

KATIE LEE LEIBEL

HOME ABOUT HONORS PROGRAM CONTACT EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE



I went to Minnesota State University, Mankato where I majored in Mass Media and Spanish. I was in many student organizations where I worked to include everyone and make MNSU a better place to live and work. I hope to work in my field of study doing public relations, communications or event planning work for a nonprofit organization or PR firm.

Personal Mission Statement:

I will work as hard as I can to ethically fight for my values and what I believe in. I look forward to continuing to learn throughout my life by working to expand my horizons, while growing as a team, as well as on an individual basis.



This picture includes my first RHA top 10 award, my first RHA perfect attendance award, and my certificate for receiving the Chester and Helen Carkoski Scholarship

Honors Program

As a member of the MNSU honors program I work to fulfill the three competencies: Global Citizenship, Research, and Leadership.



This picture includes myself, a fellow member of the PRSSA and a mass media faculty member after I had received the Mass Media Award of Excellence.

Languages

I worked to fulfill my global citizenship competency and took Spanish. I have spoken this language for about 14 years, and I have become fluent and conversational because I was active in the community on campus. I also learned American Sign Language during my fall semester of college in 2017.

”

“I have tried so hard to do right.” - Grover Cleveland

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[HOME](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[HONORS PROGRAM](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE](#)



About.

I am an honors program graduate from Minnesota State University, Mankato, where I a double majored in mass media and Spanish.

I have spoken Spanish for 14 years. I am also a Reporter/ Copy Editor for the Mankato Free Press and the former Chairperson for The MSU Reporter's Newspaper Board.

During my time at MSU I completed two undergraduate research projects: I co-authored a chapter of a book and wrote and presented a paper in Spanish at the Pan-Lingua Research Conference on Ecuador's social structures. I also won multiple leadership honors including the mass media award of excellence, a mass media department scholarship, the rising star leadership award and more.

I have experience with social media, journalism, copy editing and public relations from my past internships and jobs.

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HOME

ABOUT

HONORS PROGRAM

CONTACT

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE



MNSU Honors Program Mission Statement

"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."

For further information on the Honors Program please visit: <https://www.mnsu.edu/honors/missionsngoals/>

My Honors Mission Statement:

Through the Honors Program, I worked to be a self-aware individual that can work well with people of all different backgrounds by immersing myself in different settings that I am unfamiliar with. This was the result of fulfilling all of my honors competencies and I believe they made me a better person.

Why Honors Essay: this essay is about why I chose to be a part of the honors program, how it helps me grow as a person and what I have accomplished through it.

[why_honors_essay.docx](#)

Honors Classes Completed:

First Year Experience Seminar: Allow students to understand what the Honors Program is expecting of them throughout their college experience and how they can fulfill the competencies.

Intermediate Spanish II: Work to better a student's grammar and listening/ speaking skills in the Spanish language.

Honors Portfolio: Allow students the chance to edit and correct their honors portfolios and then defend them later in the semester.

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[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [HONORS PROGRAM](#) [CONTACT](#) [EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE](#)

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." (21, Student Handbook)
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Research is the competency that helps me to better my critical thinking skills. This competency seemed rather scary at first. When I envisioned this I saw myself in a lab, prodding at pig eyes with a crazy professor telling me that I was doing something wrong. In reality, this competency molds into what I want it to be. I am able to ask the hard questions and do any kind of research I want with it whether it is qualitative, experimental, or something I want to invent. Once I got started with my undergraduate research, it was hard to stop. I kept meeting new members of faculty that wanted or could use help on their projects, but I knew I had to prioritize and stick with it. This competency went from being the one I thought I'd never complete, to the one I get the most excited for.

Honors Research Essay:

Research Synthesizing Essay

When I was a freshman, the research competency was the one that I was most concerned about fulfilling. I knew it was important, but it seemed something totally out of my realm of capability. As I always do in situations similar to this, I threw myself into the fire from the get-go, and started my first big research project as a freshman during my second semester at this university, which was a unique approach as I had not had some of my smaller experiences to build off of.

