

A close-up portrait of Michelle Baldrige, a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling warmly. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a grid pattern, possibly a window or door. The name 'Michelle Baldrige' is overlaid in a white, elegant script font.

# Michelle Baldrige

## *Welcome!*

Welcome to my portfolio! My name is Michelle Baldrige and I am a senior honors student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am a Sport Management major with a minor in Human Resource Management, that was partially completed at the University of South Australia, Adelaide. After my graduation in the Fall of 2020, I hope to work for a professional sports team in Community Relations.

## *Mission Statement*

I will use the skills acquired from the three competencies I will develop in the Honors Program to empower others to achieve their goals. I hope to make a difference in the world of sports and to inspire others to make a difference in their communities.

[CONTACT ME](#)

## About Me

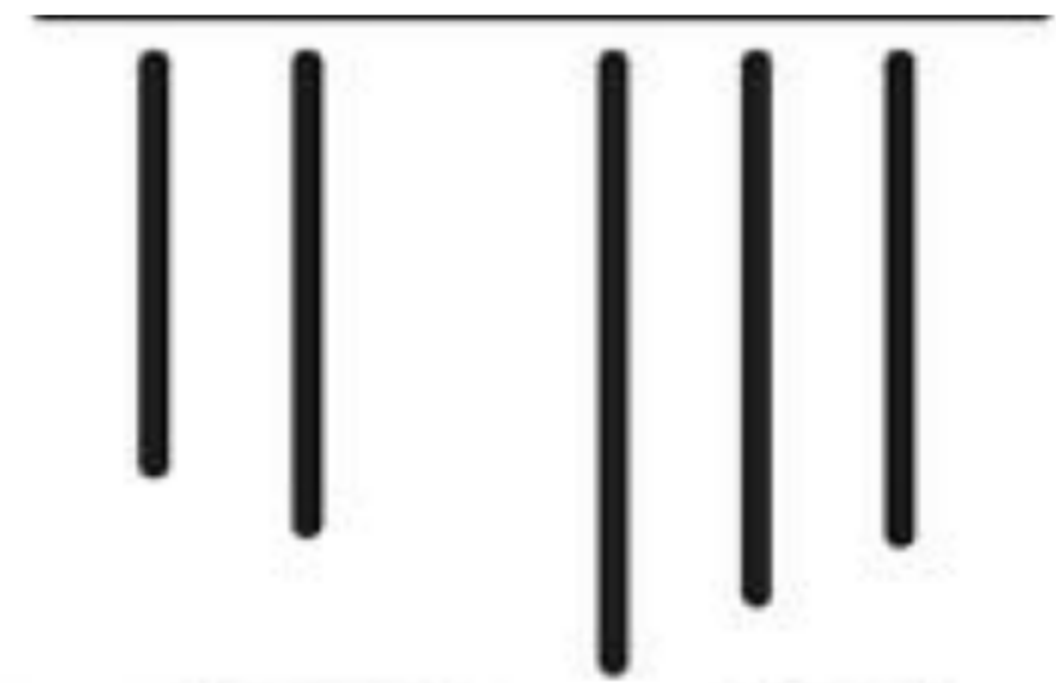
Growing up in Ames, Iowa, sports were always a large part of my life. The passion that I developed inspired me to become a Sports Management major. I am pursuing a minor in Human Resources Management in order to be able to connect with the diverse workforce of professional sports teams and develop human capital. After graduation I hope to pursue a career in community relations for a professional sports team.

In my time here at Mankato, I spent two years in the Maverick Machine Marching Band and have gotten involved with various volunteer organizations such as BENCHS (Blue Earth Nicollet County Human Society), the Mankato Marathon, the Mankato River Ramble, Mankato Youth Place (MY Place), and the YWCA Girls on the Run Program. I served as a Ticket Sales and Service intern with the Minnesota Twins and worked as a member of the Shelter Support Staff for the Partners for Affordable Housing homeless shelters. In the spring of 2020, I was able to study abroad in Adelaide, Australia for a month before my trip was cut short due to COVID-19.



