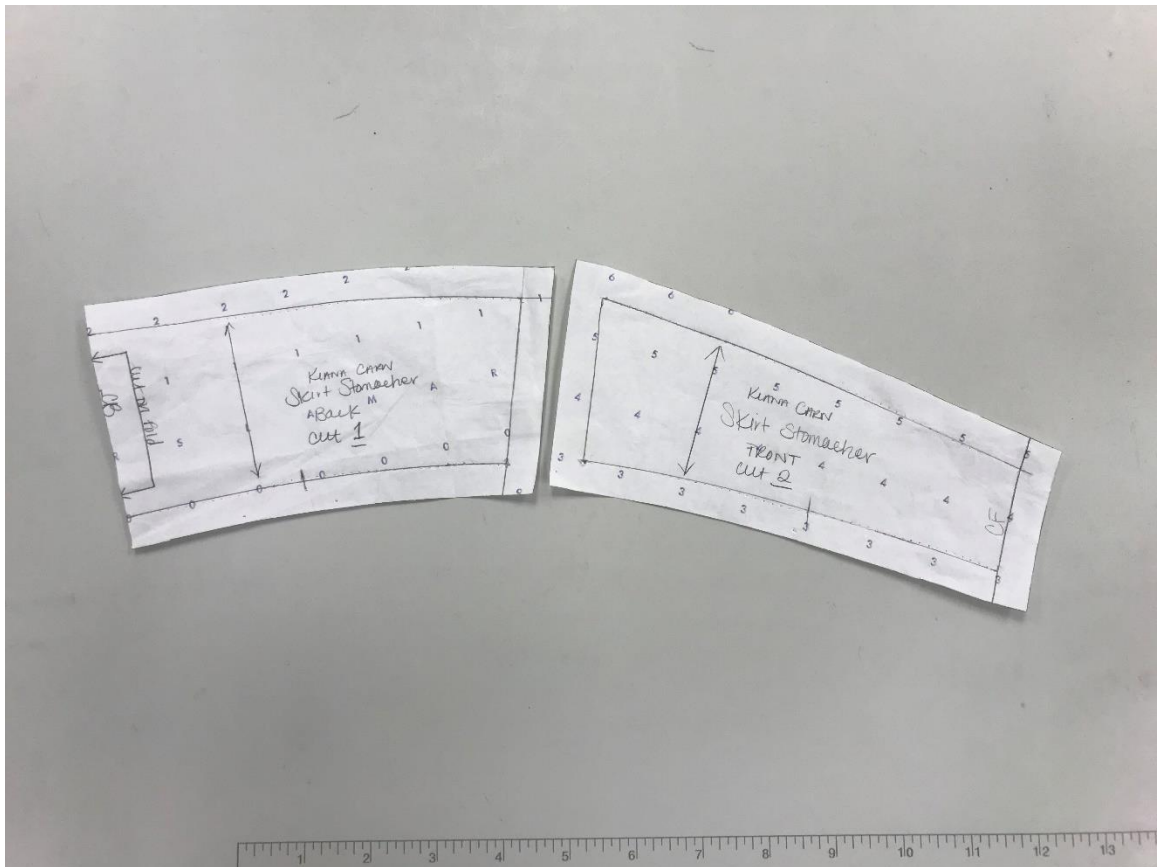
stomacher piece design that I wanted the skirt to have. After I draped all my pieces I transferred them to pattern paper. I decided to take the side seam out of the skirt pattern so I combined the front and back skirt pieces. I taped them together at the side seam and cut away from the front. The reason for doing this is because my pattern was wider than what my final skirt fabric would be and it was a specific way I wanted the skirt to look in the front so it worked out and I cut a muslin of the skirt. Because the skirt was going to be so big and to save fabric I cut a muslin of half of the skirt.



