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Welcome Statement



Hallo und Willkommen!

My name is Jonathan William Smith, a German immigrant and non-traditional student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. My goal is to graduate with Law Enforcement and German as my majors, and International Relations as my minor. Ultimately, I wish to work for a federal agency as a correspondent between the USA and Germany, so that I can apply all of who I am and where I am from for a common, greater, good.

My Mission

First comes work, then comes fun. Poverty taught me how to work hard to overcome hurdles and analyze whats at hand to achieve my dreams.

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About Me



I was born and raised in Berlin, Germany. Growing up in poverty, each day was lived to the fullest, and was explored to see what the world has to offer. With this philosophy in mind I came to the USA to advance in my aspiration to work for a federal law enforcement agency.



Prior to my immigration, I completed high school education, an apprenticeship and a post high school education in Germany. Furthermore, I had several jobs, one of which has influenced me the most: my work as an interpreter for Military Personnel at a Military Training facility for the US Army and various other NATO forces. Without this experience, I would not have found my passion for international correspondence between uniformed personnel.

Being active in the working sector is one thing, but I have also traveled in between my working obligations. Some of the places included France, England, Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, Singapore, Poland, Canada and Mexico. This traveling, as well as the experiences I was able to gather through work and the general struggle with life's direction and the ever present seek for fulfillment, have culminated into my choice in being here in the USA, receiving further education, and moving on towards a career I have singled out for myself.

Currently I am a first year student at Minnesota State University, Mankato in pursuit of my goals. Other than progressing in studies, I enjoy spending time with my long term girlfriend, taking walks, enjoying some "popcorn movies", my favorite reads and last but not least, sketching.

Contrasting Home

Start Date & Time May 29, 2016 9:37 PM

In my "second" semester (Spring 2016) here at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I was able to travel to Germany, and in specific: visit my hometown of Berlin again after nearly two and a half years. While you can read more about this trip in my Global Citizenship section, the point I wish to clarify here is the point of where I come from, and what my origin means to me.

I chose to go to the USA to study and get a better chance than I could've gotten, but instead of finding only academic and career success, I also found personal growth. This happened when I visited my parents house. Many people would be shocked when they see it, and I even have heard people call it "gypsy-like" and "povert stricken" and many other things. I can't blame them - no running water (rain water in barrels is the closest), no plumbing, no electricity (other than solar panels that store enough for lights at night), a gas-stove, a heater that is run by putting wood into it's fire, and much more.

When I was in the HONR 401 class, we had learned about the conditions that people emigrate (undocumented or not) from, and seek to improve when they move to (for example) the USA. But what truly shocked me was that it was exactly how I grew up, and how my parents live now. The fact that I can write in this portfolio, or handle a phone, or even use email and D2L is actually quite big, considering my parents have a hard time turning on a computer, let alone actually connecting to the internet, knowing websites, knowing what passwords are and do, and far more than you can imagine right now.

Without this trip, I would not have "seen" this change in me, and where I am headed with my life. Often we look back and "remember," but when faced with this extremely stark contrast from one day to the other, I can actually grasp the value of what I have done to change my life into the direction it is going. It gives me energy and compassion for the future and those around me who may also not be quite "home" and out of their personal depths. I am glad I signed up for this Study Tour for Germany and Austria, as I would have never thought that such a tour could teach me more than just academia - yet it also taught me about myself and who I am.

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Education



Midway - Enroute to my Bachelor Degrees

Deviation from the Norm

As with most things I have experienced in life, even classifying my route to bachelor degrees is hard for me to do. Normally, a bachelor degree is referred to being a four-year degree, a major and maybe a minor if the major requires it. For me, none of those quite apply.

My goal is a Bachelor of Science degree in Law Enforcement, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in German. The second which I've chosen International Relations to minor in. So not only am I not doing one degree, I am attempting to do two. Yet deviation usually doesn't go alone. As I am a non-traditional student and am at the end of my twenties, I am faced with a job market that wants applicants at mid thirties as the highest entry age. Considering that I am looking to do also a Masters Degree, I have opted to do my degrees in three years instead of four - which is why I am doing Summer Classes every summer to fit it into the time-table.

Reflection on these Choices

I have now, after my "second" semester (since summer semesters do not count), arrived at the half-way, or Midway point of my academic strive. At the beginning of the Spring semester 2016, I was losing my energy and drive, and felt a little overwhelmed as I have had no out-of-school activities, something that I have been used to thus far. For instance, my wishes to go sight-seeing in the USA, and many more, have been put on hold for my wish to finish school in a timely fashion. Everything was put on hold for the sake of school.

