



# HELLO,

and thank you for viewing my portfolio!

My name is Rasheed Al-Arami. I am an accounting student at Minnesota State University (MSU), Mankato. I am also a student in MSU's Honors Program. This portfolio will highlight how I met the three Honors Program competencies; Leadership, Research and Global Citizenship. To learn more about the Honors Program, click below.

[The Honors Program](#)

### MISSION:

My mission is to start a very profitable business that would allow me to support educational development in my country, Yemen!

### FAVORITE QUOTE:

"Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind."

Theodore Roosevelt

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## Honors Program Mission

" 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."

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Leadership is very crucial in our life. It is what has built civilizations throughout history. Due its importance, it is one of the competencies that the Honors Program requires its students to achieve. The Honors Program instills leadership in students by allowing them to build their sense of both individual leadership values and leadership within a team. Throughout my academic pursuit in college, I have been looking back and assessing myself on four progressive leadership standards or levels.

The first level discusses how the student identifies their leadership values and their role in a group or a team. I was able to develop my skills in both of these areas as I was serving in the Minnesota State University's [Student Events Team](#). As part of leadership development, students have to partake in a StrengthFinder 2.0 assessment, which helps a person identify their top five strengths. Through that assessment, I was able to identify my strengths which are deliberative, analytical, responsible, realtor and adapter. Furthermore, I found my role in a team to be that I am usually the person who finishes their responsibilities and then attempts to help someone else. Because I am a realtor, helping my teammates in finding volunteers for their events, for example, was one of the tasks I took charge of even though it was not assigned to me.

The second level digs a little deeper into one's experiences by allowing one to reflect on one's findings from level one. For example, as I was working on my [MSU Students for Syria](#) campaign, I started noticing how we as a team were using our strengths to achieve our goals. Utilizing my deliberative nature, I was able to be a successful quality manager because in my brain every step had to be carefully performed to be able to achieve a consistent product. However, I would have failed at advertising these products because the only people-skill strength I have is realtor, which to some extent is not the best strength when you are trying to close on a sale. Since I know that this area is not my strength, pushing this role to someone who had woo and relationship strengths was good application of what I learned about leadership at the time.

The third level is improving on the student's observation and beginning to determine what would be the best leadership style to follow as well as how different leadership styles help a group achieve their goal. I was able to see this during my term as a Controller of [Midwest Made Company](#). The company had several leaders and various departments that gave me a perspective on different leadership styles. I saw micro-managers, hands-off managers, unorganized managers, result-based managers as well as other styles. However, I found that the best type of management style for myself is a combination of certain traits. I describe my preferred leadership style as organized, fair, consultative, decisive, results-based management style. As I was working with my team to ensure sufficient, accurate financial statements, I learned through a lot of trial and error as well as based on my team's feedback that this was the best leadership style. However, the true challenge was how the different leadership styles worked together in one melting pot. The first a few weeks of the semester was chaotic; nonetheless, I believe my strength of adaptability allowed me to be successful as a leader within my team because I incorporated parts of everyone's style with mine. Therefore, everyone was happy.

The fourth level is developing and using a leadership style in an organization. I plan to test my leadership style this coming spring in [VITA](#). I will be the coordinator of the Non-Resident room, and I will be managing a group of volunteers that help file tax returns for clients. My plan is to use the leadership philosophy I developed to ensure that the most efficient system is in place. Tax is one of the most complex areas to learn. The true challenge will be how to train the volunteers to use the knowledge they learned in class while not showing that they are not experienced to the clients.

Now that I was fortunate enough to know the true meaning of leadership. The true challenge is how will I use it after I graduate. I intend to keep testing my philosophy every time I use it. I believe it is an ongoing process that will be learned and relearned forever!

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Research is a powerful skill to have. It is what allowed scientists and noble prize winners to achieve the level of knowledge they have. To me, research is the ability to extract enough data about a topic and to make something useful out of it that would add to preexisting knowledge or lead to a new discovery. I was able to learn what research is and the right way to do it throughout my journey as an undergraduate scholar.

I was able to learn about and gain practice with the four main levels of information literacy during my first research paper in my ['World Civilizations Since 1500 – Present'](#) class. My research paper addressed a lot of events that have taken place throughout the history. Based on it, I claim finding the two Americas was inevitable. As I worked on this research paper, I learned multiple strategies that helped me extract the pieces of information that assisted me in exploring my topic. For example, I learned that 'Google Scholar' and 'MavScholar' are great research tools to utilize when a researcher is looking for concrete data. Furthermore, I learned how to ethically cite the resources I use; specifically, books and websites.