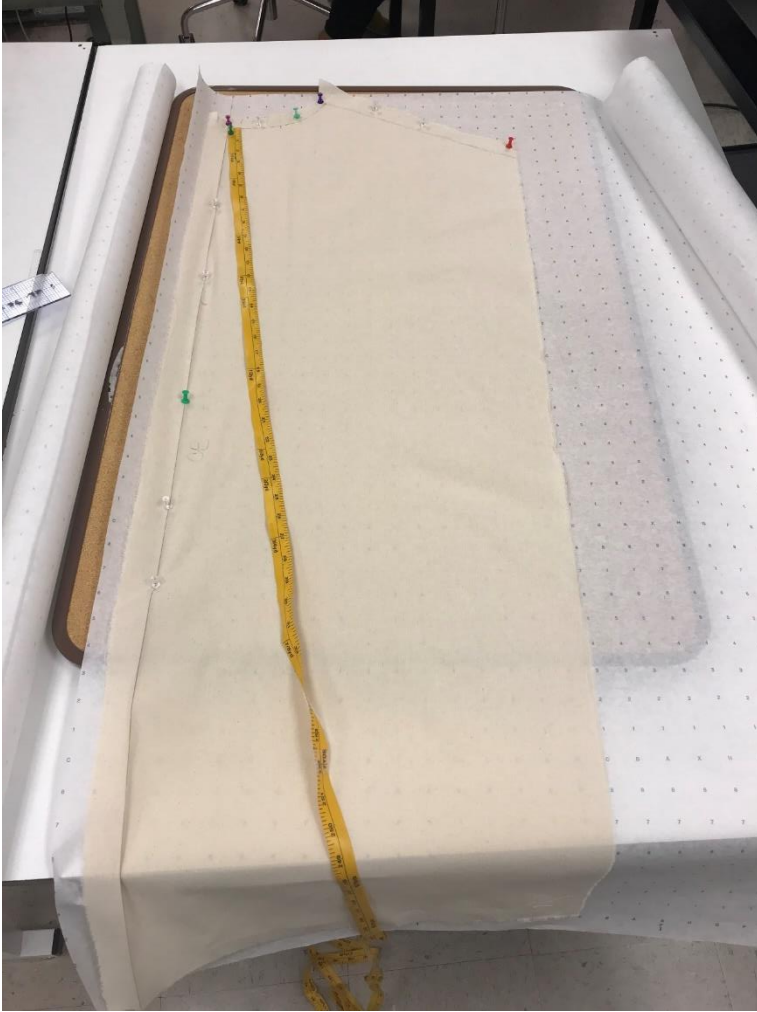
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I had my model do another fitting this time with skirt pinned to the jumpsuit to see how it looked and if any alterations needed to be done. No alterations needed except

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trimming down the front more to give the opening a more curved look. Now, I could cut my jumpsuit pieces out as well as the skirt on the final fabrics. The sheer fabric was very difficult to work with I had to use silk pins to pin the fabric, tissue paper to stabilize the fabric for cutting and cut the fabric with a rotary cutter for a fine cut edge. Also, when sewing the sheer fabric a regular seam stitched is not used. A *French seam* is used to close the seams, meaning the fabric is stitched wrong sides facing at a ¼ inch and stitched right sides facing at a ¼ inch to close the seam. The entire jumpsuit was done that way. Not to mention I had to sew boning into the center front and side seams of the bodice along with the shoulder piece as well.