Though this seems easily said, it is not easily done. Giving up on most of the time spent with friends, family, movies, or any other recreational activities (like drawing, which I used to like to do) was mandatory, but... if I am honest I must say that making it "mandatory" was one of the hardest things I have done in life. During that semester, all of this negligence caught up to me: how much I had missed friends, family, and recreational (or simply "me") time.

My body was drained, my mind couldn't grasp a lot of things and the dark question of "Whats the point?" echoed and loomed in my head. I was close to calling it quits with the Honors Program, with school and just take a break and refresh myself. Yet thanks to those close to me, friends and family alike, especially during my Study Tour stop in Berlin, I was able to stay sane. But not only them, a few professors at this university have helped and understood me more than I had hoped for, and that is why I am writing this reflection piece.

Close to throwing in the towel, it was a select few who gave me strength during the semester, and reminded me that school is all good, but also a personal aspect is needed - not only the cold books of academia. I wanted to thank those around me for supporting someone who has not had the privilege of support most of his life. Now, I will keep going with my plan and the completion of my degrees. It was a valuable lesson learned.

Alpha Phi Sigma



Honor

February 1, 2016
National Criminal Justice Honor Society - Alpha Phi Sigma

Joined the Alpha Phi Sigma Honors Society, a society for the Criminal Justice Scholars and the future leaders of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. This enables me to be part of scholarship programs, have the right to visit the annual convention (where there are also presentations), etc.

With this membership, I can be a more active leader in events here around campus involving those of the Law Enforcement Club, and the Law Enforcement department. I am eager to see what I can do!

Undergraduate Degree



Degree

January 12, 2015
Minnesota State University, Mankato, USA

After much back and forth, I am now en route to completing an Undergraduate Degree at the Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU).

To shed some light as to why the back and forth, this *Critical Incident Journal Entry* will explain:

Entry No. 1)

College gets knocked back

[Incident Report](#)

I wanted to start college at the beginning of the year in 2014, but because of my late arrival and lack of preparation, it became quickly apparent that I would have to wait until August, Fall term of 2014, to actually attend. When the time came, I was told that I was allowed to start classes, but that I would be considered a non-resident student. This means that my tuition would go up nearly threefold. To put it into perspective: instead of 3,900\$ it would have been 9,700\$. Furthermore, this would be my tuition for the next 4 years, per semester. Upon speaking with the financial aid office, they were not able to see me as a "resident", despite my immigration to Minnesota, USA, and could only pay for roughly 4,000\$. As an immigrant and non-traditional student, who would like to go to college full-time, these expenses would have been disastrous. However, there was a way to circumvent this: I would have to be in Minnesota for a full year (documented of course). Then I would be eligible for in-state tuition and financial aid. Thus, I withdrew from my classes, and waited another semester.

Reflection

It was one of the hardest choices I had to make when I sat there in the office. I had already waited over 6 months, working full time in the meanwhile, to start classes and now I was told I had to wait another 6 months. The initial shock took a bit to escape me, but I realized afterwards that if I had waited near 10 years to be a "college boy", that another 6 months would not break me. It was the logical, and financially stable choice to make. My entire life I lived in poverty, and I am the first generation going to college, so I knew this situation was one to follow me the rest of my life. I knew the impact this decision would have on my life. I knew stepping back was the right choice, but letting go of my classes and all the plans I made that went along with going to college was a very hard thing to do. Thus far I have not regretted my choice, and I am glad that I made a mature call to that situation. If not, I would have regretted it.

Fachhochschulreife (Post High School, Secondary Education)



Degree

August 1, 2012 - June 17, 2013
Jane-Addams-Schule Oberstufenzentrum Sozialwesen - Berufsoberschule für Sozialwesen, Berlin, Germany

In order to apply for this degree, I needed to **complete** my Realschulabschluss (MSA), **then** apply and successfully **complete** a two-or-more year apprenticeship of my choosing (I did my Apprenticeship as a Social and Health Care Assistant), and **then** I was eligible for the Fachhochschulreife.

Ironically, the US institutions to which I have sent my degrees in order to decipher and find equivalents for, have state that both the Realschulabschluss (which was step 1) and my Fachhochschulreife (step 3) are both equivalent to a US High School Diploma. However, if you google it, then there are cases where a Realschulabschluss and an apprenticeship are equivalent to a Bachelor of Arts/Science.

