

# Alysia Przybilla

HOME

ABOUT ME

HONORS PROGRAM

LEADERSHIP

RESEARCH

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP



## Welcome!

Hello and welcome to my e-portfolio site! My name is Alysia Przybilla and I am currently a Senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biomedical Sciences with a minor in Chemistry. I will be graduating in the Summer of 2018 from MNSU and will hopefully attend professional school for dentistry in the Fall of 2019.

The purpose of this site is reflect on my experiences throughout my undergraduate career related to each of the three Honors competencies: leadership, research, and global citizenship.

### Personal Mission Statement:

My mission is to pursue my passion for helping others through exploring various leadership roles and career paths in my lifetime by utilizing my talents of perseverance, strong work ethic, compassion and high levels of community involvement. I strive to be a well-rounded student, with an open-minded mentality to continuously improve and maintain all of the skills necessary for becoming a successful healthcare professional.



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## Growing Up

I grew up on a dairy farm my entire life with my parents, younger brother, and grandparents and that in itself has many ups and downs. Currently, my family farms over 750 acres of land and we have two dairy barns that hold up to 225 cows. I still work for my parents on the farm over the weekends and owe much of my personality, including my work ethics, to living and working on the farm, aka. 8 A.M. classes are still considered sleeping in! Around 2010, farming became my full time job with my paychecks coming from when I sold the calves we raised. My duties include waking up before school every morning to milk cows, feed calves, and clean the feed bunks when needed. At night, after school and sports/extra curricular activities (or now when I come home from college), I scrape manure into the gutters, shovel out bedding to throw underneath the cows and prepare to milk the cows again. In between all the hard work, I do get a chance to play with the baby kittens we have running around as well. Being able to work on the farm has allowed me to own a vehicle and stay debt free while studying at a University.

## Hobbies

I enjoy anything that involves being outside, especially on the farm, whether it be a game of tennis to riding on my snowmobile. I also enjoy quilting and watching movies with friends when the weather outside isn't as agreeable. I can also say there is nothing better than curling up with a book to read at night or spending time with family. When the budget allows, I also enjoy shopping, especially at thrift stores to find bargains and shiny new things.

# Honors Program

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."



Honors Homepage

## Honors Competencies

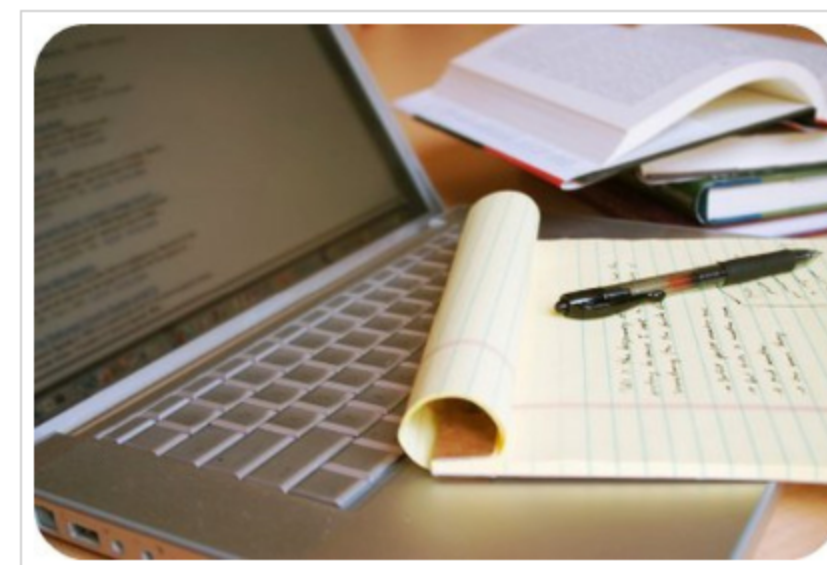


Leadership

"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."



Competency Rubric

Learning Plan

### Learning Plan:

Every fall semester, Honors students are required to develop a personal learning plan. This plan consists of goals I have for the academic year to advance myself in each of the Honor's competencies. However, they do not have to be directly related to MSU or the Honors Program itself. Not only are they my goals, but I also reflect on how exactly these accomplishments will fulfill my competencies.