My smaller research projects, including my **Spanish research paper** and my **Native American Literature papers**, both helped me to develop the easier and smaller parts of this skill. My Spanish paper taught me to look at both sides of a situation and present them because of the importance of ethics in any piece of research. Even a small research paper such as this could have a bad impact on society if more people read it and the data in it is not ethically chosen or cherry-picked to support my ideas. Both papers also helped me to pick good sources, and know where to find them. My Native American Literature paper, especially helped me to learn how to organize other people's ideas. I used this paper to help prove the importance of understanding cultural context when reading a book by an author with a different background from your own. I used this skill a bit in my Spanish paper, but more so in the Native American Literature one.

I learned the most with my two big projects: **co-authoring a book chapter on the participation of gender in internet culture**, and presenting my work on **Ecuador's history and its impact on the country's social structures** at a research conference. Co-authoring the chapter of the book helped create a solid foundation for me to really understand and continue on with my research and my smaller projects. I learned how to write a proposal for a book chapter with Dr. McIntosh by writing up a short summary of our ideas and sending it in to many publishers. Eventually, a few became interested, and the process began. This research was original as it focused on a meme that had never been studied for gendered violence and patterns. We explored the questions of who was creating the meme and what the overall impact was. In this project, our new knowledge was that men and women both use violent and sometimes degrading memes online to fight against each other and defend themselves, but they typically have different ways of doing this. This completed research will help future researchers studying memetics and gender in memes to better understand how we looked at and drew conclusions from our own research and also build off of our research to study different memes in the future.

My presentation at the Pan-Lingua undergraduate research conference also helped me in these areas. The information I gathered added to what was already known about the topic by bridging together why certain beliefs were upheld for so long, and looking at the information we have on how long it has taken for certain beliefs to fade away in order to predict what may happen in the future. When presenting this research in a public venue, people were able to ask questions, and they did. They wanted my opinion on the future based on what I had learned through my research. They also asked about how I came to bridge the gap between history and how it impacted social structures and beliefs. Ultimately, I was asked questions that made me think and had to give answers to somewhat hard questions, but this pushed me to grow and question myself more in my work.

I know, for a fact, that I will continue to use the skills this competency gave me in the future because of my career field. I am going into mass media and Spanish, and mass media, especially, requires those in the field to be able to gather research, whether it be for a news story, demographic information or sentiment on a particular subject, and be able to present it ethically. I believe that these projects will be things that I continue to look back on as I move into my career.

First year research_competency_essay.docx

This is an essay that I wrote for my honors first year seminar. This essay is on the importance of research in our everyday lives, what it does to advance us, and why we need to conduct research ethically.

Global Citizenship

"Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to lead and serve in a multicultural world through increased self-awareness of one's own culture and its relationship to others, deepened understanding of other cultural perspectives, attainment of second language proficiency, and demonstrated awareness of culture-language connections in communication." (22, Student Handbook)

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The Global Citizenship Competency has been fun for me so far. It includes the things that I love to do: joining clubs/ organizations/ groups/ societies and trying new things. I also have met plenty of new people from this competency while growing as a global citizen. A global citizen recognizes that we only know what we are familiar with or what the media tells us on the news. We're only truly familiar with where we grew up, where we are now, and where we have traveled. This competency is meant to show us that there is a great big world out there with different cultures, perspectives, and ideas from our's, and our goals should be to explore it, not shy away from it.

Global Citizenship Essay:

Global Citizenship Essay

The world is a diverse place. It is bigger than your backyard and what you grew up knowing and understanding. I believe that a global citizen is one who works to broaden their horizons and never ceases their work to experience and understand new things. This is important as it allows us to challenge our personal biases every day and recognize that no matter how much we may think we know, a world of knowledge is still out there waiting for us. This competency is comprised of three big facets: self-awareness, knowledge and understanding and communication.

Self-awareness is exactly how it sounds. It is understanding how you fit into this world, what biases you may have from your upbringing and how you are actively challenging those. I grew the most in this area as a **community adviser** and when I **studied abroad in Costa Rica**. As a community adviser, I really began to understand the variety of people who come to MSU and all of their different stories. It helped me to realize, especially when I had a few international students in my building, the norms and biases that not only I, but other residents, held and how a simple discourse could help us to better understand and interact with one another. Studying abroad helped me to grow the most in this area. Living in a completely different culture puts things into perspective. I made new realizations about my viewpoints while in Costa Rica. I noticed small things, such as that in the United States people care a lot about the weather where as there are not even many weather reports in Costa Rica. I also noticed and learned bigger ideas such as political standpoints of people on international issues and more. This helped me to observe similarities and differences and better understand myself in relation to the world and others. I learned what beliefs and prejudices I held that impede my cultural understanding. I still do not always understand the importance of some religions in other people's hearts and the impact it has on communities. I plan to continue to learn more about that through my experiences as a journalist and through pushing myself to try new things.

