

# MYLES SCHWARTZ

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*"The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.  
But I have promises to keep. And miles  
to go before I sleep" -Robert Frost*

My name is Myles Schwartz and I am a senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am currently working towards majors in English Studies and Spanish. With my degrees, I hope to work in the field(s) of creative writing and editing, as well as working with Latin American literature. Directly after graduation I plan on completing my scuba diving education and pursuing a career as a PADI Dive Instructor. Experiencing new and different cultures is my greatest passion so I plan on traveling and having a job that allows me to pursue this love.

I am an active member of Gamma Phi Beta as well as a member of the MNSU Honors Program, Sigma Tau Delta English Honors Society, and Alpha Mu Gamma Spanish Honors Society. In high school, I was involved in DECA (an international business organization) as chapter president and a state officer, as well as president of my school's chapter of Educators Rising.



**Personal Mission Statement:**  
*Be present where you are, but never stop striving to get to where  
you want to be.*





### Girls On The Run

Through Gamma Phi Beta I volunteer with Girls On The Run. GOTR is an organization committed to "building strong girls" through training for a 5K race. The girls train with coaches and assistant coaches multiple times every week for a couple of months. They come to the program after school with their friends or just to hangout. We encourage them to push themselves to accomplish things they never thought that they could. We are role models, counselors, and cheerleaders for these young girls.



### Adams Elementary

I have volunteered at Adams Elementary School in Wichita, Kansas since I was middle school. I help in my mother's kindergarten classroom and any other classroom that needs extra help that day. They are a Title 1 school in an urban school district, so many students have less support at home do to poverty. School is a sanctuary for many students and as a volunteer I try to remember that and do what I can to make it the best experience possible. I help the students with their letters and numbers, but also play with them during play time or recess. We also guide students in play and respect, important social skills, especially for young children. This opportunity has taught me empathy and understanding for people of all backgrounds.

### El Puente Christian School



While studying abroad in Costa Rica during the summer of 2018,

I volunteered at El Puente Christian School, an English and Spanish school educating students from the age of 4 to 14 years old. During my time there I helped preschool age students with their English writing, while communicating and explaining the work to them in Spanish so that they could understand more effectively (code switching). I also helped fourth grade students with math, which is their main focus and struggle at that age in this particular school. One of the most interesting things about this experience was the setting. The students were most literally learning in a jungle, with howler monkeys being a big distraction (and irritant) some days. We would take the students on walks around the more forested area outside of the school grounds some days when they needed breaks. We recorded different animals and plants that we saw on these walks and then reflect about them back at the classroom. I would have loved to learn about nature and our place/purpose on the earth in this way as a child. It was also interesting working with the preschool students being that their Spanish wasn't always clear, let alone their little understanding of English. I had been in similar situations before while working with bilingual children, but this was much harder because the students were not even surrounded by English in their day-to-day lives, as children in the U.S. would be. Overall, this was my favorite and most valuable volunteering experience. It taught me more about the culture of the Costa Rican people. It also taught me about myself in major language-barrier situations, and how to improvise and communicate in other ways (pictures, sounds, actions).





## Enrichment Activities

### Traveling: India, Europe, Belize, Costa Rica, The U.S.



Since I was young I have traveled with my family all over the U.S. and world. Through traveling and experiencing the world first hand, I have a broad view of humanity and civilization. I firmly believe that where we come from shapes who we are, but where we go molds who we grow up to be. I think that it is important to remember who you are and where you come from while in other cultures, but lend yourself to their practices and culture to respect those that are opening their world to you, a guest, a tourist. For example, while in India, though it was 100+ degrees Fahrenheit I still dressed modestly to respect the people and culture that I was a guest in.



### Creative Writing Blog

I have always been an avid writer and in August 2018 I decided to finally publish my work on my blog, Travel Journal Poems. I usually post 6 or more works of poetry and short stories at the end of each school semester. Publishing my art has helped me grow as a person, a writer, and a student. I value the literature that I read in both languages so much more now because I know how it feels to gain the courage to publish something that really does come from your soul. It takes so much work to create a poem or a story, but it is so worth it if you can help others be more aware and in-touch with their feelings or reality.

I have linked my website below, as well as a site where you can find two of my first published pieces, La Playa and "Who Are You?". I was overjoyed as you can imagine when these were first published. I am excited to publish more work and see where creative writing could take me in my life as a possible career path, but for right now I have been reading more than writing. I find that I write much better when I have surrounded my life with words and stories, for inspiration possibly, or just to get my mind started.

[traveljournalpoems.weebly.com/](http://traveljournalpoems.weebly.com/)  
[transcendmagazine.net/mylesschwartz](http://transcendmagazine.net/mylesschwartz)





### **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 Program Mission**

I will work to improve my leadership skills, begin my career in research, and become a more educated global citizen through the Honors Program while completing all of the competencies and bettering myself in the process.