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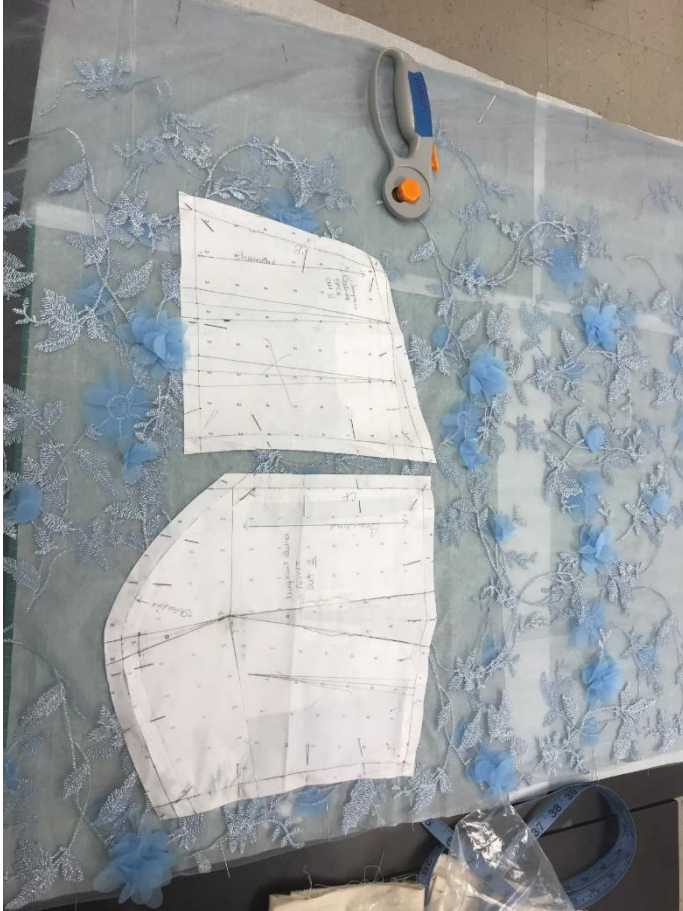
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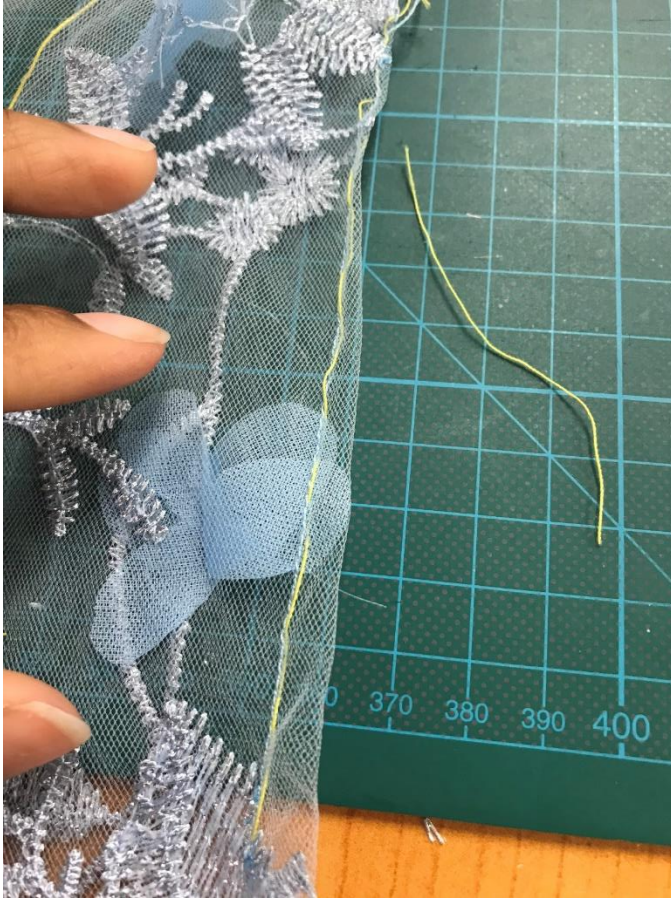