# Leadership

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

When I was younger, leadership meant that you were involved in extracurricular activities and everyone liked you, especially teachers. It was drilled into our heads that leadership was a necessary trait to have for applying to colleges, getting a job, etc., but to me, being a leader is so much more than building a strong resume. So then what is a leader? A person who can confidently talk in front of a group of people? Or is it someone who spends their free time volunteering in their community? Maybe it's a person being a mentor to younger students and their own children? Being a leader can be any of these things, but I believe being a leader means having a vision to help yourself and others succeed in life to build a brighter future. Who I am as a leader can be broken down into three categories, my leadership skill sets, my work in team settings, and my evolving leadership mentality.

Everyone is born with or has learned some of the necessary tools needed to have an impact in the world we live in. It is just a matter of identifying these skills to understand who you are as a leader, meaning acknowledging one strength's and weakness' when it comes to assuming a leadership role. Throughout my **Broad Leadership** experiences, I identified my biggest strength as the ability to lead with empathy and harmony. This means I care deeply about others, wanting to help them reach their goals, and making sure they feel that their voices are heard. I value leading with an open mindset as everyone sees the world through different eyes, and some view points might help a team reach a goal more efficiently. I also value making meaningful connections with others to establish trust and equality in a team setting. Although empathy is one of my best leadership skills, it also comes at a fault as I let myself get too involved in situations, causing my feelings to get hurt. To overcome this, I often look to my peers for advice and counsel on how to move forward. Being able to identify these strengths and weakness', along with the realization I take a democratic approach in leadership, helped me become a stronger member of a team.

Working with the **Residence Hall Association** (RHA) gave me great insight into working on several different team settings. I was first a representative for RHA, which meant my role was to act as a liaison between my floor and RHA. The other roles of team members within RHA came from the executive board positions. Each position has specific tasks to uphold the mission of RHA and being elected onto the board presented me with an abundance of different leadership styles to work alongside. It was through this and my work with the organization STLF, **Student Today, Leaders Forever**, that I was able to critique different management styles to produce my own unique leadership model. I have found that I like to change my method of leadership to fit the current situation and what my role is on the team, meaning that not one style fits all environments and maintaining fluidity through the different styles helps a team grow in a positive direction together. I have found that when I join a team, I have a servant leadership style to show other team members I am willing to give a project my all. Such as I will usually be the first to volunteer for tasks needed to be completed when working with other Community Advisors at our weekly events. As time moves forward in the group, I take a more coaching and democratic approach to begin to share my opinions and let others know I value theirs, such as being an advisor to residents on my floor. I only like to take an authoritarian type of leadership when it is necessary to steer the team away from a destructive path, such as sharing my past experiences with events on campus and their success rate. Being able to observe these different styles has helped evolve my leadership philosophy to one I could apply to future leadership roles.

My philosophy of leadership revolves around "clear communication and accountability within reason, open to discussion on all ideas, working towards a common goal based on our strengths and weakness'. My work as both a **Community Advisor** and taking a credit of **HONR 450: Service Learning** are what helped tie all my experiences together to form this philosophy. The reasoning behind my specific doctrine is because it mixes my values of a being a leader and team member. I work hard towards my goals and I want to push others to do the same. But as an empathetic leader, I am also understanding of our different abilities to reach a goal, including myself working on an individual project.

Being a leader in the Honors Program helped me understand I wanted to leave my mark at MSU and develop skills to use in a healthcare setting one day. I want to be remembered by others as a passionate leader who took great effort in making all college students feel welcomed and help them grow and achieve their goals. In the future, I hope by having a solid leadership foundation means my dental practice will be thriving with a positive team community and content patients.



# Research Competency

"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."

One of the many ways to become a life-long learner is to question how something works and how to develop a deeper understanding of it through research. Without people asking questions and the willingness to delve into the unknown, we wouldn't be living in the advanced technological world we are in today. There are many different aspects to research and it does not have to be limited to a laboratory setting with test tubes and beakers. It can simply be a scholar cracking open several old textbooks and synthesizing information in a more orderly fashion. Students often fear the word "research", but I believe it is because it stretches the limits of what we know and pushes us to dig deeper to what is not understood. To me, research can be broken down into four simple steps, asking a question, gathering data, drawing conclusions and sharing the results with others.

