

# Dylan James Riess

## Honors Portfolio

### WELCOME!

Hello, my name is Dylan Riess, a Senior Honors Student here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am working towards a Bachelors of Science in Accounting and a minor in Business Administration. During the school year of 2019-2020, I attended Ambassador Bible College in Cincinnati, Ohio, for an intensive 9-month program, earning a Certificate in Biblical Studies. In the spring of 2021, I had an audit internship with CliftonLarsonAllen to build my real-world knowledge of external auditing in public accounting. After graduation in December of 2021, I plan on continuing on to get my Master of Accounting degree at the University of Tulsa in 2022 before I start a full-time position as an Associate at CliftonLarsonAllen in 2023.



### MISSION STATEMENT

I will do my best to uphold the principles I believe in, prepare to be a well-rounded employee in my future career, and strive to be a force for good in the world at all civic levels, from my local community on up.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

# About Me



## Get to Know Me!

Hello, and welcome again to my Honors Portfolio! I'm excited for you to see my experiences and growth throughout my time at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Family is something that has always been important to me. Being the youngest child of four, I've grown up somewhat in the shadow of my three older siblings; I kind of enjoy it. Knowing I'm like my siblings - especially when I get told so - makes me happy, even if its a negative trait we have in common. In contrast, I also find it amazing to see just how different I am from my siblings in all the little - and sometime big - things.

My hobbies include reading, driving around, watching Netflix, dancing, rock climbing, running, and going to the gym. I've always really enjoyed reading, as it allows me to escape reality and use my imagination - which can all too easily be lost!

Personality types have always been a very interesting subject to me. I love talking about personality types with people, and discussing the subtle differences and similarities you can find with others. It's a way I relate to people around me and work to find common ground with others. For those just as "personality type inclined" as myself, here are some results:

**Myers-Briggs:** INFJ-T

**Color Personality:** Gold

**Love Languages:** Quality Time & Physical Touch

**Big Five Test:** Extraversion 48, Agreeableness 71, Conscientiousness 87, Neuroticism 78, Openness 1

I am a self-described workaholic. I have not been without a job since my Junior year of High School - sometimes I even have had two or three! In the future, I want to take this passion of working and staying busy to do great things in my career. As long as I know I'm making some sort of a difference in the world (no matter how small), I know I can rest easy.

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"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Education

## Minnesota State University, Mankato

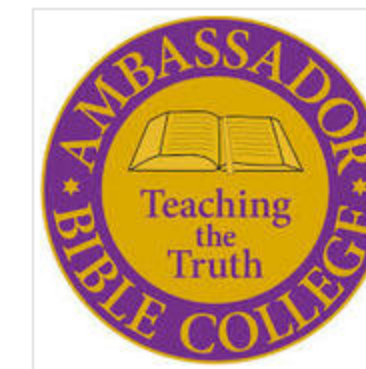
*August 2017 - December 2021*



I attended MSU, Mankato for a Bachelors of Science in Accounting, and a minor in Business Administration. I was a member of the Accounting Club and Student Ambassadors, and participated in the Integrated Business Experience. I was also able to work as a Community Advisor and be a part of the Big Discovery Project.

## Ambassador Bible College

*August 2019 - May 2020*



I took a year off of attending at MSU to attend Ambassador Bible College, a 9-month Certificate program [Certificate in Biblical Studies] located in Cincinnati, Ohio. During this program, I was elected class President, got to participate in a traveling chorale, and learned many things about myself as both a leader and a friend.

## Southwest Minnesota State University

*September 2015 - May 2017*



Though I have never stepped foot on the campus of SMSU, I have 24 credits of college coursework from there. Through my high school, I participated in the dual-enrollment program. It allowed me to stay in my classroom environment while simultaneously getting high school and college credits for certain advanced courses.

## Stewartville High School

*September 2013 - June 2017*



I attended in the local school district in my town my entire public schooling, ending at Stewartville High School. While at SHS, I participated in Choir, Band (including Marching Band, Pep Band, and High Voltage), Theatre, and National Honor Society. I also got to jump start my college career with Dual-Enrollment and PSEO courses. I graduated in June of 2017 with Special Honors and a GPA of 3.85.

# Work Experience

## Tax / Audit Intern

CliftonLarsonAllen | Rochester, MN

*January 2021 - April 2021*

I was an Intern for the 2021 'Busy Season,' working as an Auditor for the Rural Electric Cooperatives and State & Local Government sectors. I worked on audits for clients of various sizes, averaging two or three clients a week with my team. With an amazing atmosphere and encouraging mentors, I experienced a tremendous growth from day 1 all the way through month 3. After completing this internship, I was confident I would enjoy beginning a career in Public Accounting, and had accepted a full-time position with CLA post-graduation.