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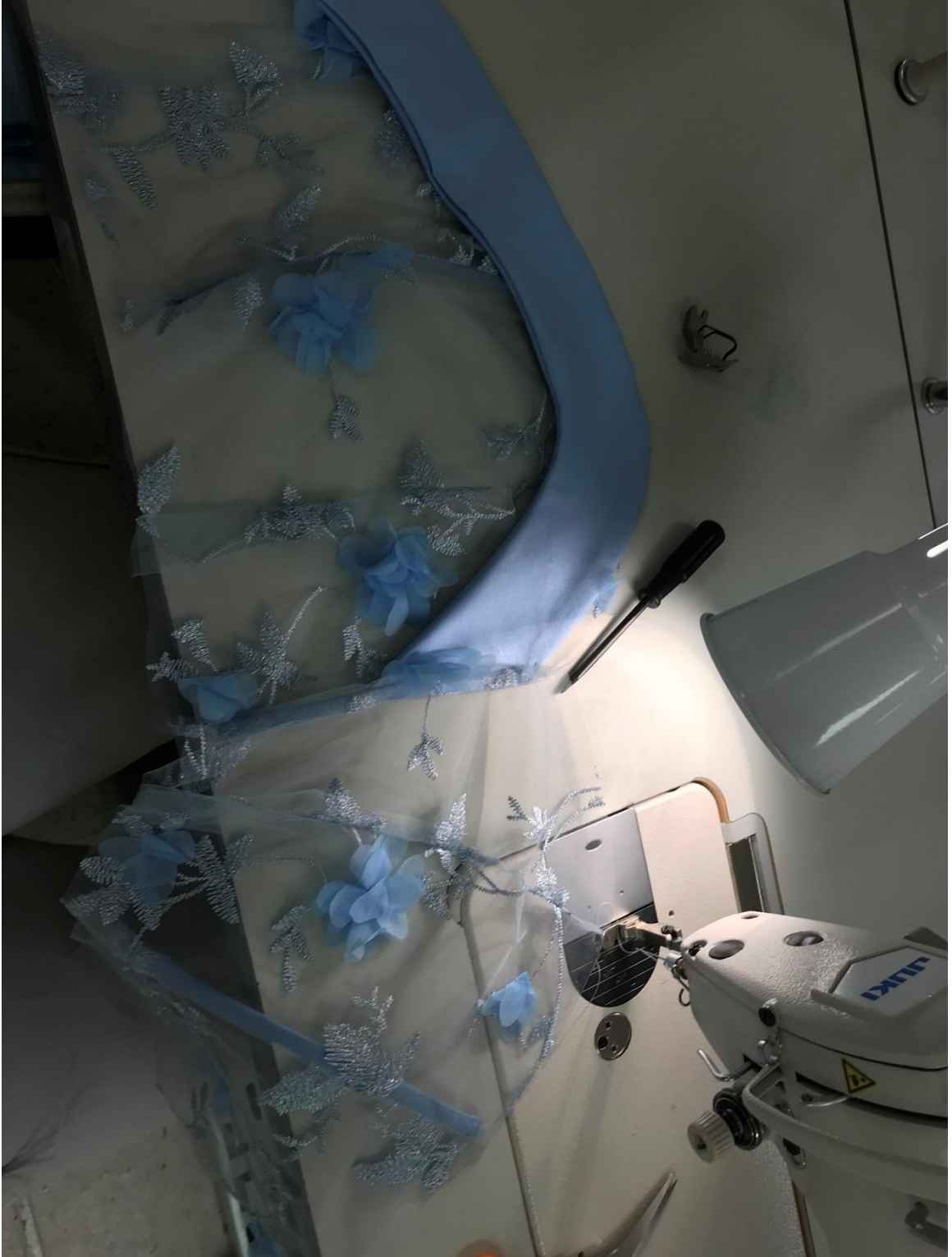
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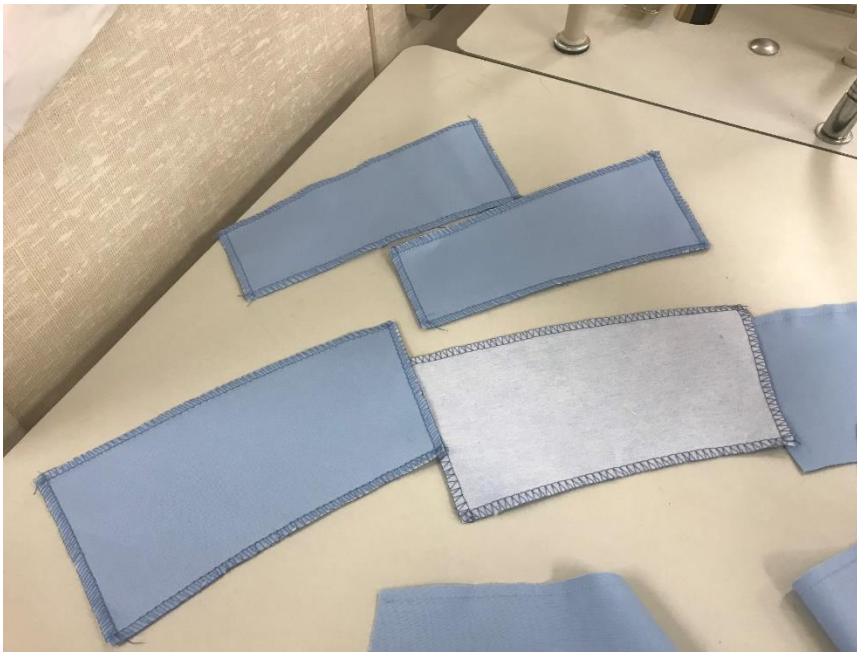
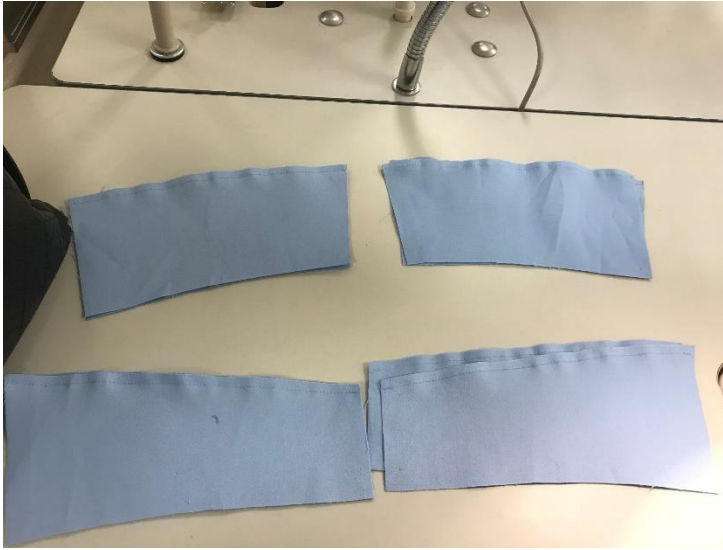