# 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

## Learning Plans

FIRST YEAR LEARNING PLAN

SECOND YEAR LEARNING PLAN

THIRD YEAR LEARNING PLAN

## Competencies

LEADERSHIP

Throughout the program, honors students will learn the ability to utilize personal leadership values and guide groups toward a common goal.

RESEARCH

Throughout the program, honors students will learn the ability to exhibit information literacy skills, synthesize and integrate ideas, produce original research or creative works, and contribute to knowledge.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Throughout the program, honors students will learn the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness.

# Leadership

Throughout the program, honors students will learn the ability to utilize personal leadership values and guide groups toward a common goal.

## MINNESOTA TWINS INTERNSHIP

*Spring, Summer, Fall 2019*

## ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

*Spring 2019*

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR

*Fall 2018 - Spring 2019*

## SUPER BOWL LII

*Spring 2018*

Before beginning my leadership competency journey, I thought that a leader was only someone that had all the power and told everyone around them what to do. I quickly learned that leaders come in many forms and have a wide variety of diverse but effective styles. While I would describe myself as a driven and extroverted person who is not afraid of taking a leadership role in a group setting, I grew to appreciate the art of leading subtly, through actions and influence, instead of words or commands.

My first exposure to my newly learned, wider concept of leadership came through my experience working as a security guard at [Super Bowl LII](#). I learned that I valued clear communication, an approachable disposition, assertiveness in times of need, and accessibility in leaders that I interacted with. This experience, as well as my leader on the [Alternative Spring Break](#) trip, alerted me to my pet peeves in a leader like disorganization and lack of communication. I also discovered that I struggled to take feedback from those that I perceived as peers, instead of superiors, and resisted delegating tasks to others. These were challenges that I tried to overcome both as the Student Experience Coordinator and as an intern for the Minnesota Twins.

Working as the [Student Experience Coordinator](#), I prioritized communication and organization when working with others to plan and execute events. However, I continued to struggle to delegate tasks to others when their working style was unlike my own. This challenge pushed me to branch out from my narrow, type-A view of how to complete a task. While I have experienced the pitfalls of delegating to individuals that did not live up to the responsibility, my time at the Minnesota Twins showed me it was possible to trust those around me. I saw that when I had competent colleagues, their work style did not matter, as long as they were able to get the job done.

My [Twins internship](#) was critical in learning that leadership does not just mean telling others what to do. I recognized that I was learning about leadership traits and trying to emulate the actions and mannerisms of people who did not have traditional "leader" titles. Some of my fellow interns showed me how to listen to those around me and diffuse tense situations. Further personal growth occurred when I was observing and appreciating the behavior of people who were leaders of the organization but were not carrying out tasks in a traditional leadership setting at that moment. For example, I would watch my supervisors interact with fans and note their behavior or would witness bosses consulting their employees on how to tackle an issue.

All of these experiences taught me how to be a better team member. At the Super Bowl, the success of our station was determined by the dedication of each team member to their assigned tasks. When serving as the Student Experience Coordinator, I worked with several other students as well as faculty and a graduate assistant to help run the program. Recognizing when my area of expertise was needed, jumping in to help someone with their tasks, and reaching out to my peers when I needed advice helped ensure that we ran a cohesive and successful program. My internship with the Twins showed me that delegation, collaboration, trust, and accountability were crucial to completing a challenging project that involved several interns and many moving parts. These experiences led me to develop my personal leadership philosophy of prioritizing communication, delegation, and respect for the capabilities of those around me.

As I look forward to my career after graduation, I feel better equipped to not only be a member of a team but also lead a diverse group of individuals. I know that I will still struggle to delegate tasks to my peers, but this is an obstacle I am excited to overcome, now that I am aware of how varied people's work styles can be. I have learned that I can be an active and crucial member of a group without having to take the lead. I am confident that I can tackle any challenge that my team and I encounter because I have seen how capable my teammates are and I have learned from my leaders that trust and respect are crucial to the success of every endeavor.