Most of the time, asking a research question is the easy part, but figuring out where to start hunting for information on the topic is where it can become difficult. Many students look for the easy answer and have a hard time not straying to Google after five minutes. But learning information literacy and synthesis skills show integrity, work ethic, and the ability to solve complex problems on one's own which is necessary in a future career. In [Honors FYEX](#), I learned multiple different ways on how to gather information from the MNSU library database, and how to assess if a certain article I found was a good resource to pull topics from. I was also encouraged to visit the reference desk at the library for additional help on projects and to find a research mentor through emailing professors with similar research interests as mine.

The next step to the research process is to develop a hypothesis, organize ideas/topics, and gather data. I learned most of these skills from my [General Biology](#) class while doing research on photosynthesis and have continued to evolve these skills throughout my other science classes. Creating a hypothesis can be an art to learn, and I have graduated from writing "if,then" statements, to questioning how subcellular processes work, based on data I have extrapolated from other experiments. Learning various ways to format the research gathered was also an important tool I have gained. In a [Technical Communications](#) class, I discovered ways to format different research and workplace topics with figures and legends to help a reader understand the information trying to be communicated. This step is often challenging for me as it is comparable to writing a thesis statement for a paper. It takes extra thought and often needs to be revised several times, and often different professors had different styles for how they wanted reports to be formatted, making it confusing for students what method to follow.

Not only is being able to format data integral for researchers to display their information, it is also needed to help draw conclusions. Research concludes with several questions, what did you learn, how did you get from point A to point B, and how does this contribute to what the field already knows. To put the question simply, "So what?", what can you say about your research. Not only have I done this in biology classes, but I have also worked on this by doing [original research](#) with Dr. Secott in Microbiology. I worked on developing a way to grow cells more rapidly in culture through placing cells in varying environments to stimulate their growth. This was important to understanding how one could create a vaccine for the disease. Through my research I learned many technical skills such as pipetting, how to do cell cytometry, solution calculations, and sterilization techniques. This cell research project and my various classes taught me that research isn't done to "prove" something, it is done to discover the unknown and continue to validate what is known. Working on my own research project proved very daunting as I practiced techniques None the less, this project taught me that there is purpose behind testing negative controls and recording all data found as I had no other experiments to compare my results to. Recording the data was important not only for my own sake, but for ethical implications that allow other to replicate the experiment.

One must have an ethical code of standards to live by when doing research. Today, students have the vast knowledge of the internet, access to millions of historical articles, scholarly journals, databases, etc. Then there is the inadequate and incorrect information waiting to pounce on an overly exhausted teen, whose paper is due at 8:00 A.M. A big example where I have seen unethical research is when students compare their results with another team to find out they have completely different answers in lab settings. The students consult the teacher to find their results have been contaminated, and so they change their numbers to better reflect the experiment by copying others answers or finding the answers online. In a high school laboratory setting, it's just a difference of a grade, in real life, it could mean life or death in new pharmaceutical studies in the medical field. Students need to understand that falsifying results or copy and pasting an article into a paper of their own is unethical.

The point of research is to gain knowledge and understanding through questioning and problem solving using one's own brain, to use evidence to back up the findings of the experiment/research project and sharing the research within the existing community of researchers in the field. For my [Developmental Biology](#) class, I created an animated video about tooth development as a research project. I loved the project as it revolved around my future career and decided to present it at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) on April 10th, 2018. I created an abstract for the project revolving around the process I used to research and create the video itself, rather than analyzing data. This was the first time I had submitted a school project to be presented and judged in front of others and I was extremely nervous to share my work in front of other individuals. Although I didn't present as well as I wanted, I was able to listen to other presentations and gain feedback on my own project to further improve my skills.

Although research can be quite frightening when trying to find a place to start, it's a challenge I can't wait to begin. Gaining more knowledge through information literacy and synthesis, following ethic guidelines, and having future research goals is the best way to get my research plans underway. One day in the future, instead of writing about my research goals, I will be writing on this keyboard my research *accomplished* and what I hope to do next!