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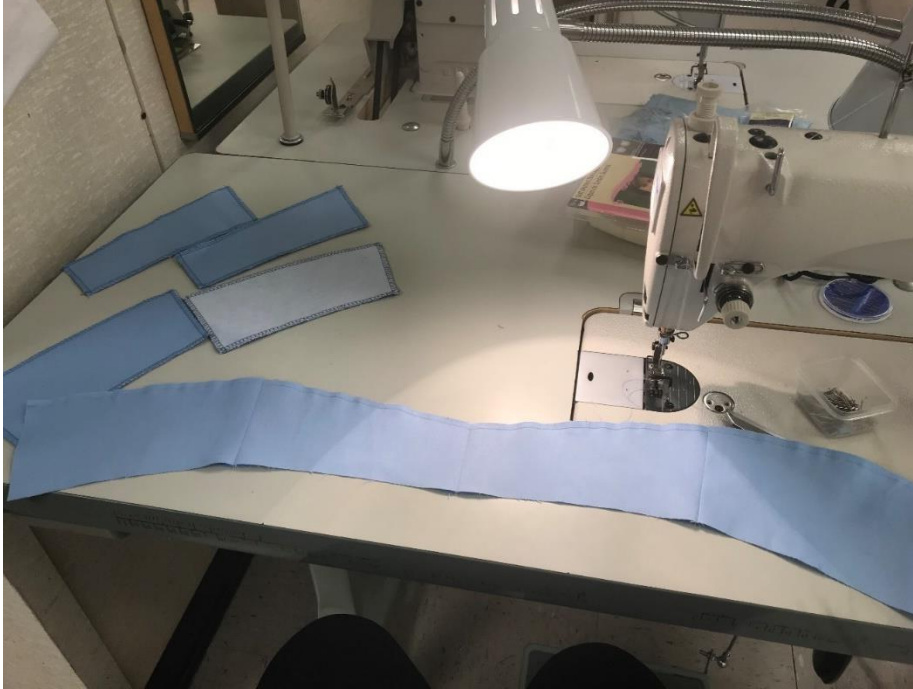