# Research

Throughout the program, honors students will learn the ability to exhibit information literacy skills, synthesize and integrate ideas, produce original research or creative works, and contribute to knowledge.

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH PROJECT

*Spring 2020*

## INFORMATIVE SPEECH

*Spring 2018*

## RESEARCH PAPER

*Spring 2019*

## FYEX ESSAY

*Fall 2017*

Reflecting on my research experiences has made me realize that I stand by the first essay I ever wrote about research in my college career. In my Honors First-Year Experience (FYEX) class, I said that research was about “helping the world move towards the goal of a better life for all.” I maintain that statement and can confidently say that progressing through this competency helped me realize just how integral research is to the advancement of society. Without continued research, we would not be able to effectively tackle so many issues faced by the world today. Knowing how to conduct reliable and valid research can help improve the quality of life for everyone.

The [FYEX essay](#) was my first research experience that helped establish a knowledge base on what a good research process looked like. I was familiar with finding, using, and citing sources, but unfamiliar with the formal concepts of information literacy and synthesis. Even within that essay, I cited sources in the incorrect format, showing how much I needed to learn about information literacy and synthesis. Learning more about these terms helped me apply them to my later research.

My [informative speech](#) on concussions in the NFL was the first collegiate instance in which I had to gather my own information and bring it together to make a point. I found reliable sources that directly supported the points I made. This speech also helped me understand the resources I had, such as the MNSU library article database, that would aid my discovery of peer-reviewed literature. The skills I learned in the FYEX essay and informative speech helped me navigate the world of research, understand the content of peer-reviewed articles, and utilize the resources that would benefit me most.

After establishing my competency of finding and citing sources that supported a goal I was assigned, I progressed to conducting my own research. While I still used the skills learned earlier in the competency, I was now responsible for researching and writing a paper on the topic of [female executives in sports](#). My paper centered on creating statistics on the frequency of women in executive positions of professional sports teams. I extended the scope of the paper by detailing the skills that other women in executive positions possess and recommend to be successful in the male-dominated industry. I had initially been skeptical of how I would be able to complete my own original research project to fulfill the research competency, but this essay helped me understand what qualitative research can look like and how to form a project that focuses on talking to people.

My paper on the [Girls on the Run](#) (GOTR) coaching experience was the first time I conducted primary research with a method of my own. Through this project, I learned how to create a survey and how qualitative research methods should be reviewed and restructured before finalization. While I was happy with my overall project, I recognized that my survey did not cover as many topics as I would have liked and there was room for improvement. This was also the first time that an original research project had pushed me to gather my own information, draw conclusions, and suggest changes to improve the GOTR program. Disseminating my research was also a novel experience for me. It taught me how to concisely bring together my project and comprehensively discuss my project to those who didn't have any background information on what I researched. Being able to share my findings is crucial to my research being useful to relevant groups. The project helped extend my knowledge about coaching for GOTR and can serve as a valuable resource for the Mankato GOTR program.

The skills I developed through the research competency will prove useful as a future employee. When assigned projects by my supervisors, I know I have the knowledge, skills, and ability to find relevant and reliable sources on a topic, correctly credit those sources, create my own research project, and apply my findings to draw useful conclusions. Not only will this help my employers reach the business goals they have set for me, but I know the research I conduct can help improve the lives of others.



# Global Citizenship

Throughout the program, honors students will learn the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness.

## AUSTRALIA STUDY ABROAD

Spring 2020

## HONR401

Spring 2019

## ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK

Spring 2019

## SPANISH COURSEWORK

Fall 2017 - 2018

In the essay I wrote on global citizenship in my First-Year Experience class, I talked about wanting to connect with people who had experiences different than my own and learn about other cultures. As I progressed through this competency, I realized that this would be a more challenging task than I expected. While I appreciate, understand, and value the importance of becoming a more educated global citizen, I was naïve to the personal boundaries that pursuing this competency would push.

