

Jamie

Rogers

MNSU Honors Student

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Hello, a bit about me:

Hello Everyone! Welcome to my portfolio. My name is Jamie Rogers and I am an honors student from Minnesota State University, Mankato graduating with a Bachelors of Science in Biology. Upon graduation, I plan to further my studies in medical school to obtain my medical licence and become a surgeon someday.

MY WHY: My mission as an MNSU honors student has been to better shape myself as a human not only in the three competencies of this program, but as a critical piece in our growing society. I wish to take with me the knowledge and many lessons that I have learned within this program and within the realm of biological sciences into both my professional life in the healthcare field, and my everyday life in society.

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Why Honors

I decided on Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU) to further my education for many reasons: the location and price, but also the atmosphere, the staff, and the opportunities that I had heard about. I have always been a student that likes to go 'above and beyond' and simply get more out of my day to day life, experiences, and education, so when I received an email inviting me to delve into MSU's Honors Program, I was all over it.

I do firmly believe that my time spent at MNSU has been greatly impacted by this program. It has given me more of a reason to find my 'why' in everything that I do and keep becoming a better version of myself. I feel like many students get lost in their day to day life as busy people just trying to earn their degree, and they never really stop to think about why they are doing what they're doing. Well, I have now learned to think more about my day-to-day purpose and to walk through experiences with more mindful thinking, and I owe it to this program. I have now learned not only how to go about pursuing outside experiences such as volunteering, extracurriculars, or research, but to also find my 'why' within them, reflect upon them, and carry the things I have learned within them into my future endeavors.

I would also like to mention how much the Honors Program has helped shape me as a critical member in today's dynamic society. The three competencies of this program include [Global Citizenship](#), [Research](#), and [Leadership](#). Throughout my time at MSNU in this program, I was challenged to pursue experiences that helped me further delve into these competencies and develop new, proficient skills in each. Having to sit and reflect upon my experiences in leadership, global citizenship, and research led me to find out who I really am as a person: my idea of my own cultural identity and challenges that different cultural groups face in America today, my roles as a leader and how I can improve on those, and how much I've grown in the aspect of performing and explaining research materials and carrying out experimentation. Having to defend my portfolio at the end of this semester will also greatly aid in my abilities to properly articulate my thoughts and words in an extremely professional manner, as well. I will definitely carry with me all of these skills into future schooling endeavors and the workplace someday.

Overall, the Honors Program at MNSU has helped me to find and appreciate my 'why' in almost everything that I do, and for that, I am eternally grateful!



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Leadership

Growing up as a dual sport athlete and being involved in many extracurriculars quickly exposed me to different leaders, and within no time, my very own leadership positions. You're never really told when you're little what a leader is; you just show up to activities in life and follow whoever is instructing. Throughout middle school, my dad started to preach to me about what leaders do and why we have coaches and other leadership positions to lead teams to success. I even remember the first "definition" of a leader that he told me. He said, "leaders lead by example. They show up even when they don't want to and still choose to lead their people by example." This has resonated with me my entire life and began my internal career as a leader, which I have carried into Minnesota State University, Mankato's (MNSU) Honors program. Through the experiences that I have been able to participate in throughout my undergraduate studies here at MNSU, I have successfully been able to discover my defining leadership values and use those values in different group settings.

I began my leadership journey at MSU in the Honors 201 introductory course when I took the [Strengths Finder](#) assessment and discovered my top core values: restorative, achiever, learner, consistent, and futuristic. Honestly, these came by no surprise. I saw this generated list and it truly resonated with who I am as a person, in and outside of school. I was able to use the Strengths Based Leadership book to read more about these and relate them back to my own life and the leadership positions that I had already held.

Upon learning about my own leadership values, interpreting other leadership styles also really struck a chord with me when I took an Honors 401 seminar called "[Leadership and Interpersonal Communication](#)." Here, we spent much of our time analyzing different leadership and communication styles, and I really started to connect with these findings when I interviewed one my old soccer coaches for a Case Study assignment. It broadened my scope on leadership values and how they look different for each person and can even be different based upon the situation at hand.

I soon became better able to reflect upon my core values used in group situations, such as in my [English 271W course](#); here, I was able to delve deeper into how I really use my leadership values in my day to day life on campus. Working in a small group during this course allowed me to seek out how I generally function as a leader, reflect upon why I take on certain roles, and how I can improve my weaknesses to better reach toward the common goal of the group. This experience also helped me better appreciate different leadership styles and the general idea that someone else can find strength in my weaknesses, and vice versa; we all hold different qualities and values for a reason.

This idea of further defining my leadership values and philosophy continued into working with community organizations, such as the [Open Door Health Center](#) in Mankato. Throughout this experience, I learned how important it truly was to articulate a general leadership philosophy for a group, and how it was important that this philosophy be dynamic and malleable in order to tackle different situations effectively. I was able to acknowledge my role in this group and help keep others accountable for their roles in order to complete tasks successfully, efficiently, and on time.

I really began to effectively establish my role as a leader within group contexts holding more major leadership positions when I was appointed [Vice President of MSU's Premedical Club](#) and also hired by the YMCA as a [mentor for the Brother/Sister program](#). These two opportunities presented me with large shoes to fill; I now held major leadership roles within these groups. I was planning events for Pre-med Club with my fellow board members and planning events for my mentee and I, seeing those through, and making sure the best possible version of me and my core values showed up to those groups every week. Both of these experiences taught me a plethora of lessons that I will take with me into the next chapter of my life. I learned how to articulate my own leadership philosophies and a philosophy for a group setting. I learned to deal with failures, and that no matter how hard you try, sometimes the situation can be out of your control and not go as planned and you must improvise. I learned that I have skills in areas that I probably wouldn't have found had I not pursued these experiences, such as public speaking. I learned that I like forming new relationships. I was also able to confirm some of the core values that I had established when I took the Strengths Finder years ago; I really am a futuristic, planning type of person.