The stomacher portion of my skirt also needed to be self-faced and stay stitched before attachment to big part of the skirt.

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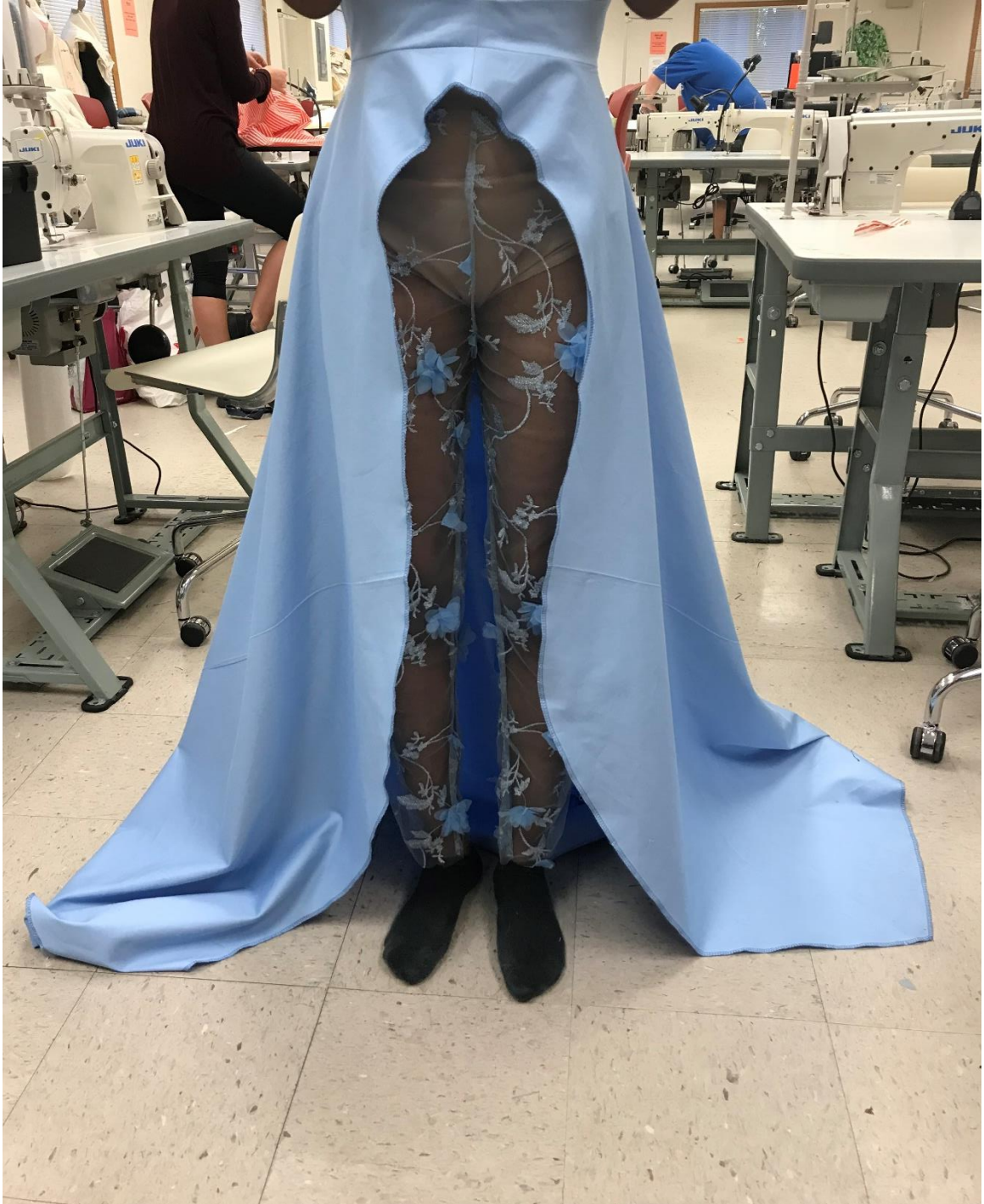
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Final Garments

