

Alycia Holwerda

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Welcome!

Hello! I am Alycia Holwerda. My hometown is Willmar, MN. I am currently in my final year at Minnesota State University Mankato, and I am a member of the Honors Program. I am majoring in statistics with an emphasis in information technology with a minor in mathematics. After college I hope to become a data scientist.

Mission Statement:

I will strive for my best in all that I do whether it is in the classroom, in the pool, or in the workplace. Attending Minnesota State University, Mankato puts me in the best position to continue on the path of learning that I have started, and I hope to grow as a student, a athlete, and a professional. I do not know exactly what my future holds, but I do know that I will be prepared to succeed and positively impact society.

Browse around my portfolio. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.



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Honors Program

[Leadership](#)

Mission statement of the 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.

[Research](#)

Leadership

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

[Global Citizenship](#)

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.

Why Honors?

I first heard about Minnesota State University, Mankato's Honors Program after being accepted into the college. My first semester of college I completed an Honor's first year seminar class. In this course, I learned about the various aspects and requirements of the Honors Program. Afterwards I was not involved in many activities that the Honors Program provided, but that does not mean it did not have an impact on my collegiate experience. In this essay I will reflect on how I was evolved with Honors Program, how that impacted my experience at MNSU, and how it has helped me grow personally and professionally.

My initial interaction in the Honors Program was in my freshman Honors seminar class. In this course I learned various leadership techniques, aspects of research, and what it means to be a global citizen. I was able to define my leadership aspirations as being able to communicate with my team members, collaborate on ideas, and make informed executive decisions after hearing all opinions. I learned research is proposing a curiosity, learning information on that topic, and then presenting what was learned to others. Global citizenship is not only being able to communicate with others, but also connecting language to culture and being aware of cultures.

After completing this course, I was not very involved in the Honor's Program, but I was able to take the knowledge learned and apply it to activities that interested me. I applied my leadership philosophy to my role as President of D.R.E.A.M. Through hackathons I was able to work on my research skills. With conversing and traveling to new places I was able to progress in my global citizenship. The Honors Program pushed me outside of my comfort zone to gain new experiences and skills in activities that interested me. I was not applying the Honors Program to my activities; I was applying my activities to the Honors Program.

The Honors Program allowed me to reflect and articulate my experiences at MNSU. It pushed me to challenge myself to progress in my leadership, research, and global citizenship skills. Though my Honors portfolio, I can exemplify my progress, skills, and knowledge to future employers. During interviews I can list specific examples, express skills gained through that experience, and articulate how that applies to the desired job. The Honors Program challenged me to develop new skills, opinions, and thoughts. Even though my approach was more hands off than others, the Honors Program still helped me grow personally and professionally.

I'm busy working on my
blog posts. Watch this
space!

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Leadership

[Leadership Essay](#)[Willmar Fests Ambassador](#)[Swimming](#)[D.R.E.A.M President](#)

Before coming to Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU), I always considered myself a strong leader. I was involved with many activities between academics, athletics, and other events. However, the Honors Program allowed me to continue my growth by identifying my leadership strengths and finding identify opportunities to grow in my abilities.

In my first semester of school, I took an Honors First Year Experience class. I was introduced to various leadership philosophies. In this class, I was able to identify my personal leadership values and various roles within team settings. I believe that the authoritarian philosophy is the most effective when it comes to leading a group. In this theory, it takes a group of people working together to succeed in a task. I believe this is the best philosophy, because more minds and bodies are better than one. With more brains thinking together, better ideas are created than if just one person is brainstorming. With more bodies working together, work gets done faster than if just one person was working. This class gave me a solid foundation to build my leadership capabilities upon for the next four years at MNSU.

The following summer I had an amazing opportunity to continue to develop my leadership skills as a Willmar Fests Ambassador. Since I was working with two other extraordinary women, I practiced group member skills and reflected upon roles within the group. Together we shared the joy of Willmar in our community and in other communities. We participated in parades, luncheons, volunteering events, and much more. In this role I was able to reflect upon my strengths and weaknesses. I am very determined, goal-oriented and a perfectionist. I realized I am not the best at initiating conversations but excellent at continuing interest in conversations. I also realized I am excellent at delegating tasks and managing time and people to make sure goals are completed.

My freshman year I started my collegiate swimming career at MNSU. Throughout my four years, I was able to see a progression in my leadership skills. I began as a shy freshman analyzing the upper class student's actions in leading the swim team. Positivity and encouragement were essential for effective leadership. As the years continued, my leaderships continued to grow. I started giving more advice to underclass students and helping lead the team. In my senior year I helped encourage, motivate, and inspire drive in my teammates to push themselves and each other in every set, every practice, and every meet. I was able to utilize my leadership strengths that I identified as a Willmar Fests Ambassador to lead the MNSU swim team such as collaborating with others, delegating tasks, and time management.

The final capstone to my leadership skills was my role as the President of D.R.E.A.M. (Data Resources for Eager Analytical Minds). I identified various roles within the executive board so we could effectively collaborate together. These roles included a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Personal Relations Chair, Web Design chair, and Graphics Design chair. From identifying my strengths as a Willmar Fests ambassador and identifying effective leadership skills as a swim team senior, I was finally able to apply my personal theories and values to lead meetings and organize opportunites for members. I successfully resolved conflicts between executive board members by hearing all sides of the story and then created compromises between the two parties. Through these challenges, I was able to grow in my leadership abilities.

After all these experiences I was able articulate a general philosophy to guide future collaboration within groups. I can now take my experiences in leadership to help contribute to my career at IBM. I hope to grow and shape my leadership philosophy as I continue to learn more about effective and ineffective leadership skills as leadership roles continue to evolve.