Needless to say, there is no American equivalent to this degree. I see it all as a progression of education on my behalf.

Apprenticeship as a Social and Health Care Assistant



Degree

August 30, 2010 - June 19, 2012
Akademie für Berufliche Bildung gGmbH, Berlin, Germany

I received my degree as a state (in Germany this means for the entirety of Germany; i.e. **all** its states) licensed Social and Health Care Assistant, where I had 3 Internships. Two of these were with the John-F-Kennedy Friendship Center e.V. in Berlin, Germany. There, I was a kindergarten teacher and event organizer. My other internship was with the Evangelisches Krankenhaus Hubertus, Berlin, Germany, where I was nursing in the Geriatrics Ward of said Protestant Hospital Hubertus.

Realschulabschluss (High School Diploma/GED)



Degree

07/02/1993 - June 23, 2006
John-F-Kennedy Schule, Berlin, Germany

Successfully completed my Mittlerer Schulabschluss (MSA) Examination, thus receiving my Realschulabschluss and left the John-F-Kennedy Schule.

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Work Experience

As a non-traditional student, I have had my fair share of work alongside school or as a true job. This page is a collection of my efforts and venturing in the private sector, that have all contributed to my choice in pursuing school once again.

Student Communications Officer (Dispatcher)



Employment Type Part Time
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Industry Protective Service

Start Date January 20, 2017 - May 20, 2017

After the idea of researching the University Security "Safe Walk" Program, I decided to also apply for a job to see more aspects pertaining to my investigation/internship.

Thus, I was hired as a Student Communications Officer (aka "Dispatcher") for Minnesota State University's University Security.

My expectations were to be professional to any incoming students, staff, or others that reached out to University Security, to note and keep track of officers in the field, dispatch them, or exterior emergency services, in case of need, and keep a log of any activities, as well as monitor video cameras and make reports/footage available for any required incident.

Counselor



Employment Type Summer Camp Counselor
Concordia Language Villages (CLV) - Concordia College
Industry Educational Summer Camp
Start Date July 12, 2016 - August 20, 2016

This job will begin in the second half of this year's Summer, and thus I have nothing to talk about yet.

However, my duties as a Counselor are to help/guide children during summer activities and festivities at the camp, while strictly speaking German in this environment. Furthermore, I was also appointed a part time Kitchen Share (i.e. aid) and thus will find helping out the cooks on the side as well.

I imagine being in charge of kids, doing events and taking responsibilities may only be a "small" step of leadership, but mentoring children and being to apply some of my knowledge to brighten their day sounds fantastic and a great opportunity. I am very excited and will update this when I have gained the experiences gathered there.

Work Study



Employment Type Part Time
Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota
Industry Office and Administrative Support
Start Date January 25, 2016

In this office environment, the responsibilities I held were copying, inter-campus mail delivery and pick-up, coffee making and disposal, answering phone calls, rerouting patrons (callers in stop-ins) to the corresponding parties (professors, departments), and giving directions and/or email addresses), scanning, filing, and proctor exams (if need be).

MNSU logo.jpg

Salad Bar Clerk



Employment Type Part Time
Hy-Vee, Mankato, Minnesota
Industry Food Preparation and Serving Related
Start Date February 23, 2014 - August 1, 2015

Some of my responsibilities include the preparation and proper handling of food and ingredients, adhering and reinforcing strict cleanliness policies, and customer service. In time of absence of the managers, I was asked to temporarily take on their responsibilities until their return to the position, which I have successfully completed.

Bartender



Employment Type Part Time
Bambooland-Steglitz, Berlin, Germany
Industry Food Preparation and Serving Related
Start Date October 7, 2013 - January 7, 2014

I worked as a bartender at Bambooland.

My duties included serving the guests, refilling and restocking the drinking goods and taking orders for special events.

Assistant Manager



Employment Type Part Time
Kiosk an der Rehewiese
Industry Sales and Related
Start Date November 12, 2012 - January 7, 2014

I worked as an assistant manager at this Kiosk.

My duties included: food preparation and serving, ordering retail goods, deliveries, and accounting (I was the sole accountant until I left).

Military Interpreter for the US Army



Employment Type Full Time
 SST GmbH, in accordance with the US Department of Defense
Industry Military

Start Date August 24, 2009 - June 19, 2010

I worked as an Interpreter for the NATO forces to prepare them for their rotation for KFOR, Iraq and Afghanistan at the JMRC in Hohenfels, Germany.

