

# Katherine Albers

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## Welcome to my Portfolio



### Welcome

Hello, my name is Katherine Albers. Welcome to my site. I recently graduated from Minnesota State University, and I received a Bachelor of Science in Private Studio Dance with a minor in Marketing. I was a part of the MSU Honors Program, and it has helped shape me into the person I am today.

Enjoy the rest of my site and feel free to contact me with any questions.

### Mission Statement

I will continue to develop my leadership, global citizenship, and research skills as I prepare my future outside of MSU. The skills I have developed during my college career will help me create a positive impact on the people and world around me. I will never stop learning, and I will teach others to do the same.

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## About Me

Dancing has always been a part of my life, and I am thrilled and terrified to be a college graduate. I have been dancing since I was in third grade, and it is the only activity I have continued to pursue for such an extended period. Through my studies I have seen how dance can draw out intense emotional reactions from an audience, make political commentaries without saying a word, and connect a group of people who didn't have anything in common besides being in the same space. I have had countless hours of training and rehearsals, and I am so grateful for the people I have worked with. Dance is powerful and an integral part of our society, and I am proud of the work I have accomplished as a dancer at MSU.

When I'm not taking dance classes, it's likely that you will find me in rehearsals, doing research, sleeping, or in more rehearsals. I also try to find time to save the world in my own little way. I encourage my friends and family to recycle, compost, and eat vegetarian meals. If everyone takes little steps, we can make a huge difference in the world.

On a more personal note, I am also getting married this January. I met my fiancé, Gage, during our freshman year of high school. We started dating as Juniors in high school and got engaged last in November of 2017. We endured nearly four years on long-distance while Gage studied Trombone Performance at the University of Oklahoma. Now we are together in Sioux Falls, SD and looking forward our upcoming wedding.



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## MNSU Honors Competencies

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Leadership

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### Honors Leadership Standard

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



Global Citizenship

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### Honors Global Citizenship Standard

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



Research

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### Honors Research Standard

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.

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## Leadership Synthesis

Before coming to Minnesota State University, I did not think of myself as a strong leader or as a leader at all. However, after four years with the Honors Program, I have uncovered my leadership strengths and values. I have had many beneficial experiences over the years that have allowed me to learn about the two major leadership principles of values and teams.

The first step in my journey was to reflect on what leadership meant to me and to learn about my leadership strengths and weaknesses. I was able to do this in my [First Year Experience](#) course. After taking the Strengths Finder assessment, I learned that I lead best through adaptability and connectedness. This means that I lead by helping others accomplish their tasks to meet a common goal. I recognized that this is the approach I take during group projects, but I did not realize it was a true form of leadership until I took the FYEX class.

The next step for me was to work in a group setting to reflect upon various leadership roles, critique leadership styles and to develop my own leadership philosophy. I was able to do all of this in the [Developing Your Mentor Philosophy](#) course. This course allowed me to meet with a group of students to learn about the philosophies of Plato and John Dewey. Through our class readings and discussions, I was able to discern my own mentor philosophy, which is based on the fact that mentors and mentees must have shared experiences in order to learn from each other and grow together. During the same semester, I also started my role as the [Student Producer](#) for the Dance Program's student showcase. This was a great opportunity for me to demonstrate my leadership skills outside of the classroom. I successfully delegated the work and helped other students complete their tasks, which led to a great dance concert. This experience allowed me to reflect on what went well and what can be improved upon, and I can use this knowledge to refine my leadership techniques for future productions.

My job [teaching at Impulse Dance](#) in North Mankato contributed and is still contributing to my leadership skills. When I first started working there I did not understand my leadership strengths or have a leadership philosophy. Now that I am at the end of my time in the Honors Program, I can see how all of my previous experiences have built upon each other to allow me to teach dance classes in a way that emphasizes my strengths and provides my students with leadership building skills. I have enough experience now that I am able to make successful future lesson plans for various classes that draw on my strengths and allow me to continue growing and learning with my students.



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## Research Synthesis

When I first came to MSU I thought that research was something done in a laboratory, and that, as a dance major, I would not be involved in any real research. However, my perspective changed after my **First Year Experience** class explained what research was and how it applied to me. I realized that writing a research paper is conducting real research, and it needs to be done in an ethical manner so that credit is given where it is due. This class also helped me realize that I would be able to conduct my own, original research during my time at MSU, and the research I do does not have to be done in a lab. My research can and should pertain to my field of study which is Private Studio Dance.