Costa Rica was the place where I gained the most from my communication skills by communicating in another language. Learning a second language helped me to notice more verbal and non-verbal cues, especially when I was hugging all of my friends in Costa Rica while in the United States I am not the most touchy-feely person. Learning a second language has also helped me to improve my English. Understanding direct and indirect objects in Spanish class made it easier to apply those skills in English, although I do still struggle a bit. Learning a second language has changed how I process information. As of September 2019, I have been learning Spanish for 14 years, and I sometimes will think things in Spanish that I do not know how to phrase in English. This has opened my eyes to where the English language lacks words and where Spanish can fill in. As a result of my extended language practice I have begun to better understand how miscommunication can come into play and lead to odd power dynamics. I have also realized the language, although technically the same, is different just about everywhere you go and impacts different groups and people differently.

I gained a lot of knowledge and understanding in Costa Rica, as well, but I gained some of my softer skills in other classes and programs first. For example, I was a part of the **language partners program** and I took a **Native American Literature class**. Spanish language and Latin culture have been a part of my life for years, so I wanted to branch out, and I was able to with a language partner from Japan and by learning about many Native American groups through literature. With my language-learning partner I began asking basic questions about other cultures during my freshman year, and I did the same in my Native American Literature class. Both the program and the class helped me to increase my interactions with people from other cultures, because both helped me to gain friends in both cultural groups.

Although I gained a lot in both of these, I gained the most through my study abroad experience. My new learning about culture while abroad has helped me to seek answers to complex political and social conditions, especially when my teacher, her sister and I all got coffee and discussed these subjects. I have learned to ask questions about cultures while recognizing my own biases, where I come from and applying what I have learned to gain information with multiple cultural perspectives.

I grew a lot in this competency since freshman year, but like any other, it is not over just yet. This is one of the competencies that we need to challenge ourselves in the most because it is one of the easiest to shy away from. With my current job at the Free Press and my goals to work with minorities in the future in health-related non-profits, I believe that I will continue to grow in this competency for years to come.

14 years formal experience Spanish:

I started taking Spanish classes, both cultural and linguistic, when I was in kindergarten. Since then my skills with the language have grown substantially. I recently completed what is regarded as one of the hardest Spanish classes at MNSU called Spanish composition and conversation. I plan to continue my journey with the language and minor in it.

Learning a second language has taught me the importance of understanding different dialects and how hard it can be to translate common phrases and slang that I use in English. It has also taught me that non-verbal cues in Spanish can be more suggestive than they are in English because Spanish is a romance language. I think the reason why Spanish has such a rich culture with dramatic telenovelas and other fun and interesting media content is because their language is a romance language. English only has the words "like" and "love" to describe that we enjoy something, while Spanish has "gustar," "encantar" and "amor" to describe the levels at which we feel things. Spanish is a very emotional language while English can make it hard to convey feelings and pain as their are not as many English words to describe something.

With my continued practice with the Spanish language, I have learned that language can impact the way we view things because of the words that we have to describe them and the way that we may describe them in different languages. For example, in Spanish I can say "Ojala que," which does not fully translate to English. It kind of means "I hope that" or "I wish that," but there are no correct words to describe it. For this reason, it can be hard to understand some things such as the song "Ojala que llueva cafe en campo." When there are differences in language that make it difficult for us to sometimes understand things such as art or music, it can impact what individuals understand or believe about the idea that the art or music is representing. This can even be seen in power relationships between people in different cultures. Some may have different ideas, and may never see eye-to-eye on a subject because they do not have the same experiences and the differences can be rooted into both culture and language used.



With my job at The MSU Reporter, I was able to meet with and interview many people. In this photo, I met with and had interviewed 2004 Pulitzer Prize winner Leonard Pitts Jr. Pitts is a columnist for the Miami Herald and I was also able to attend his lecture titled the United States of Amnesia: Forgetting African American History.