My duties included planning of missions in accordance with military troops at hand, training and assessment of troops, creating a cultural understanding and education tangible for military personnel in a foreign zone, and translating (written or spoken) between NATO forces. These languages included: English, German and French.

Baker



Employment Type Full Time
 Wiener Feinbäckerei, Filiale Zehlendorf, Berlin, Germany
Industry Food Preparation and Serving Related

Start Date April 9, 2009 - June 15, 2009

I worked as a baker for the Bakery "Wiener Feinbäckerei" as the opening baker.

My duties began at 3AM on the dot, preparing the breads and baking goods until the shop would open at 6AM. I would continue to be a part of the opening staff until 12pm.

Private tutor for English

Employment Type Part Time
 Self Employed
Industry Education, Training, and Library

Start Date February 12, 2008 - March 30, 2009

I worked along with some teachers I knew from school to offer students who were struggling with English the opportunity to advance in their classes through tutoring them.

Waiter

Employment Type Full Time
 Restaurant Porto, Berlin, Germany
Industry Food Preparation and Serving Related

Start Date September 29, 2007 - January 5, 2008

I worked as a waiter for the restaurant "Porto" in Tempelhof, Berlin, Germany.

Single Project Contract: Part-Time handyman for Plumbing and Electricity

Employment Type Part Time
 Klaus Müller
Industry Installation, Maintenance, and Repair

Start Date October 30, 2006 - November 28, 2006

I accepted a job for a time based project aiding in building a house.

My duties were to aid the main workers, support work in plumbing, wire setting, and support in laying water conduits.

Parking Lot and Fire Watch Attendant



Employment Type Part Time
 Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Industry Protective Service

Start Date August 26, 2006 - October 21, 2006

In my exchange program with the USA and the Robert E. Lee High School in Baton Rouge Louisiana, I had accepted a job at the Louisiana State University as a part time Parking Lot Attendant and Fire Watch personnel.

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Honors Program Overview



The Honors Program is dedicated to the development of three main competencies: leadership, research and global citizenship. Upon entering the program, students can choose to live with other honors students in the learning community. All students have the opportunity to enroll in honors sections of general education courses that focus on competency development. As students move into courses within their major, they further develop their honors competencies through advanced honors seminars and individualized plans of study.

Throughout their time at the University, students may choose to participate in a number of honors-sponsored co-curricular activities which complement their plan of study. At the culmination of all coursework, students are required to demonstrate acquisition of leadership, research, and global citizenship competencies through a successful presentation and defense of an honors electronic portfolio.

Leadership

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

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.

Global Citizenship

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

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Leadership

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Leadership



What is a leader?

"Good leaders must first become good servants."

- Robert Greenleaf

This quote builds the foundation of leadership to me.

In the experiences I have gained in this world, I have realized a few things about leadership that are universal. Whether it is working at a bar, or in a team for a project, or even with the military, the ability to communicate, and to misunderstand stems from the understanding of one's own position, as well as the position the opposition is in. To fully understand your team, the goal you have, and what you have at your disposal is what life taught me about leadership.

In this section, I will display the forms of leadership that I have been allowed to be a part of during my educational stay at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Below, you will find the corresponding links to the pages.

Leadership - My life at MSU and what it taught me about Leadership

As a non-traditional student, I've had the chance to explore life and the world, but never did I believe to defy an old teacher of mine, who told me I'd never amount to anything. However, over these last few years in university, my attitude and my view point on my own life and its achievements, have shifted. Never would I have thought to be in this position now, part of an honors program, and even be called a "leader." Though, I must admit, it did not come from nothing.

In **HONR 201** we were introduced to the idea that everybody has a unique perspective and skillset to apply when becoming a leader. The word "leader" has an inherently vague definition, yet a clear meaning behind it: Someone who leads people. But how? The book "Strengths-Based Leadership" tackled this paradox by giving me a clear, personalized concept of what my strengths as a person are. The foundation of what my strengths are were set; building relationships, arranging, intelligence, and empathy. Through trial and error, I grew over the next few years, not only as a leader, but also as a person, by using these tools given to me in this class. As I look back now, I would say that without this course, I wouldn't have had the chance to make mistakes, and above all: learn from them.