## Administrative Assistant

Edina Realty Title | Rochester, MN

*June 2020 - August 2020, May 2021 - August 2021*

The summers of 2020 and 2021 I worked as the Receptionist and Administrative Assistant for Edina Realty Title. As part of my responsibilities, I welcomed clients, managed incoming emails and phone calls, and did general clerical work. Additionally, I had the added difficulty of working through a pandemic, which gave me the chance to work on my strength and resiliency in the face of adversity.

## Sales Associate

Home Depot | Milford, OH & Rochester, MN

*September 2019 - Present*

Throughout a majority of my collegiate career, I worked at Home Depot. As an Associate, I worked in the Garden, Electrical, and Deliveries departments. I was trained to run several pieces of equipment, including the electric ladder, REACH truck, order picker, and sit-down forklift. I was able to get experience on leading a team in the latter part of my time working there as a shift lead, and continued to work on my merchandising and sales skills.

## Accounting Intern

McNeilus Steel, Inc. | Dodge Center, MN

*May 2019 - August 2019*

In the summer of 2019, I was an intern for McNeilus Steel, a steel manufacturing and warehousing company. I spent several week-long rotations in various departments of the company, including Sales, Accounts Payable, Credit, Payroll, and Human Resources. I saw how the many different business departments worked and fitted together, got some experience in using various softwares, and was able to work on several minor projects.

## Internal Operations Coordinator

CliftonLarsonAllen | Mankato, MN

*January 2019 - May 2019*

I worked during the 2019 'Busy Season' as an Internal Operations Coordinator at CLA. I primarily did scanning and preparation of the Tax returns' paper copies. This experience helped me see the way I could fit into doing Public Accounting as well as helping me develop my skills of organization and attention to detail.

## Community Advisor

Preska L4, Minnesota State University, Mankato | Mankato, MN

*August 2018 - May 2019*

During the school year, I was a CA for Preska L4. Through this experience, I learned a great deal about building community, balancing busy schedules, and how to professionally deal with supervisors, colleagues, and residents. I learned the hard way that I find it hard to live where I work, and sometimes was overwhelmed by always being in 'work mode.'

## Big Discovery Project Consultant

Minnesota State University, Mankato | Rochester, MN

*May 2018 - July 2018*

I was given the opportunity to interview alumni in my hometown area for the Alumni Foundation Center. During the course of the interview, I would ask them what initially brought them to MSU, as well as how their time there was like and what they've been up to since graduation. I got to meet a lot of interesting, amazing people! One thing that really stood out to me was how different people found MSU had become. I dedicated a couple minutes of every interview to asking alumni what campus was like during their time and describing what it was like now.

# Honor's Program

## Why Honors?

"Would you like to be a part of the Honors Program?" As I checked the little box on the Presidential Scholarship Interview form, I initially thought that the Honors Program at MNSU would just be something that would help my resume stand out after graduation, but it would end up being so much more. Throughout my time at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I have had so many experiences and opportunities that were only available to me through my participation in the Honors Program.

My very first day on campus freshman year was for learning community priority move-in. As a first-year Honors learning community student, I was able to move in a day early - and beat the crowds! That first evening on campus, I got to meet my peers in the Honors learning community: the people I would end up spending much of that year with. With the beginning of the semester came our Honors FYEX class. The first day of class brought many emotions: excitement, nervousness, and a bit of trepidation. The future looked exciting, but the whole idea of the Honors program was a lot to take in right away. However, it would get better. Throughout the fall, we learned about the competencies of the Honors Program - leadership, research, and global citizenship - building a nice strong base on which we could construct the rest of our collegiate careers. The deep discussions and thought-provoking assignments stood out during my freshman year. While many of my other classes were very reminiscent of my High School classes, Honors FYEX stood out from the crowd: it was special!

My second year at MNSU, I was a part of the Emerging Leaders Honors learning community. Through this learning community, I took two Honors seminars with a cohort of students that included many I had spent time with my freshman year. These seminars pushed me further as a leader and forced me to be an active participant in class; whereas I usually enjoy silently observing. This second year, I was pushed to participate in the Integrated Business Experience. Without having a friendly face in my fellow Honors student Mason Vlaanderen, I would not have had as much courage to step forward and shine as a leader in my IBE Company. It was also during this time that I simultaneously realized I needed some time to figure out if I actually wanted to finish my degree in Accounting, and had the opportunity to study Theology at a small private institute for one year. Without the encouragement from my Honors advisor, Ginny Walters, I don't know if I would have been able to take the literal leap of faith, jumping into a different academic experience and still being able to seamlessly come back a year later.