Another aspect of research that I applied is the ability to synthesize information. As I was developing the financial system for my IBE company, [Midwest Made Co.](#), I had to analytically prepare the budgeted financial statements for the loan officers. Prior to doing so, I had to synthesize data provided by the financial planning and analysis team while researching specific Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The main purpose was to build meaningful and compliant financial statements. In the same time all of the different teams from the company were developing the business plan, I had to connect with marketing and operations to understand their perspective on our business and eventually implement their plans in the statements. By the end, we had to disseminate our results to the bank officers in order to get our loan approved. This experience developed my skills in using strategies to organize others' ideas as well as synthesizing various perspectives, while drawing conclusions from incorporating other's ideas to make successful business decisions.

The third research skill development that I have learned is creating an original research project. As part of my [Social \(In\) Justice Responsibility](#) class, I started a campaign to help battle hunger and famine among Syrian refugees around the world. The step I took as I worked on this campaign was a result of a research I completed. The research addressed what were the particular challenges faced by Syrian refugees, what were the consequences of these issues on the world, what were the figures and data we can work with, and what could be a possible solution. The research concluded with a proposal that if implemented, in my humble opinion would resolve the financial aspect of the Syrian refugees' issue. The entire research was presented to my classmates.

The fourth research skill that I have learned is how to ensure that a person's research is disseminated properly and is useful to readers and users. Creating content that people need is one of the most important objectives that a researcher should consider as they prepare their research. How you disseminate the result is of even greater significance. I learned this when I connected some of my [Knowledge Articles](#) via the Minnesota State University, Mankato website. I am fortunate to be able to see how many times students and colleagues have used my articles as they resolve their issues, which highlights the importance of making a person's research as accessible as possible.

In conclusion, my journey as a scholar has allowed me to learn and develop many aspects regarding research. These include information literacy and synthesis, as well as the development of original research utilizing the appropriate avenues of disseminating the results. What I have learned about research will always distinguish me as a skilled member of society which will enable me to achieve my career and life goals.

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During my teenage years I had no conceptual understanding of global citizenship or culture. To me, everything that surrounded me seemed to be the norm and anything outside that surrounding was wrong and not acceptable by any measure. Open-mindedness was perceived as the act of being stylish, indulging in socially unacceptable actions, and being an elegant speaker with a few foreign words here and there. However, all of that changed when I started stepping out of my comfort zone.

In 2010, I was selected as a youth cultural ambassador of my country, Yemen, to the US, specifically Sacramento, CA. This was part of the [U.S. State Department Youth Exchange and Study \(YES\) program](#). The moment I stepped into Sacramento International Airport, I experienced that weird feeling of where am I? Why did I choose to come here? Who is this family and why did they accept to host me? Am I brought here to be brainwashed? Or maybe this is a lie and they just want to religiously convert me and that is why they initiated this program? I had so many stereotypes about America and had the feeling of cultural superiority. I assumed my job is to change the community's way of thinking and make them adopt mine and my culture. However, as time passed by and the more engaged I was with the community, I started learning about why others are doing things the way they do them, and why I am doing the things I do the way I do them. I began comparing and contrasting as well as evaluating the good and the bad of both cultures. At the end of my exchange year, I was finally able to change perspectives that people had about me and my culture, and I changed a lot of perspectives and stereotypes I had about America and the American culture. It is then when I realized the meaning of open-mindedness and the meaning of global citizenship; the ability to progressively learn coexistence.

My YES experience was even more enriched when I attended [Better Understanding for Better World](#) conference. This specific conference helped me learn more about different religious beliefs. The background I come from is nearly 100% Muslim. I never was exposed to people of other religious denominations. However, this experience allowed me to ask the questions I always wanted to ask. It allowed me to explore others religious beliefs and learn about their similarities and differences. It even furthered my understanding of world politics when I discussed international controversies with attendees of the conference.

The skill-set I learned from the two previous experiences was applied in my three and half years at [Minnesota State University \(MSU\), Mankato](#). During my time at MSU, I had fabulous and successful coexisting experience. I lived with American, Canadian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Egyptian and Moroccan roommates. They all had different ways to do things, various beliefs and diverse ideologies; yet, we recognized and celebrated our differences!

In bringing my newly learned skills into action, I co-founded a [campaign](#) that help collect donations for Syrian refugees around the world. I worked with skilled, diverse individuals in bringing this project to light. The beauty of the entire project was how our differences did not hinder the bond of humanity that we shared. This experience ensured me that if there is a good cause, it doesn't matter what your background or creed is. What matter is how you use it to achieve your goals.

Now I am more confident in myself and my abilities. I know that if life throws me anywhere, I will be able to survive, adapt and be happy without necessarily changing any of my ideas or beliefs or attempting to change others. This makes me feel prepared for this world and its challenges!