All of the experiences mentioned above have significantly shaped my core values as a leader today and how I can play an effective role as a leader in the future, as I endeavor in further schooling and a career in medicine.

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Global Citizenship

Cultural diversity had been something that was really 'tucked under the rug' in my life until coming to Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU). I grew up in a small, mostly white, stereotypically American cultured town in central eastern Minnesota. I had never really been exposed to many different cultures. Coming to MNSU, I was quickly exposed to many different groups of people with different cultural backgrounds than myself; MNSU has a large international population in attendance. None of these new interactions really struck me until I was introduced to the idea of shaping myself into becoming more culturally diverse within MNSU's Honors Program. I have grown very much so in the realm of cultural diversity since becoming a part of this program.

My journey within the Global Citizenship competency of the Honors Program truly began in the Honors 201 Introductory course where we discussed readings about what life might look like for people of other cultures. These discussions helped put into perspective that different cultures face different challenges, have different norms, and might be oppressed in the United States.

I then delved deeper into the idea of trying to understand other cultures better by attending [American Indian night](#) in the fall of 2018. To be quite honest, I probably hadn't thought about the American Indian culture more than a handful of times throughout my life in my own free time. This culture night introduced me to multiple American Indian languages and other cultural customs such as dancing and food. I was now beginning to be able to appreciate and further question cultures other than my own and decided that a good next step would be for me to interact more with other cultures.

During spring break of the 2018-2019 academic year, I took a trip to [Isla Mujeres](#), an island off of Cancun, Mexico. I made it a goal of mine to speak as much Spanish as I could, as Spanish was the second language that I became proficient in prior to coming to MNSU. This was much more challenging than I expected, but it helped me to realize some major cultural differences between this new culture and my own, including things like nonverbal communication skills, such as hand and face gestures.

I was further able to utilize my second language skills and also gain a better knowledge and understanding of other cultures throughout my time as a volunteer at the [Open-Door Health Center](#) (ODHC) here in Mankato. Here, I interacted with the Spanish community more, along with some members of the Somalian culture as well. This position also introduced me to the cultural group of people that needed the services offered by ODHC - generally those of low income, or those that were in need of more affordable healthcare options. My experiences here led me to understand better what it might be like to be a part of a minority group living in America.

I was really able to become more self-aware of how I perceived different cultures and my own internal prejudices while I worked at the [Harry Meyering Center](#) (HMC) here in Mankato. HMC is a corporation that houses and aids in the day to day lives of adult individuals with disabilities. Here, I was introduced to a culture that I, so wrongfully, never gave enough credit. I worked one on one with individuals of all kinds of mental and physical disabilities and was able to better understand their lifestyle and give them the respect that they so crucially deserved as equal pieces in our society.

All of these experiences led me to be better able to communicate with, understand, question, and relate to people of other cultural groups. These skills will be very useful to me in my future occupation someday, as an aspiring physician. I will encounter people of all cultures and ethnic backgrounds in my daily job, and I now feel more equipped to being able to communicate with and relate to them better.



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Research

Prior to coming to Minnesota State University, Mankato (MNSU), I did not really have an expectation as to what "doing research" truly meant; I thought that the research process was really only for those with degrees, or the "scientists," per say. As a biology major on campus, I quickly heard about some of the research that my professors were performing and how they often had a research team full of eager students. As I learned more about the pre-medical track, the Honors Program, and my major, I quickly sought after educating myself more about research in general. Being a part of the Honors Program really helped me get my feet wet in regard to doing research during my freshman year, and overall, I have learned that there are a lot of important pieces that fit into the puzzle of doing research. I was able to build a strong foundation in all aspects of performing research within the Honors Program, such as evaluating sources, synthesizing information, forming scientific hypotheses, designing experiments, scientific writing, and disseminating my results, all of which I will take with me into my professional career someday.

My "career" in research really began in [Honors 201](#) and a couple of my introductory biology courses, like [Biology 105](#), when I learned why research was performed, how to find and use credible sources, how to conduct experiments, and how to report scientific findings. From there, I was able to move into higher level courses with a better understanding of the foundations of research and delved into creating some original research projects.

I took [Developmental Biology](#) and [English 271W](#), which both challenged me with the task of creating original research projects. This involved the whole process of coming up with a research question, designing and carrying out experimentation, collecting data, and composing a research report using other scholarly articles as references. These experiences overall taught me about how the research process can look as a whole, from start to finish, including working through some procedural setbacks.

Moving into the end of my junior year, I decided that joining a faculty research team was something that I wanted to pursue. I spent a couple of weeks reading into some of the professors' work within the biology and chemistry departments and ended up meeting Dr. Katner, and she welcomed me onto her team that studies Glioblastoma (brain cancer) and Hepatocellular Carcinoma (liver cancer). I was assigned to the [Glioblastoma portion of her team](#), and hit the ground running in the beginning of my senior year for the 2020-2021 school year.

While doing research with Dr. Katner, I learned various lab techniques, saw experiments through from beginning to end, learned how to effectively write grants, and presented my research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium here at MNSU and also at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research. Presenting the materials that I spent so much time and effort on with Dr. Katner and the rest of our team was a truly rewarding, yet scary, process, and is an important part of being a scientist.

Through all of these experiences, I grew as a scientist. The research competency introduced me to all of the happenings included in performing research, from finding credible sources to carrying out original research and presenting my results. I know that what I have learned will be tremendously useful to me in the future as I endeavor onto further schooling in the medical field and becoming a physician one day.



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