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Honors Capstone Portfolios

Honors Program

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Sarah Wall Honors Portfolio

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Welcome to my portfolio!



Brief Introduction



Who am I?

I am an undergraduate student at Minnesota State University, Mankato.



What am I studying?

I am studying exercise science with a minor in psychology.



What are my goals?

I want to attend graduate school and become a certified Physical Therapist.

Mission Statement

I strive to become a well-rounded student by ensuring I am an effective leader, global citizen, and researcher. Furthermore, I will work on self growth by learning from my experiences and surroundings.



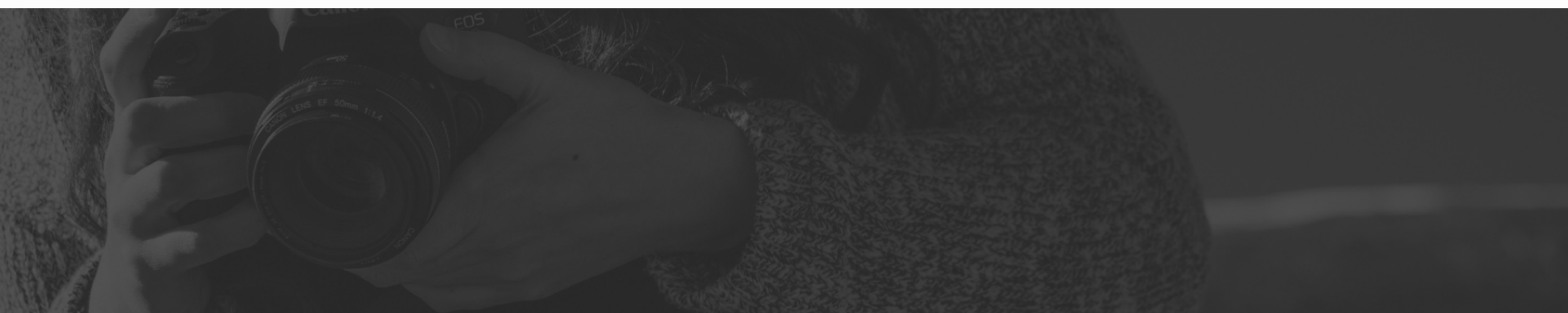
Education

Higher Education

I began my higher education at Minnesota State University, Mankato in Fall of 2017 as a student in the Honors Program. I plan on earning a degree in exercise science with a minor in psychology December 2020.



Highlights of My Undergraduate Experience





Honors Program

Honors Program Mission Statement

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

Why Honors?



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Global Citizenship

Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness.

Global Citizenship Synthesis Essay

Global Citizenship Synthesis Essay

I will always be grateful for my parents because I was introduced to different cultures, encouraged to ask questions, and to treat everyone the way I wanted to be treated. As a senior in the Honors Program, I realized these lessons shaped me into the global citizen I am today.

From a young age, my parents celebrated Chinese holidays such as the Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese New Year. When I noticed ethnic differences between myself and others, my parents explained despite physical differences, we were all expected to treat each other with respect. I became self-aware of how I appeared differently than others and were in some cases, treated differently because of it. Overtime I have learned how to be mindful of my opinions, acknowledge differences between myself and others, and continue to treat everyone with kindness and respect sarahwall-1.weebly.com/a-reflection-on-my-culture.html.

I studied the Chinese language for six years and had two experiences to practice my communication skills in China sarahwall-1.weebly.com/a-reflection-on-studying-the-chinese-language.html. While studying with a diverse group of students, I noticed different learning styles and speeds. People who had exposure to Chinese at a young age learned vocabulary at a faster rate than those who never had exposure to the Chinese language prior to seventh grade. I made many observations in China regarding different types of communication and how my communication changed. A difference between nonverbals can be seen in leaving food on the plate. Empty plates in China are an indication of hunger whereas empty plates in America are a sign of satisfaction and satiety. My communication changed drastically when I travelled to China. I wanted to make sure I did not seem incompetent or uneducated when speaking to native Chinese individuals, so I sped up the rate of speech and perfected my pronunciation.

My knowledge and understanding of other cultures have come a long way and still has room for improvement. When I attended a culture night at Gustavus Adolphus College (GAC), I learned surface-level information regarding the Latina culture and lifestyle sarahwall-1.weebly.com/latinx-night-and-friendships-within-the-community.html. Contrarily, I was also exposed to some of the horrendous and realistic reasons why people flee their country and was granted the opportunity to expand my friendship with people in different cultures. I developed my philosophy of global citizenship and realized the importance of listening to other people's stories and trying to understand their point of view.

Research

Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit information literacy skills, synthesize and integrate ideas, produce original research or creative works, and contribute to knowledge.

Research Synthesis Essay

Research Synthesis Essay

Research was the most intimidating competency when I first learned about it. However, after four years, I realized my research provided me with experiences I would not have been offered through leadership or global citizenship.