Freshman year Global Citizenship Essay

global_citizenship_competency_essay.docx

This is an essay that I wrote for my honors first year seminar detailing what I think of the global citizenship competency, what I plan to do with it, and what it means to me personally.



Above is my artifact for my 14 years of Spanish. Although it does not prove all 14 years, it shows that I am active in the Spanish Program at MNSU because I received this scholarship for presenting at a research conference in Spanish and also had a high enough GPA to receive it.

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HOME ABOUT HONORS PROGRAM CONTACT EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Leadership

"Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to utilize personal leadership values and guide groups toward a common goal." (20, Student Handbook)

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Leadership is a competency that I have been taught ever since I started girl scouts when I was five years old as a Daisy. I never thought I would grow to be a leader until I figured out what a leader actually does. Leaders start off as servants. We work to provide the community with what they need, build a firm foundation, and then we begin to grow. We become good listeners, and work to understand what the group or community needs from a leader. When the time comes that a leader is needed to step up they do not shy away. This is everything that I am and want to grow toward.

Leadership Essay:

2019 essay:

Leadership Essay

A leader is someone with a diverse skillset who works alongside their team members, and is respectful of everyone's time and efforts. *I see leadership as working to make a positive difference in the world or community through a team effort.* To me, this means understanding the importance of every role on a team, and never taking that for granted. This theory took a long time for me to get around to understanding, but I found my way to it through the various leadership experiences in which I took part.

Almost all of my experiences showed me the importance of working well with teams, but the two that did this the most for me were my experiences as the **Treasurer of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)** and being a **community adviser (CA)**. As a CA, I had to understand that not everyone thought exactly like me, and my job was not to control that, but to instead work to make the community an open and inclusive environment for people of all different backgrounds and beliefs. I learned how to delegate and to play to people's strengths. For example, when putting on the Fall Festival WOW, I was not able to do it all myself. I used my baking skills to make the candied apples and helped find pumpkins to carve while my boss ordered the cotton candy machine, and worked to find the cheapest one to rent. My WOW partner focused on finding coloring sheets and the more logistical part of the job because of her organizational abilities. This helped me to identify the roles in a team, especially when we worked together toward a common goal. We had issues with the cotton candy machine setting off the fire alarms, but it taught us to communicate and listen to one another better. Although there were miscommunications at times, and the policies were not always clear, we were able to overcome these issues as a team and work toward the common goal of keeping the community safe and inclusive. We made it to this goal by understanding our differences and focusing on the matter at hand.

One of the things that I struggled with in the leadership competency was understanding what did not work as a leader, but through the Treasurer position with the PRSSA, this became apparent. The president and I did not get along as she pushed a lot of her work off onto others, and believed she was able to do this because of her title. This instilled in me one of the most important beliefs and philosophies that I have surrounding leadership: it is important to lead while serving and by example; not by ordering people to complete tasks on their own. Our leader ended up failing after I chose to leave the organization under the guidance of both the adviser and one of my role models and mentors, Dr. Heather McIntosh. I believe that this will help me to avoid many pitfalls in my future career as it has led me to actively work with others to solve a problem. I also believe that sometimes removing yourself from the team is sometimes the best thing to do for self-care, even if it means the group as a whole may not succeed.

I also learned a lot about my own leadership values through this position and through my work as an **RHA representative** and as the **chairperson of The MSU Reporter's newspaper board**. I value transparency, honesty, loyalty and ambition. I discovered these values during my freshman year as an RHA representative while I worked with the group to put on events. These values became more apparent to me as the chairperson of the newspaper board because the Editor-In-Chief (EIC) would not always follow policy or protocol in the handbook, and ended up using the newspaper for his own personal gain. The StrengthsFinder assessment named me a strategic thinker, an achiever and a communicator. I believe I am all of these things because not only did I meet up with the adviser to discuss our course of action with the EIC, but I also worked to make sure to add legislation to our handbook to make sure this never happened again. I also met with the EIC to chat about what had happened and how we could avoid these pitfalls in the future.

A leader is not a dictator. They do not force all of the work and blame onto one person, but they do not also assume all of the responsibility. They work within the team to make a difference. Before I came to MSU, I was the type of "leader" to assume all of the responsibility and finish the project myself, but now I work to include everyone on the team and their strengths. I feel that this is the most important growth I have experienced: letting go of control and trusting others and our abilities to use our strengths together to get the job done.