My journey to becoming a more informed global citizen began with the classes I took to learn [Spanish](#). I was able to develop an understanding of how language and culture are interrelated. The use of informal and formal pronouns showed me that this culture values respect for those in positions of power and elders. Speaking in Spanish helped push me out of my comfort zone and has inspired me to continue my education through Duolingo in order to better communicate with the Latin community, which is substantial in the sports industry. My communication competency took a different path when I made further connections about the importance of language, communication, and culture while studying abroad in [Australia](#). By making an effort to communicate with Australians using their dialect of English and their slang terms, I was able to appreciate the laid-back nature of Australian culture. I started to incorporate the Australian-English terms into my vocabulary to avoid instances of miscommunication with my family and to respect the country that I was in. While in Australia, I was able to recognize the advantage that English speakers have when navigating the world. I generally do not need to worry about being able to communicate in most countries that I travel to but knowing the language of another country is an important way of demonstrating respect to that culture. Additionally, I was able to appreciate the challenges that non-native English speakers experience in the United States. Not understanding what some of my European friends were saying gave me a unique insight into what many immigrants or refugees may experience when they begin their life in the U.S.

The first time I began to see myself as a member of a culture was when I learned about the lives of economically disadvantaged families while taking part in the [Alternative Spring Break](#). This volunteer opportunity with the Kingdom House in St. Louis helped me recognize the privileged upbringing that I had and the lengths that some families have to go to, to keep their children safe and happy. Volunteering with children from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds showed me how noticeable the socioeconomic gap is along racial lines. This experience also showed me how important it is that all children see themselves represented in leadership positions and how vital it is to give our youth equitable opportunities to succeed. I began to recognize my own biases when comparing the Somali culture to my own beliefs about gender and religion. Reading [Somali literature](#) helped me learn more about how women are seen and valued in other cultures and that religion can hold a significant role in helping people cope with hardships. Finally, I began to recognize the differences in Australian and American cultures in terms of schooling and family ties. Immersion in the Australian way of life helped me realize how difficult it is to adjust to and understand cultural norms that are unlike my own. These experiences helped me learn that while someone's way of life is different than my own, that doesn't mean that one way is better or worse than the other. Each experience has its own unique and beneficial characteristics.

While all of my experiences involved learning basic information about different cultures, the Somali literature class pushed me to gain background knowledge about that country to truly dive into the culture. Learning about the history of war in the country helped me understand the unrest between tribes, the reasons that so many citizens flee the country, and the importance of the Islamic faith to so many Somalis. My understanding of Somali culture was deepened by reading Somali literature about the immigration process, the dangerous refugee journey, and having first-hand interactions with Somali people. Visiting the Somali Museum of Minnesota allowed me to more deeply connect to the histories and events that I read about during the semester, giving me context for understanding the novels, poetry, and essays. Additionally, talking with immigrants and refugees from Somalia helped me understand how their experiences have shaped their personalities and influenced their actions. This class helped me understand that one of the best ways to learn about and truly begin to understand a culture is to expose myself to their literature and ask questions to members of that culture firsthand. Another way to understand your own culture and the structures that have emerged throughout its history is to immerse yourself in another culture. By comparing and contrasting the relationship between white Americans and Native Americans with the relationship between white Australians and Indigenous people, I was able to recognize the lack of inclusion of Native Americans in the United States. Seeing the Australian acknowledgment of Indigenous culture showed me how far the U.S. has yet to go in making reparations to the Native American people and helping fix the negative impacts of their marginalization.

While the experiences I gained in trying to complete my global citizenship competency seem very diverse and unrelated, they did teach me several overarching lessons. I learned that above all, being a global citizen means taking the time to actively seek out experiences that are different than my own. While doing this, I learned that it is challenging but imperative to recognize and check my biases to ensure that they do not hinder my learning experience. Finally, I realized that while we all have incredibly diverse backgrounds and experiences, the most important thing to remember is that we are all humans and that kindness, generosity, and an open mind are the key factors in embracing others and creating positive change.