With these fundamentals, I had the opportunity to apply many things in a continuous setting I held for 3 years: being **President of the German Club**. I had been the club president for 3 years, and thus, it molded me more than any other experience. When I began, I had little idea of what a "President" does, or how to be a leader, so naturally I fell back onto what I had learned from HONR 201. I also had the chance to be a part of the Law Enforcement Club and Alpha Phi Sigma, where I could watch other leaders, see them fail (for example at communication, consistency, or even discipline), and naturally adapted their ways to see if there was room in my style and concept of leadership for it. I learned quickly, though, that copying others really didn't suit me. But the biggest thing I learned was thanks to one of my vice presidents I had over the years: She was a real powerhouse, and loved to keep people involved and was very energetic. Only because of her, did I slowly realize that I didn't actually enjoy being in the foreground. When she left, a void was left, and I couldn't fill it. Losing her made me realize that I am my own worst enemy, and that self-discipline to achieve success can only come from me. My mistake was to be friendly, to be lenient, and to try and build-relationships, always have "empathy" and so on, trying desperately to follow the book's definitions of my strengths. At the end of my time with the German Club, I had learned to keep my distance from my fellow officers, and yet also find ways to balance professionalism with empathy by being strict, but finding ways to reward them for their hard work. For these lessons, I thank my German Club counselor, and the departure of said vice president.

When I stepped up to be an **MSSA Senator**, I had already experienced these lessons from the German Club, and so I kept myself away from the buddy-buddy team that many Senators had, and instead take charge of a personal project in lieu of my responsibilities (i.e. the University Security internship to create a detailed report for the Student Body by presenting it as a Senator to the MSSA). Because of this opportunity to be a Senator, I was able to harness what I looked for in a leader, what I wanted, and what I didn't want. The President and the Vice-President showed me another style of leadership, something that I had lacked: a "good cop/bad cop" routine. The biggest thing I took away from this experience was the fact that you can't be "just strict" nor "everybody's friend" as neither are fully respected. It's the dance on the wire that, with the combination of my German Club experiences, made me realize that leadership only works if working in a team, and everybody has the same goal.

While positions like a Senator or a President inherently devise a certain amount of respect from your surroundings, what if you find yourself in a position where this is not the case? I had the chance to be a **Summer Camp Counselor** for 13 to 16-year-old boys - beings that don't care about a title, or who you are. You have to build up a relationship from the ground up. It was the interpersonal caring approach that embedded trust with the boys, and with the help of my co-counselor, we did a very good job of playing "good cop/bad cop" while above all, being just and fair. When they know you aren't being strict to flex your metaphoric muscles, but because you genuinely mean well for them, they look at you from an entirely different angle, and understand that with their help, my and their own lives, would be a lot easier and more fun. But what I cherished most about working with the boys, was the fact that I learned that you can make mistakes, and show them how to take responsibility for them. They like you for being fun, but they respect you for being fallible and owning up to it. It was then that I learned that a leader can be an imperfect leader, and the best thing to be, is simply "you."

The culmination of my experiences was in my **internship with University Security**; good cop/bad cop, rather working alone and being distant with others as to not fall into a buddy-buddy relationship, being an imperfect leader, and also just being myself. In my time as a senator, I was able to find a subject I wanted to explore by myself: I chose Campus Safety and Security. This was a self-lead, mildly guided by the direct of Security, project where I could examine University Security and a specific program for the sake of my off-campus housed constituents. I had learned quickly that I truly was someone who prefers to work by himself or one on one - something I had felt more and more in my time as a Senator and the German Club. While I can adjust and handle group work and its roles and responsibilities, I flourish finding a subject and investigating it personally. As the MSSA taught me, sometimes it's good to make use of arranging your assets, sending them out, and then have them return to disseminate their information. Here, too, I learned to self-guide, ask, make appointments, write and then finally report on all these facts. The strengths in my leadership style as emphasized by working alone, but my weakness was (and in some parts, still is) discipline, a point to which the guidance of Director Schnorenberg was able to help me with. There were times I was crumbling, or cracking, but with Director Schnorenberg, and the encouragement of the MSSA exec board, I was able to get myself back on track. While the other experiences showed me what kind of a leader I am, this part showed me also how valuable it is to have a team, and allies who aid you.