Freshman year essay: leadership_essay.docx- As a member of the honors program, I was asked to write about what I believe are the values of a leader, my strengths and weaknesses, and what roles of a team are necessary to make sure that we function as a cohesive unit.



This image includes my volunteer scholarship and two RHA awards.

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[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [HONORS PROGRAM](#) [CONTACT](#) [EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE](#)



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HOME ABOUT HONORS PROGRAM CONTACT EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE



Experience and Education

With my job at *The MSU Reporter*, I was able to meet with and interview many people. In this photo, I met with and had interviewed 2004 Pulitzer Prize winner Leonard Pitts Jr. Pitts is a columnist for the Miami Herald, and I was also able to attend his lecture titled the United States of Amnesia: Forgetting African American History.

Experience:

Reporter/ Copy Editor for The Mankato Free Press (08/2019- present)

I copy edit stories for the organization and also write for the Arts and Entertainment section.

- Write A&E articles
- Take and edit photos and videos
- Read through and edit final version of every newspaper before sending it off to press
- Interview sources
- Edit photos and graphics in photoshop and InDesign

Freelance Writer for The Mankato Free Press (04/2019-08/2019)

I ran the organization's Instagram account while writing stories that were assigned to me/ searching for new pieces to write.

- Write A&E articles
- Take photos
- Interview sources

Social Media Summer Intern for bethematch.com (National Marrow Donor Program) 04/18-08/18

I worked with the organization's social media answering questions and comments online and participated in meetings and brainstorming sessions.

- Monitor and answer questions on all social media.
- Create daily social listening updates.
- Participate in and lead meetings.

Alumni Relations Summer Intern for the Minnesota Children's Museum 05/18-08/18

Wrote newsletters to keep volunteers and employees informed at this organization.

- Design and draft content for the newsletters and emails.
- Create a structure for the next intern to take over the position.

Chairperson of the Newspaper board for The MSU Reporter 05/18-05/1

- Attended meetings regarding the newspaper's future
- Used the handbook to guide decisions including voting on a future Editor-in-Chief
- Oversaw the Editor-in-Chief and ensured that the newspaper continued to run smoothly.

Staff Writer for The MSU Reporter 01/18-05/18

Wrote articles for the MNSU school newspaper. Found stories and was also assigned them on occasion. Researched and gathered information and quotes from the resources and faculty on and around campus. Wrote articles for A&E and news. Was the theater critic as well as one of the top news staff writers.

Staff Writer for The Honors Beacon 01/18- 05/18

Wrote articles for the Honors newspaper. Was assigned stories, did research, gathered information, quotes and more from resources and faculty on and around campus.

Education/ Course Work:

Mass Media:

- English Composition I (Spring 2016)
- Modern World Literature (Fall 2016)
- Fundamentals of Public Speaking (Fall 2016)
- English Composition II (Spring 2017)
- Intro to Mass Media (Fall 2017) Grade: A
- Principles of Visual Mass Media (Fall 2017) Grade: A
- Basic Mass Media Writing (Spring 2018) Grade: A-
- Public Relations Principles (Spring 2018) Grade: A-
- Mass Media Ethics and Criticism (Fall 2018) Grade: A
- Mass Media Law (Fall 2018) Grade: A
- Public Relations Writing (Fall 2018) Grade: A
- Undergraduate Research (Mass Media, Spring 2018) see Honors Program, Research. Grade: A
- Digital Design for Mass Media (Spring 2019) Grade: A
- Writing for Digital Multimedia (Spring 2019) Grade: A

Spanish:

- Intermediate Spanish II (Fall 2017) Grade: A
- Spanish Composition and Conversations, Writing Intensive Course (Spring 2018) Grade: A
- Topics in Language (Fall 2018) Grade: A
- Spanish Conversation and Composition (Spring 2019) Grade: A
- Individual Study Abroad: Readings in Hispanic Literature (Summer 2019) Grade: A
- Individual Study Abroad: Topics in Spanish American Literature (Summer 2019) Grade: A
- Spanish Civilization (Fall 2019)
- Topics in Spanish Peninsular Literature (Fall 2019)



In the image on the left I am standing with one of my favorite professors and a fellow member of the PRSSA holding my Mass Media Award of Excellence. In the image on the right I am standing with everyone who won different mass media awards that night.