There are so many different ways that the Honors Program has shaped the man I've become in the last 4 ½ years that I can't even try to count them. The Honors Program has brought so many valuable and beautiful relationships to my time at MNSU. It has been a constant through my crazy, winding journey to graduation. I've learned the best way I can be a leader, and how to stand back when someone else is more adequate for the job. I've learned how to synthesize data and parse financial statements. I've learned to get along with people who have very different ideals and beliefs than me, and even be able to call some of them my closest friends. It's wild to think that the bright-eyed 18-year-old that stepped onto this campus 4 years ago no longer exists, but I'm comforted by the fact that my 22-year-old self is much more well-equipped to join society after graduation. And that is all thanks to the Honors Program.

LEADERSHIP

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

RESEARCH

## Honors Program Mission

"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."

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

**Global Citizenship:** Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness.

**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.



**Honors Competency Rubric**  
Download File

# Leadership

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

HONORS FYEX

HONORS FY LEARNING COMMUNITY

DEVELOPING YOUR MENTOR PHILOSOPHY

COMMUNITY ADVISOR

INTEGRATED BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

ABC CLASS PRESIDENT

AUDIT INTERN

## Leadership Synthesis

Throughout my time at MNSU, I have grown as a leader both in and out of the classroom. My growth as a leader is separated into two main phases: development and application. Much of my development phase happened in the classroom, where I learned about different leadership styles, philosophies, and ways to apply great leadership. Conversely, most of my application phase happened outside of the classroom, through jobs and academic extracurriculars.

The development phase started the day I moved into my dorm freshman year. As part of the [Honors First-Year Learning Community](#), I learned how to informally work in a group setting as both a leader and a group member. It also allowed me to see how the values I'd gained from my past experiences and upbringing could either help or hinder my ability to be an effective leader. As a part of my [Honors FYEX](#) class, I learned about the leadership competency of the Honors program and introspectively begin to develop my personal leadership philosophy. My development continued into my second year at MNSU in my class, [Developing Your Mentor Philosophy](#). In this class, I teetered on the edge of applying my leadership philosophy. I was able to both develop my individual mentor philosophy *and* put it into action by applying it to working in Residential Life and my Honors mentee relationship. This class helped show me ways I struggled as a leader and would need to improve, but also ways I could greatly excel.

I also began to move into the application phase during my second year at MNSU. As a [Community Advisor](#), I learned about how I was much better at working with information than with people and found that the dynamic of the team I was on could greatly affect my attitude and effort towards projects and goals. Later that year, I participated in the [Integrated Business Experience](#), where I applied leadership to a mock corporate structure as a Chief Financial Officer. This experience taught me about how proper delegation and giving meaningful work could create the most efficient team. It also gave me a chance to implement my leadership philosophy, seeing what worked well and what needed improvement. My next two years involved several capstone leadership experiences. First, I practiced executive, broad leadership as the [Class President at Ambassador Bible College](#). I learned that taking the leap of faith into scary experiences and positions that I felt unqualified for brought the largest learning curve. I improved on seeing the whole picture while trusting my team to pull through; I also learned to celebrate the small victories when nothing seemed to go right. Second, I learned about individual, specific leadership as an [Audit Intern at CliftonLarsonAllen](#). I experienced how leadership philosophies can apply to teams of one, and how to work as a team on high-stakes projects.

Throughout my collegiate career, my leadership philosophy has also grown and flourished as with me. As a servant leader, it is my goal to give my team the tools they need and best experience they can have to succeed, individually and as a team. One of my mentors once said, "Servant leadership is training your team so they can one day replace you." I strive to lead in such a way that my mentees are competent enough to replace me, but to simultaneously be invaluable through my diligence, attitude, and hard work. As I continue onto graduate school and begin my career with CliftonLarsonAllen, I will continue to push myself to grow as a leader and be a life-long learner. Through the journey to perfect leadership, you may find there is no such thing, but if you have empathy, a love of learning, and a willingness to correct your mistakes, there are no limits to what you can achieve.

# Global Citizenship

**Global Citizenship:** Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness.

HONORS FYEX

SPANISH

LONDON TRIP

CULTURAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS CLASS

## Global Citizenship Synthesis

When I started college at MNSU, I was not very cognizant of my unique culture, or very welcoming to other cultures as a Global Citizen. However, throughout my time at Minnesota State, I have learned, through many different experiences, how important it is to be a well-versed Global Citizen: open to unique experiences, beliefs, and always willing to challenge a preconceived notion that may not be true. As I developed, I learned about my own culture, the culture of others, and how those two things don't have to be at odds. I then moved on to applying my knowledge as a Global Citizen in my studies and travels.