The final verdict of my experiences, style and competency is that I work better alone, but while I work better alone, it isn't really what I am built for. I am good at building relationships in a professional setting, and can work in a team, but my personal weakness is getting sucked in by emotions and relations, rather than being on task. I am, after all, quite an emotional guy, and to counter this deficit, working alone is the logical outcome I have come to through multiple trial and error periods. Additionally, I believe if I distance myself from those around me, I can play "good cop/bad cop" better, and keep the group and myself from deviating. This insight, combined with the experiences about how to approach being a leader, have all come from the first Honors class I took, where the "*Strenths-Based Leadership*" test classified me to be someone who is based in Context, Arrange, Empathy, Relator and Intellect. I was astounded to realize the truth about myself, and how to handle myself, but I know my strengths now, my weaknesses, and how I can turn many of them around. Yet to know that there are some things I just can't change about myself is a valuable lesson too, and thus all of my experiences in this essay not only explain how I came to define leadership, but also how I became in tune with myself.

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The seek for more...



The Exploration Awaits

"The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge, but imagination."

- Albert Einstein

Research sounds mysterious and intangible, but on closer look, it actually is something we as a species can't live without as it is a part of us.

Looking back, I never thought I would open up books and articles to review and research for school, as I thought it is only something for academics. Yet, upon careful consideration, I realize I was at fault. From reading and synthesizing articles to opening a book to find that perfect cooking recipe for supper, everyone is a researcher.

Part of academia is the ability to *harness, synthesize* and *develop* information - three core aspects that the Honors Program nourishes as part of their curriculum. During my seek of an undergraduate degree, my abilities in research will become more and more detailed, and demonstrated.

Research... The quest to change the world.

One of the three pillars of the Honors Program is the knowledge and ability to conduct research. Yet, one thing I learned is that it isn't merely the ability to look something up, but also to put 2-and-2 together, and then demonstrate your findings. While progressing through any research and learning skills, one must above all else, do so ethically and responsibly. Thanks to the guidance of my mentors in the Honors Program, as well as those outside the academic halls, there are five experiences that I can include under the Research Competency.

The first was in my very first semester: **GER 460 (499)** - German Film History. Not only did we watch movies, but we also received and read secondary literature, where crucial aspects of contemporary sociopolitical situations were highlighted and reflected upon. This was the first guidance on how to understand and "read" information more than just at face value. Furthermore, we had to trace a theme, and idea, throughout our texts, and use movies as references in order to argue our thesis. While this seems like a "small" feat to many established students and scholars, to me it was the first step of understanding and utilizing information to arrange my own thesis and explore if it holds true or not. This ability to trace an individually aspired idea, and use texts to find pros or cons connected to it, are the foundations that are required when acquiring and analyzing any data related to research.

My second experience was a giant step for me: My partner and I pursued a self-guided research topic in a nearby library archive, as we explored the statue of "**Hermann the German**" of New Ulm, Minnesota. It was the first ever archive work, consequential presentation at two Symposiums, and original research, as we found out a few things that not even the curator knew, and wrote a paper about it and held two presentations to show our findings. Through the use of the library resources, the archive, and the help of the friendly Brown County librarian/curator, we were able to gather enough information to create our thesis. Disseminating our findings as a presentation was virtually easy in comparison to finding a thesis.

Having an **interview with the Berlin Police**, Germany, marks the third experience I had with the Research Competency. During the interview, the question of ethical use came to question as I was asked to omit certain parts of the recording. I also had to evaluate and synthesize the 3 different perspectives of the 3 different leaders of the respective Police Academy branches. Not all responses to a question were relevant, some overlapped, and I had to discern which argument was stronger or of current importance. This interview was in lieu of expanding my own knowledge of the Law Enforcement discipline, and so with how the world is changing, I had some questions on how the Berlin police handles work with immigrants, how they prepare, etc. This is because in my training so far, the background of a person didn't matter. It was more important that they were all equal in the eyes of the law. Yet disregarding other input, like history, personal beliefs, and various other motivators, is something that the USA is recently struggling with. After I had completed the interview, and gathered my data, I had submitted an abstract to Dr. Krämer who, after discussing this with me, thought of expanding this topic into a capstone.

The internship I had with **University Security** was not only important for my leadership experience, but also for my first actual disseminating of information. As a MSSA Senator, I took on an internship to find out about a specific program in regard to our off-campus living students, as many constituents raised the question of whether or not it can be applied to housing adjacent to campus. After 3 months, I then presented my findings to the MSSA.