The acquisition of my research skills began in general education courses such as art as politics (ART265w) and biology (BIOL105). The final project for ART265w was a research essay which required knowledge from previous research studies. During the process of writing the research essay, I practiced and improved my information synthesis skills. All biology courses have lab components, but BIOL105 focused on improving scientific writing for laboratory reports. When I wrote the comprehensive laboratory report, I significantly improved my information literacy skills by accessing information and using it to accomplish a specific research goal. The skills I improved in ART265w and BIOL105 sufficiently prepared me for original research.

Emily Schiltz and I, with help from Dr. Emily Stark, identified a research question that would explain the influence of social media on college students' feelings of stress, anxiety, and self-esteem. Schiltz and I decided we would conduct our research by having all participants complete two surveys and be randomly selected to either continue or discontinue social media use for three days. All surveys were anonymous and discarded if someone failed to return after the three-day period. Dr. Stark helped with the statistical analysis of the results and we discovered social media use did not influence stress or anxiety, but it did influence self-esteem.

We completed our research in December 2019 and wrote a proposal and abstract for the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS), Upper Midwest Honors Conference (UMHC), and National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference. Our research was deemed intriguing and relevant and we were given the opportunities to present our research at all three conferences.

Disseminating our results was a nerve-wracking, exciting, and educational experience. I developed my presentation skills while traveling to various states. The conferences also offered an opportunity to learn about other research topics and receive feedback on our research.

Moving forward, I will use my acquired research skills to discern between information and fallacies in graduate school the work force. The research process experienced in BIOL105 and ART265w helped me develop the skills to organize information, create a detailed research question, and ultimately conduct and disseminate research in a timely and professional manner.

Leadership

Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to utilize personal leadership values and guide groups toward a common goal.

Leadership Synthesis Essay

Leadership Synthesis Essay

As a first-year Honors student, I had no idea what leadership truly looked like and the depths of my leadership skills. My experiences in the honors program exposed me to a wide variety of leadership styles I have been able to reflect upon. I have recognized the qualities of a leader that I most appreciate and strive to instill them in my personal leadership style.

Developing Your Mentor Philosophy helped identify my leadership weaknesses, empathy and the acceptance of ambiguity. I have since strived to improve and apply both values to real-life situations. During times of frustration or anger, I tried to remind myself all feelings were acceptable, and it would be okay. I also realized a large portion of accepting ambiguity was being patient, so I did my best to remain patient when I was seeking answers. As I became more comfortable with empathy and ambiguity, I began applying it to situations that involved others.

Exploring Personal Leadership taught me about the Civil Rights Movement and the leadership within it. Through reflection on various leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, and modern leaders such as President Obama, I developed my personal leadership philosophy.

Working with children requires empathy and patience, so volunteering at Rosa Parks Elementary School was an excellent opportunity for self-growth. When working with students, I tried to remember their priorities looked different than mine and thus would affect their attitudes and work ethic. I did my best to put myself in the students' shoes and offered incentives I thought would benefit the student. For example, I would offer an avid reader a trip to the library after completing a task. I gradually became less frustrated with students who needed constant redirection because I was able to empathize with them and accept the ambiguity regarding how much work the individual would complete.

My leadership weaknesses were ultimately tested during my internship with Ignition Fitness and Sports. When all non-essential businesses closed due to COVID-19, I was forced to accept a lot of ambiguity and my roles and responsibilities changed every day. I initially did not handle the ambiguity of the situation well. As COVID-19 continued, I realized this was the new "normal" and there was no "waiting it out." I began implementing a routine that allowed for changes which ultimately helped me accept the ambiguity. I tried to be mindful of others and realized everyone has different reactions to change and therefore a harsh reaction may not be a direct attack on me, rather it is an indirect release of negative energy from something else.

Throughout the past three years, I have identified my leadership weaknesses, developed those weaknesses, and applied them to a wide range of situations. My leadership philosophy has evolved to include compassion, empathy, communication, and growth. I am not a perfect leader, but I strive to be a leader who is consistently willing to improve.



Volunteering

Rosa Parks Elementary School

I began volunteering in a fifth-grade classroom at Rosa Parks Elementary School in the Fall of 2017. Twice a week for a hour and a half, I help students improve their writing skills and develop various health concepts. I have helped students edit and revise their informational and persuasive reports. Observing the teacher has taught me leadership skills and how to apply my own leadership style in a new setting.

Work Experience

Freedom Homecare

I joined Freedom Home Care as a caregiver on August 1, 2020 to work with older adults and expand my work experience. As a caregiver I provide aid to older adults with anything ranging from companionship to incontinence care. I enjoy my job because it is rewarding and I enjoy seeing other people smile.




Mankato Area Gymnastics School (MAGS)

I began coaching gymnastics at Mankato Area Gymnastics School (MAGS) in the Fall of 2018. While I had five years of coaching experience, this job brought new challenges such as getting used to a different coaching environment. Most recently I helped coach the Xcel bronze and silver teams during the 2019-2020 competition season. I discontinued coaching but will always cherish the memories and experiences I had with these gymnasts.



Graduate School

I applied to five physical therapy doctoral programs in Fall 2020 and hope to hear back from them by December 2020. The document below explains why I would like to pursue a career in physical therapy.

 [ptcas_essay.pdf](#)
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Contact Information

Contact

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