The final garments in my collection each represent a social or lifestyle issue. Typically, a collection would have the same or similar colors and the same fabrics that are seen throughout the entire collection, but my collection does not besides the blue color. This was an intentional design decision so that each look and design would stand out on its own just like the social issue stands out by itself. The cohesiveness of my collection is not through similar colors on each garment but instead with the style lines and repetition of design details. I wanted to make sure that my collection stayed on trend for Spring/Summer 2018, therefore my collection features those trends: off the shoulder, 3D lace embroidery flowers fabric, sheer fabric, capes, blue, non-traditional bridal silhouettes such as a jumpsuit, and the style lines being curved or contoured to represent femininity.

Look 1: The Cocktail Dress

This dress was inspired from my generation's lack of knowledge about the correct dress code for an event, specifically knowing what type of dress is needed or appropriate for the event (Strachan, 2015). The cocktail dress length (i.e., knee length) was typically appropriate for the prom and for a time frame of drinking which where the name comes from. I wanted to make my dress different by using a non-traditional color and style by making it rose gold and exposing the stomach area. The dress has an asymmetrical bodice with a cut out over the abdomen with side bust darts and waist darts all attached to a fit and flare circle skirt. I would style it with a cute high or side bun, nude heels, and minimal makeup and jewelry.

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Look 2: The Upcycled Bridesmaid Dress

The inspiration behind this garment was the cost of being a bridesmaid but more so the accumulation of bridesmaids dresses that one person may encounter in their lifetime. The person builds a personal collection of these dresses with nothing to do with them except keep them in the back of the closet. I decided to purchase a used bridesmaid dress from Goodwill and upcycle the dress to make the point more apparent. The garment is completely made from the used bridesmaid dress and is a 2-piece set. The top is bralette-like with horizontal bra cup seams and a fit and flare band attached at the side seams. The bottom is high-waisted pencil skirt and finished with cover buttons. Romantic curls would complement the fit and flare arm piece. Silver or gold heels for the shoe and makeup to match the color. A simple pair of studs will complete this look.

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Look 3: The Social Media Prom Dress

This dress is inspired by social media platforms but specifically Instagram. During prom season Instagram is one of the most commonly used social media platforms to reveal the best and worst prom dresses in the world. With the typing of a simple hashtag “Prom2k17” or whatever the current year is, everyone’s red carpet-worthy looks are seen in the palm of your hands. Today the dresses seem more serious and dramatic as opposed to previously being cute and flirty. So, I wanted to make my dress as dramatic as possible and make it “Instagram worthy”. This a mermaid/trumpet style dress made using a metallic gold knit fabric and features a band across the shoulders attached to the neckline of the dress with cape sleeves attached to the band. The body of the dress has a deep v sweetheart neckline. A deep side part long ponytail is perfect for the hair. Gold and black glitter eyeshadow and nude lip for the makeup. A simple 2 strap black shoe and gold chandelier earrings for the jewelry.