### **How has the Honors Program encouraged me to grow as a Leader?**

Since childhood, I have been encouraged to be a leader in all aspects of my life. When I first joined the Honors Program at MNSU and learned about the Leadership competency, I thought that completing it would be easy since I had always considered myself a leader. This was far from the truth. The Honors Program looks at leadership through 4 levels of Values and 4 levels of Teams, which is something that I had never done before. Overall, these various levels and topics of the competency guided me in my journey of becoming a more effective leader.

In terms of Values, I began my leadership experience in college deciding how I could be a leader in my sorority, how effective my skills were when working with a large group, and how I could improve them to gain respect from followers. Through my work as *Social Chairwoman* and *Ritual Chairwoman* I guided others in learning the value of reputation, tradition, history, and respect. After these experiences, I feel that I have learned how to examine situations thoroughly and empathically. I have also gained the ability to be responsive and flexible in leadership style depending on the situation at hand.

I have gained leadership skills in Teams through my two college jobs: *Advertising Representative* for the MSU Reporter and *Server* at Pub500. At the MSU Reporter, I learned how to be a good leader, follower, and teammate in a new situation and environment; where I was the only woman in my office. I took that knowledge and applied it to my leadership role as a senior server at Pub500, where I now teach younger servers how to be a considerate, likeable teammate while giving guests the best service possible. I know that I will continue to use these workplace and team skills in all of my future jobs.

In summary, the Honors Program has assisted me in developing valuable leadership skills that I will continue to use in all aspects of my post-undergraduate life. As a philosophy of leadership, I believe that the best leaders are even better followers, who will guide before they direct and learn before they instruct.

### **Honors Leadership Competency**

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

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





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### How has the Honors Program led me to becoming a Global Citizen?

As a child I traveled often with my family. I always believed that this made me "cultured", but travel alone does not make a person a Global Citizen. The concept of "Global Citizenship" was new to me as I entered the Honors Program. What did a Global Citizen have that I hadn't already obtained from my various travels? Well, a lot. Through my varied experiences in college, specifically the Honors Program, I feel that I have become a well-rounded Global Citizen, rather than solely a "cultured" traveler.

A major aspect of embodying Global Citizenship is having the ability to recognize your own culture and ask critical questions. The path to Self-Awareness began for me while learning about other cultures, as well as when I was living in a completely different culture. I became most aware of my own culture, one of a Global North, White, American citizen, through *studying abroad* in Quepos, Costa Rica. After this experience, I began asking deeper cultural questions about Costa Rica, other post-colonial nations, and myself. I continued to study and discover new layers and history about Costa Rican and post-colonial culture through Dr. Haque and Dr. Harrison's class on the "greening" of Costa Rica. Now, I find myself diving into a self discovery again, though from a new direction, in my study of the tradition aspects of yoga.

To complete the Knowledge and Understanding competency, one needs to begin asking questions that go deeper than the surface of culture and tradition and begin making lasting connections with people outside of their own culture. I feel as if I really dove into this competency through my *study abroad* experience and my studies on post-colonial Costa Rica afterwards.

My experience with the Communication competency was unique for me in that I studied both Spanish and Portuguese while in college. Portuguese is a language that I have surface level proficiency in, differing from my Spanish language ability, in which I am able to analyze and think critically about various subjects. Having the ability to realize my varied proficiency levels helps me in being empathetic to foreign language English learners.

Overall, I believe that all of these competencies combined have taught me how to be a more ethical, aware, educated, and empathetic traveler, as well as citizen of humanity as a whole.

### Honors Global Citizenship Competency

"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)

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





### **How did the Honors Program encourage me to participate in Research?**

When I first joined the Honors Program at MNSU and learned about the research competency of our curriculum, I was nervous. I always pictured research as work done by scientists in a lab, which I knew would not be my path. I quickly learned that I had already begun literary research and would continue to do this through both my English Studies and Spanish degrees.

I began my research journey with the Information Literacy and Information Synthesis competencies through my research on the Indigenous People of America which then prompted my interest Latin American Literature. During these experiences, I learned how to research effectively in a library and through online academic journals. I also learned how to synthesize my own ideas and theses from the information that I had obtained in these journals, through which many of my critical thinking skills were developed. Conducting research based on literature and history is important to our society in that we can learn from the mistakes of humanity in the past (and sometimes present), so that we as a race, can move forward in the most educated way. When I realized this, I knew that I wanted to continue researching.

With what I had learned through my first research experiences, I was able to work towards completing the competencies of Original Research and Dissemination of Results. After studying abroad in Costa Rica, I developed a passion for women's rights in Latin America, one that I knew I wanted to explore in depth through research. In beginning this study, I created multiple questions and two original theses centered around the Machista culture in the hopes of gaining a better understanding and a deeper passion for the subject. To conclude this exploration, I had the opportunity to present my study on the rights of women in El Salvador. Through this I gained confidence in my original ideas and research abilities as a whole. By developing my own ideas and presenting those to others, I was able to be a part of the bigger picture; I, as a minuscule individual, helped in moving society forward.

In summary, the Honors Program encouraged me to conduct original research, which has helped me in becoming a more educated member of society, giving me the ability to educate others, too.

### **Honors Research Competency**

"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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