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Research

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Throughout my academic career I always thought research was a very scientific process which included test tubes, measurements, papers upon papers, and lab coats. However, my opinion has greatly changed and become more accurate throughout college. The Honors program has allowed me to gain a better understanding of how to complete research.

My journey to an accurate research knowledge began when I took my Honors First Year Experience class. I began to understand the roles of information literacy and information synthesis. At first I struggled with finding resources for my papers. When completing my research essay for the class, I improved my methodology of effectively, efficiently, and critically accessing information as well as organizing others' ideas. I accessed various academic databases online to search for resources. In this class I learned that research is proposing a question and the process of seeking the answer to that question.

The following semester I continued to grow my information literacy and synthesis skills in my English composition class. Since I already had a foundation started from my Honors First Year Seminar, writing my papers was much easier since I already knew how to access information. Through writing my proposal I not only demonstrated how to ethically use information but also to incorporate selected information into my knowledge base. Through my response I was able to synthesize diverse perspectives to the topic.

As a student majoring in statistics, research had a strong presence in my upper-level courses. Most of the courses taught various methods on how to ethically research data specifically through the use of datasets. I learned how to create predictive models such as regression models in STAT450: Regression Analysis and linear regression in STAT458: Categorical Analysis. My STAT492: Capstone class tied all my knowledge from previous classes together through a final project where I analyzed a dataset on pet adoption at Petfinder.my. I was able to exemplify various statistical methods as well as complete original research. The skill of incorporating selected information was essential to synthesizing my research to key information and then relating that to advise how to use this knowledge to improve methods.

After gaining some experience in my statistic courses, I was able to apply my research knowledge through hackathons. A hackathon is a data analytic competition where a dataset is given by a data sponsor and teams analyze the data to give business solutions to the sponsor through a presentation and paper. I completed in a total of five hackathons. At these I worked with others to complete original research and disseminate our results. These competitions helped me understand that research in my field is analyzing given data for meaningful answers to business-oriented questions. We won honorable mention at the datathon at Advanced IT 2017, 2nd place Data Visualization Award at MUDAC in 2019, 1st Place in the Advance category at Data Derby 2019, 1st place in the advance category Datagon at Data Derby 2019. Through these hackathons, I was able to fully develop my research abilities through information synthesis, information literacy, original research, and dissemination of results.

Upon graduation in the winter, I will start my career as a data analyst. As a data analyst I will be researching constantly for businesses. I am very thankful for my undergraduate classes as well as the Honors program for allowing me to not only learn what it means to complete research but also giving me opportunities to apply my research skills. Throughout my career I hope to continue to grow and master research by continuing to learn every day.

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Global Citizenship

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Before attending MNSU, I had no clue what it meant to be a Global Citizen. My first guess would be it is another term for a world traveler, but that is completely wrong. Throughout my academic career, I was able to learn what it means to be a global citizen as well as evolve in the three aspects of global citizenship: self-awareness, knowledge, and communication.

After completely forgetting two years of Spanish classes in high school, I restarted learning a second language by completing Spanish 101: Elementary Spanish. This course allowed me to verbally and nonverbally communicate in basic, familiar situations through various vocabulary, grammar, writing, and oral Spanish activities. The following year I continued to develop my Spanish abilities in Spanish 102: Elementary Spanish II, where I identified the connection between language and culture. My last semester of college I finished my language requirement by taking Spanish 201: Intermediate Spanish. Being able to communicate effectively with others is an essential skill to success. Knowing a second language allows me to successfully communicate and work with a wider range of people.

My senior year I worked as a server at Buffalo Wild wings where I was able to demonstrate my Spanish speaking abilities outside of the classroom. I would have a lot of customers whose first language was Spanish. Because of my previous three Spanish classes, I was able to communicate in Spanish well enough to learn their food order and other basic dining conversations. At first, these situations were uncomfortable, but they made me realize how uncomfortable I was trying to use my Spanish. I hoped to continue learning Spanish for situations like this to make communication easier for all parties involved.

Since I was learning Spanish, I wanted to grow in my knowledge of Spanish speaking people and their cultures. I took Ethics 204W: Perspective on Latino/Hispanic Diversity. Through weekly discussions, book readings, videos, and papers I was able to ask questions that showed an increased understanding of complex cultural practices, products, and perspective to the Latino/Hispanic Culture. I recognized new perspectives about other cultures and compared and contrasted that to my own.

In my daily life I was also growing accustomed to many different cultures besides those of Spanish speakers. When I was the Personal Relations chair to D.R.E.A.M. (Data Resources for Eager, Analytical Minds), I not only grew in my self-awareness but also knowledge of other cultures. This student club has many members from a variety of different nationalities. Through conversations with these members I grew in my knowledge and by attending meetings I was able to perceive myself as a member of my own culture. Also, through my statistic courses, roommates, and swimming I was able to continue to develop my self-awareness and hone my understanding of my culture and the communities of which I am a part. Through conversations with multiple different diverse individuals, I was able to grow in my knowledge of other cultures.

Global Citizenship is a vital quality to have not only in the professional but also personal setting. Being a global citizen will not only help me stand out in the job application front but also when connecting with others. This is a very important skill when trying to foster new relationships but also strengthen them as well. I am very thankful that my time at MNSU allowed me to become a more aware global citizen.

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Contact

For any questions you may have, you can reach me here: info@mysite.com, or by filling this form:

A contact form is overlaid on a background image of a large tree with sunlight filtering through the leaves. The form consists of four input fields: 'Name', 'Email *', 'Subject', and 'Message'. A 'Send' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Name

Email *

Subject

Message

Send