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Look 4: The Non-traditional Bridal Gown

This dress was inspired from the non-traditional aspects of the bridal industry within the last 3-4 years specifically the actual wedding dress as the main focus of the inspiration. Brides want to feel like themselves and are breaking tradition with the type and color of dress worn at a wedding ceremony. Separates, jumpsuits, and pant suits are extremely popular options now so that's what I decided to create. The garment is jumpsuit with a sweetheart neckline and princess seams. It's made with 3D lace embroidered flowers and has an invisible zipper for the closure. The skirt is bell shaped and made with buckram and has a stomacher piece that sits on the waist. I would style this design with a soft curled bun, very light or minimal makeup, a light blue tulle veil to compliment the color scheme, and a sliver 2-strap heel.

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Conclusion

After all my hard work, I believe my collection can get consumers talking and asking questions about these lifestyle issues. I hope that with the collection being completed that my idea and concept will be understood. Yes, I created a beautiful garment but does the person understand why? Why I picked that color? That silhouette? That fabric? Why did I choose that design? All questions to start a conversation so that the lifestyle issues will become aware and apparent to consumers. For non-fashion professionals, I believe my paper gives insight into a designer's process and more respect will be given.

The process of designing this collection was not easy. There was a purpose in everything I did. If you're not a fashion professional or designer you would not know what we as designers go through to make a garment. Everyone only sees the final garment. Though my paper's concept was focused on to get consumers or people to understand the lifestyle and social issues of an American women, it was much more than that. My paper gives insight into the design process no one ever sees. My mentor and I spent long days and nights completing this collection. I only mentioned in my paper what went right throughout this process. There was a lot of seam ripping, ironing, pressing, hand-sewing, fabric sourcing, serging, I switched a model throughout the process, I drafted 3 pair of pants that didn't get used for another model that I didn't use, not to mention there is an entire look that I designed that I wasn't able to create because of the time frame of the semester, not getting things from my models when I needed it, and my mentor being unavailable at times. All those things played a part in creating the collection you see. My prom dress was supposed to have a screen-printed design but I wasn't able

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to do that. Again, consumers and people only see the finished garment no one knows what can go wrong during this process. Plenty of things happened that I wished didn't, those are things you see reflected in my process.

Reflective Critique

While completing this project I have learned so much. Time management is probably the biggest thing I've learned. Procrastinating is not something that should be done when completing this project. The project takes so much of your time and energy and of course sometimes you do need that break to relax and regain your thoughts but don't take up too much time because it will catch up on you. For me it's a bit different: the sewing lab and design development process is where all my time went. I never realized how extensive the process was to create a collection. I've created mini collections before but none never this big and it's only 4 garments. I've always had respect for what designers do but now that I've gotten a better understanding of the full process and now I have so much more respect. Developing the concepts, the mood board, the color story, finding inspiration, staying on trend, creating new and innovative garments, finding models, styling, developing samples and muslins for the garments, fittings, etc.; it's so many aspects that go into creating a collection and unless you're a fashion professional you would most likely never know what it takes to be a designer.

I am thankful for this project because it not only has pushed me as a student with my work ethic, learning how to be better writer, preparing me for graduate school, and so much more, it has also helped me develop my creative eye as a designer and push myself to think outside the box. I had only ever created a mini two-garment collection prior to my capstone project. This project has me outside of my norm and comfort zone. I'm

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creating 4 looks from scratch, something I have never done to this extent. I am proud to say I am one of the first Fashion Design majors to complete the Honors Capstone Project because though it has helped me I feel it will also help those who aren't fashion professionals to understand us a little bit more. Respect will be shown more because it's not as easy as it looks; my project gives more insight into the steps it takes to get to that beautiful garment that everyone sees.

Throughout the semester I have also sacrificed so much especially this semester Fall 2017, my social life has been on hold, I basically live in the sewing lab, I had to take off from work and some of my time at work to complete this project, I quit my organization to allow time, I had put graduation pictures on hold, my search for an internship on hold, and much more all to get this completed and finished. This capstone project is time-consuming but I made the decision to be an Honors student and I'm proud of myself for following through with it. This collection is only a preview into what I will be designing in the future. But, I am grateful and I proud that I pushed myself enough to start somewhere and that somewhere is in the University Honors Program at Georgia Southern University.

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