I started learning about other cultures and how to have open, civil conversations with people who are different from me in my [Honors FYEX](#) class. This class helped me to be more aware of other people's cultures and developed a strong base for more growing experiences. This helped me be more open and honest in the [Cultural Autobiography](#) I wrote for my Human Relations in a Multicultural Society class. This paper introduced me to reflective writing and allowed me to meditate on the privileges and drawbacks that came out of my unique experience growing up. I was also able to think about how I'd been treated for having beliefs that are different from the majority growing up, and the consideration I should give to others who fall into that category too in the future. This reflective experience helped prepare me for my [Service-Learning Project](#). I was able to learn about a community I didn't have much experience with, those who have memory-loss diseases - like Alzheimer's or Dementia - and learned about the similarities and differences we had. I also got to combat some preconceived notions I'd had about this community, and learned about different types of verbal and nonverbal communication depending on someone's exceptionalities.

After developing some skills of being a Global Citizen, I was able to start applying it through several experiences. In my [Spanish](#) class, I was able to learn about different cultures, and see how difficult it was to integrate into a new language and its culture, especially if you were not in the forgiving and friendly environment of a classroom. I also learned how much of a connecting force language can be. I then got to learn about a new culture during my [Trip to London](#). I was able to see some of the cultural differences between London and my experience in small-town USA, as well as learn about the culture of people from several different European countries. All of these experiences helped prime me for my [Comparative Religions Class](#), where I got to learn about religious from all corners of the world. In this class, I was awed by just how similar every religion seemed to be, with many having similarities with aspects of Christianity that I had always thought were unique to that faith. I learned about faiths that I already had baseless thoughts about, and was able to examine the devotion and faith that seemed to be universal across religions.

From day 1 to graduation, I have seen tremendous growth in my ability to meet and relate with different cultures, as well as realizing that my ethnocentric view of the world may not always be correct or accurate. Being a Global Citizen doesn't mean you have to agree with somebody who has different views; it is being able to have open and honest conversations with people to get to know their beliefs, values, and culture, as well as who they are. It is also being able to admit you were originally wrong when you learn more information about a culture. As I graduate and move into the rest of my life, I will always be growing and learning, tweaking my worldview as I continue to grow as a Global Citizen!

# Research

**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.

HONORS FYEX

PHILOSOPHY ESSAY

GEOGRAPHY ESSAY

EXPLORING PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

INTEGRATED BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

ACCOUNTING PRESENTATION

## Research Synthesis

When I first began the Honors program, I did not think there would be many rich, exciting opportunities to learn how to research and apply it to my future career. However, I have been able to participate in many unique and valuable types of research during my time at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I began the process of becoming a research all-star by learning how to develop my information literacy and synthesis skills. I then began to do my own original research and studied how to efficiently disseminate what I'd learned.

My first contact with research at MNSU was during freshman year in my [Honors FYEX](#) class. In this class, I learned that I was not quite as informationally literate as I had assumed I was coming out of high school. I was also able to learn how to efficiently synthesize the information I'd researched into a cohesive hypothesis or thesis statement. During that same semester, I was also able to integrate my newfound research skills into the [Philosophy Paper](#) I wrote for my Intro to Ethics class. I improved my skill of downsizing pertinent information I'd find during my research into smaller, manageable chunks for the people consuming my writing, and helped me be more open to research topics that were outside of my comfort zone. That spring, I got to continue applying my literacy and synthesis skills in my final [Geography Paper](#) for my Intro to Geography class. This essay gave me practice on the art of writing a cohesive research narrative and helped me gain discernment of high quality vs. poor quality research.

My second year in school, I was able to pivot to doing original research and disseminating said research. My first opportunity for original research was in my [Exploring Personal Leadership](#) class. I was able to research homelessness and near-homelessness in addition to developing a project that would help spread awareness of those communities in the Mankato area. I got to see research as a beginning-to-end process during this experience. I also got to practice research from beginning to end in the [Integrated Business Experience](#) that same semester. In this experience, I got to research and build an entire financial information system for my company, as well as analyzing financial scenarios for my company's loan. I gained a lot of knowledge on how to most efficiently complete the research process. I also got experience in disseminating the results of my company's research and performance to interested parties. My newfound knowledge in original research and dissemination from these two experiences helped me greatly when I was preparing an [Accounting Presentation](#) for my Intermediate Financial Accounting II class. This helped show me what information needed to be shared, and helped hone my presentation skills to be a clear and concise speaker.

Throughout all my research experiences at Minnesota State, I have seen tremendous growth in my ability to comprehend and analyze complex - and sometimes contradictory - information. I have learned that the purpose of research is to gain an understanding of a topic that can then be shared with other interested people, and am excited to grow these skills during Graduate School and, afterwards, implement them into my career as a CPA!