The final artifact for my research competency is the most recent, that is also the biggest, longest and absolute culmination of all my experiences: my internship with the Berlin Police in Germany, for my **Capstone**. For more than a year I had researched, interviewed and even traveled halfway around the globe to gather information and knowledge on my topic; how the German police handles situations with immigrants, and other ethnicities. Every experience to this point had set me up and steeled me for this experience, to which I am very thankful for. The research itself had immense importance, but I too had a vital role: I am the only Law Enforcement student who can do this internship and bring home the knowledge that I gather. In this experience I became aware of my responsibility as a leader, but also as a researcher: what will I do, not for myself but all those around me.

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Global Citizenship



Global Citizenship

*"I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles;
but today it means getting along with people."
- Mahatma Gandhi*

As an immigrant, I would say that the way to address Global Citizenship differs from the norm. Then again, what is truly the norm? The quote from Gandhi is the one that I liked the best, and in light of the competencies of the Honors Program as well as the individual sections of the Honors 201 course, I think is the most fitting to mesh leadership and Global Citizenship.

In an ever changing world, we will become a part of a more and more diverse society. The Honors Program and its competencies tries to push the student to push the student to grasp and comprehend this idea, while progressing forward to create good leadership qualities that are backed by "educating thyself"-principles of research.

In this page, I will collect my contributions, my witnessing and and my debate with the stages of cultural competency - finalizing in a hopefully bi-cultural understanding, with an open mind to many other cultures and societies.

Growing into a Global Citizen

The earliest encounter I had with the concept that every place every culture is different, is with the saying "Different folks, different strokes" which I had heard when I was a young child in English class. Until recently, whenever something happened that was different than the social norms I knew, I would revert back to that saying. Now, through four experiences that built up on one another, I realize that there is more to being a "Global Citizen" than merely knowing of, and accepting differences.

I spent a **year prior to enrolling at college working and living in Mankato, Minnesota**. Just in this environment, I began to understand little things people do or say, are cultural idiosyncrasies that I had to learn. For instance, "How are you" is a polite way to greet someone, rather than actually inquiring how you are doing. By working, I immersed myself in this "American" culture and met people of all creeds, races and education; talking with many colleagues about life, expectations, and their experiences and viewpoints of the world (and Germany, of course). With this new experience, I was able to compare and contrast how my own, and this new culture, existed but also interacted with one another, and even how some misunderstandings can occur; verbal or non-verbal. I learned there is a difference between Midwesterners and, for example, their work ethics, that there are sub-groups in America and not just "American." For example, I learned that Minnesota has its own ways of handling ("Minnesota Nice"), speaking (dialect), and the majority of heritage from here, to which they have brought their own culture and had it's time to adapt to the USA. Yet, I did also learn of a commonality between the two, and that is there is no real difference of being a "blue collar" worker in the USA to Germany, if you look at language usage, educational background, and hopes and aspirations for life. With that in mind, it is noteworthy to see that in Germany your job doesn't define who you are, and is rather far down on the questionnaire-script when you meet someone new and talk about yourself. Here, it was often the first question and follow up questions were related to that.

To compare and understand my own culture and its values, with the American culture, I had to learn that there are more significant factors involved than simply being in "American" culture. But what is "American?" The class **ETHN 100** gave me a brief, but very distinct overview of far more depth of the sub-cultures and influences in the USA; from Hispanic, Asian, African, to Natives and even Caucasians. Each one of these has its own history, struggles, and contributions to the "American" culture, and I came to realize there is no inherent "American" culture, much like I myself had believed. This realization made me also realize the struggles and individual contributions from each sub-culture in Germany as well. I was shocked to see that I had been living in a "stereotype" world of my own culture.

The **MNSU German Club** was the bridge to gap many things between German and American culture for me. While the year prior to college gave me some hands-on experience, and the ETHN 100 gave me some background on America, I truly was able to exchange and reevaluate myself, my heritage, and rethink my own identity by conversing with other fellow Germans and Americans. It accompanied me throughout the time I have been in the USA, and every step or every class I took, I could come and speak and reflect about many simple and complicated things here. I often asked Dr. Krämer and other German exchange students, and also the American students who are a part of the German Club about their viewpoints, and interpretations of a culture. Even small things like how some students sounded (dialect) compared to others, within German or American, automatically had an image, and understanding, pulled up, regardless of which culture we are looking at. Without the German Club, and the famed word of "Why" I would have never learned small things (like the "How are you?" phrase being simply used for politeness, and not an actual inquiry), or how to ask questions, and what Americans bring to the table when talking about my home too. It was the bridge that opened up a two-way street for me, a back and forth, rather than simply accepting.