## Global Citizenship

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

When stepping onto a college campus for the first time, I began to dream of all the new possibilities I would be able to explore. Making life-long friendships, trying new extra-curricular activities, and the idea of living on my own all sounded like a dream come true to a small-town farm girl. What I didn't realize was just how much I would grow into the person I am today because of my intercultural experiences. It was an eye opener to come to MSU, a very diverse school, and interact with so many different students from all over the world. It was through the Honors Program pushing me to become a global citizen that I began to understand how complex one's identity could be, how we struggle with who we are, and how we grow from what we learn.

While taking [Honors FYEX](#), I began to explore my identity and develop my definition of culture and diversity. I consider culture to be a way of life for a group of people, while diversity expresses how each culture varies from the next. The way of life for someone can include their behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that are passed along by communication, imitation and literature from one generation to the next. Through defining culture, I began to increase my self-awareness as a global citizen. Identity is unique to an individual and being a part of one culture, doesn't mean I can't be a part of or understand another. We are all made up of a hundred different aspects such as age, race, ethnicity, and especially language. I can identify some of my values, such as family and cultural traditions, and characterize myself as a Christian, sister, American, and farmer. As I attended different events on campus, I recognized stereotypes I made towards others, especially for students of different race and religion than me. As my self-awareness increased, the more diverse, dynamic and contradicting my personality became.

Growing my knowledge and understanding of global citizenship didn't happen overnight, it came through dedication and sacrifice of my personal time. I struggled with understanding how to grow my cultural awareness until I joined the [Intensive English Program \(IEP\)](#) as a volunteer to tutor students in English. The main point of the program was to not only have tutors help international students with learning English, but also have all students learn about each other's cultures and identity. It was through my interactions with students in the program where I learned the importance in being yourself and having an open mindset when learning about other cultures. While at first I over emphasized my experience with American culture, because I thought the students wanted to become "American", the students kindly showed me a whole different world. I discovered how many other cultures hold similar important values to my own, such as traditions and religion, but how we maintained and celebrated these values differed.

Through extended second language practice by taking courses in [American Sign Language \(ASL\)](#), I also began to understand the power behind learning a second language. I emphasized with my students struggle to learn grammar and writing, while I struggled with facial expression and body language in class, but I could never imagine being in a completely different culture with only my ASL knowledge to communicate with others. Yet, not only is language a way to communicate, it allows us access to different parts of society and cultures. Some Americans feel that English should be the national language that everyone is required to speak, eliminating the need for interpreters and force others to conform to their version of US society. However, if that becomes such, a large part of someone's identity relating to their language may be lost and cause strain on an individual. The question that then remains is if the world, an individual's country, and their family, all say they must learn English to be accepted into a higher class of society, how can one still find acceptance from others through their own language and culture.

The answer to that question and others I have thought about aren't easily solved but growing my knowledge and understanding of differences between culture and language has been crucial to becoming a global citizen. It was after taking [Honors Seminar: Language](#), that I could really judge just how much my cultural awareness has grown. The main way I was able to showcase my growth was through a case study I did revolving around why everyone should strive to be a global citizen. I wanted to know how coming from a very diverse background has impacted someone's cultural awareness compared to my own and that maybe if everyone added being a global citizen to their identity, we could have solidarity in the world. While conducting the interview for my case study, I focused my questions too much on how it related to American culture, rather than how cultures varied. After realizing this, I changed my strategy when asking my language partners questions. I made sure they fully answered the question before I added my own input as sometimes they would then revolve their answer around mine, not allowing me to know about the bigger differences in our beliefs.

Becoming a global citizen isn't just about being able to define diversity for an interview. It's about the cycle of learning, struggling, and continuing to grow our understanding of culture and identity. Just because I feel like I've become a global citizen, doesn't mean I will stop trying to seek out other intercultural experiences to further my knowledge. Having an open mind and the willingness to learn about another's culture are key to developing a global citizenship mindset. My definitions of culture and language will continue to expand and grow with every time I encounter a new life experience that differs from my own, I also still hope that one day I will be blessed with the amazing opportunity to study abroad and immerse myself in another culture, truly experiencing being an international learner.