Over the years, I had the opportunity to write many research papers. One important paper was my **Religious Autobiography**. The process of writing the paper allowed me to use multiple sources about various religious beliefs along with my own thoughts and feelings to create a final product. I was able to formulate a thought-provoking thesis and process how my religious outlook has been altered. Similarly, in my Honors Service Learning course, I was able to put my research-paper writing skills to work in my **Exploration Project**. The Exploration Project explored sexual assault on college campuses nationwide and how survivors at MSU could get help. The process was challenging and allowed me to conduct research about a topic I was not familiar with. Developing this paper helped expand my knowledge about MSU and became a pivotal point in my research process.

After writing my Exploration Project paper, I created a reaction to sexual assault on campus through my **Change Project**. This project pushed me to further my research capabilities by conducting original research. I conducted a survey of random students about their knowledge of sexual assault at MSU and incorporated the results into my Change Project video. Furthermore, I choreographed a dance to the song "Till It Happens to You" by Lady Gaga. The process of creating a dance allowed me to present the totality of my research experience in a new format. Dancing about sexual assault intensified the reality of its presence on campus for me, and helped me empathize with survivors in a new way. The video is posted to YouTube so that viewers on and off MSU's campus can access it. After completing the Change Project, I had a much better understanding of how to ethically conduct research, how to present new information, and how my dance major could be incorporated into research. I was ready to tackle a larger project, so I began my **Private Studio Dance Curriculum** research. My on-going goal is to create a curriculum based on inclusion for a privately owned dance business. I have conducted literature reviews, explored the curriculum of operational studios in southern Minnesota, and created my own components of inclusivity based on my research. While I am still in the process of finishing my research, I was able to present the seven components at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in the spring of 2018.

I have grown immensely as a researcher thanks to the Honors Program. I will always make sure to give credit where credit is due and to use information ethically to accomplish my future research. I will never stop learning and searching for new information. My research experiences have helped me understand the importance of research, and I will keep this information with me for the rest of my life.

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## Global Citizenship

I previously thought that being a global citizen simply meant that I had traveled abroad and started learning a second language. However, my time in the Honors program showed me that being a true global citizen means so much more. The global citizenship portion of the **Honors FYEX** class gave me the base I needed to be aware of my own culture and how my unique background affects my perception of others. I also realized how important it was to interact with other people from various cultures. Doing so would allow me to understand my biases and change my perception of the world around me.

In the years since my FYEX class, I have had many opportunities to work with people from different backgrounds and compare and contrast their culture to my own. During my trip to **New Zealand** with the group International Student Volunteers, I learned a great deal about the Māori and their way of life. The organization I traveled with tried to teach all of the volunteers the importance of learning about a culture and its history instead of touring from site to site without any information about the culture. After returning home, I reflected on my time abroad, and I realized that I idealized their lifestyle and disregarded the importance of my own culture. It wasn't until my **Topics in Dance** class traveled to Paris several semesters later that I understood how important it was to value my culture and other cultures without feeling the need to change either.

Going to Paris also helped me develop my language skills. I practiced French terms and phrases before leaving and then practiced speaking with locals during the trip. Along with French, I have studied Spanish more extensively. In my **Spanish 201** course, I learned about the language and various cultures that speak Spanish. While the language creates links between many of the cultures, there are also many distinctions that make each culture unique. Studying different communication styles in Spanish-speaking countries made me more aware of my verbal and non-verbal communication and how both words and body language are essential in effective communication in any language. As a dance major, I am highly attuned to the importance of non-verbal communication and how to convey a message through movement. By studying **modern and ballet dance** for many years, I feel that I have learned another language. I can communicate through the dance vernacular as well as through the dancing body.

Finally, through my **Worlds of Dance** class I was able to learn how dances are used in different cultures around the world. I changed my perception of what qualifies as world dance and I grew to appreciate all of the unique forms of movement. Dance is a powerful way to communicate and pass on the stories and traditions from a culture. I am very thankful to be an honors student and a dance major. I have had numerous opportunities to learn and explore the intricacies of my own culture in comparison to other cultures on campus and around the world. While I still do not understand all the complexities of culture, I am willing to keep an open mind, to ask questions and learn from those who differ from me, and to continue growing as a global citizen.



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