In this latest **internship, I was with the Berlin Police** and took part in their academy's training, but also watch them work in a demonstration, or did a ride-a-long. The biggest thing I learned here, was that to know more about American culture, one must know your own first. As I went through college and the years' worth of experiences between German and American, I realized that I have gathered more information about the USA than I have ever even tried from Germany. What affects factors like "who, why, future, history, present, politics, society"... all of these really became clear when I returned to Germany for this internship, and I could cross-reference my learned experiences with my perception of knowledge about Germany; and the realization that I was stereotyping my own culture, rather than controversially analyzing it. I had learned how to harness the English language in a way that many of my German peers had not, simply because of my time spent living there. Small grammatical mistakes, or common misconceptions from one culture to another, I now did not have anymore. It occurred to me that just like America, Germany has its sub-cultures, it's history, and much more that. Furthermore, I had taken the opportunity and jumped at any occasion I could to deal (from a police point of view) with immigrants, teenagers, Al-Qud's Day Demonstration, and even with regular Germans. Berlin is the hub of so much in Germany, that I couldn't have picked a better place to re-test myself in my own culture, and apply what I had learned so far.

To be a Global Citizen, you have to know your own culture before you can look at another. But most importantly: Culture is fluid, and open to interpretation, even within its own culture. The power of interpreting experiences, understanding, realizing them, and constantly seeking new input and questions are the key. Additionally, I have learned that one needs to be self-critical and keep all information on hand when analyzing what is before me. This, and many others, are certain skills I have learned throughout my time with the Honors Program, and what Global Citizenship truly is.

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Student Senator



Minnesota State Student Association (MSSA) / Student Government.

After my inauguration, I soon was entrusted with many responsibilities that an Off-Campus Senator has: getting in contact with Constituents, looking for and investigating issues for students living off-campus, and being available (through office hours) to them.

The first issue at hand was that of the Buses that the MSSA partially financed. Some bus-routes were overcrowded, or the buses did not continue to run past 6pm, which had detrimental affects on viability for off-campus living students taking evening classes.

However, soon another issue, or question, popped up: University Security. Much as I described in my corresponding internship, the topic of Safety and Security was given to me. When I asked why I was delegated these tasks (on-top of my volunteering for the Safe Walk Program internship), I became quickly aware that my age, my experience in life as a non-traditional student, as well as having Law Enforcement as one of my majors, were the carrying factors as to why I was trusted with these topics.

From that point on, for most of the 2 semesters (Fall 2016, and Spring 2017), I was the senator that dealt with any Security and Safety related topic - especially that of my own internship.

September 21, 2016 - May 5, 2017
Minnesota State University, Mankato

In late September of 2016, I ran against 7 other candidates for one of the *Off-Campus Senator* positions in the 84th Student Senate, of the



Honors Collegiate Representative for Minnesota



Award

April 15, 2016 - April 14, 2017
Upper Midwest Regional Honors Council

Voted in to be the **Representative** for the 19 Colleges under the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Council of Minnesota, thus representing Minnesota at the **National Collegiate Honors Council**.

The full list of colleges can be found [here](#).

2015 Kaufmanis Award



The Department of World Languages and Culture awarded me the Kaufmanis Scholarship fund that awards an outstanding student in the German program, while supporting and promoting the German culture on campus.

The following link below has the laudatio that was presented at the ceremony.

Kaufmanis Laudatio

[KaufmanisScholarship.JonathanSmith.Laudatio.doc](#)

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Nominating our Advisor for the RSO Advisor Award

Award

Minnesota State University, Mankato

For me to accel, I am compelled to also forward those who forward me.

The MSU German Club is a small recognized student organization (RSO), but has a massive amount of passion behind it. Currently as president, I realize that many achievements of the club are the result of a great team. Eventhough I am considered the "leader" of the Club, I too look towards the leadership of someone - our advisor Dr. Nadja Krämer.

One day while walking down the halls in the World Languages and Cultures section, I saw a poster that caught my attention - and one entry specifically: "RSO Advisor Award". I spoke to the German Club's vice president and the secretary and we jointly decided to forward the nomination for this award.

And based on our input via the letters of recommendation, our advisor Dr. Nadja Krämer won the award!

[Recommendation for RSO Advisor Award - Nadja Kramer - 2nd Revision.doc](#)

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[Spring 2015 - German Club Picnic](#)

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Welcome to the Photo Gallery!



The Photo Gallery

This section is all about the things I documented during my stay at MSU. Click the Event of your interest on the *left*, and take a peek!