

# AUTUMN RITTER

Minnesota State University - Mankato, Class of 2022

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## WELCOME!

Thank you for visiting my e-portfolio! My name is Autumn Ritter and I am currently a senior Honors student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am majoring in Business Management with a triple minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Business Administration, and Non-Profit Leadership. After I graduate this May, I will start working at Coldwell Banker Commercial Fisher Group as a commercial real estate agent. Outside of work, I hope to continue staying involved with local nonprofits and eventually serve on a Board of Directors.

## MISSION STATEMENT

I will consistently put forward my best effort to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be a successful leader throughout college and into my professional career. I will use my desire to help those in need to shape my learning experiences so that they align with my career goals.

Leadership

Research

Global Citizenship

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## ABOUT ME

### BACKGROUND

I grew up near La Crosse, Wisconsin in a very small town called Cashton. During high school, I participated in a large number of extracurricular activities including volleyball, track and field, National Honor Society, class office, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), and many more. The experiences I had throughout my 4+ years of FBLA were a huge reason I decided to pursue a major in business management!

### FREE TIME

In my free time, I enjoy hiking and being outside, traveling, reading books, volunteering, and going on adventures with my friends. I also spend a large portion of my free time with my parents and siblings - I only have one biological sister, but I have a ton of aunts, uncles, and cousins that I am with constantly!



### PERSONAL VALUES

Some of my personal values include morality, knowledge, and achievement. However, my most significant value is my belief in helping others. I have always been aware of the importance this value held within me, but I never realized to what extent until my senior year of high school and into college. I constantly feel a desire to help others - especially those at a disadvantage - and this is what motivated me to declare a minor in non-profit leadership and ultimately pursue this a potential future career.

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## 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."

## HONORS COMPETENCIES

Honors students are required to show that they have fulfilled all goal areas within the three competencies of the program - leadership, research, and global citizenship. Select any of the following links for a preview of my development in all three competencies.

### Leadership

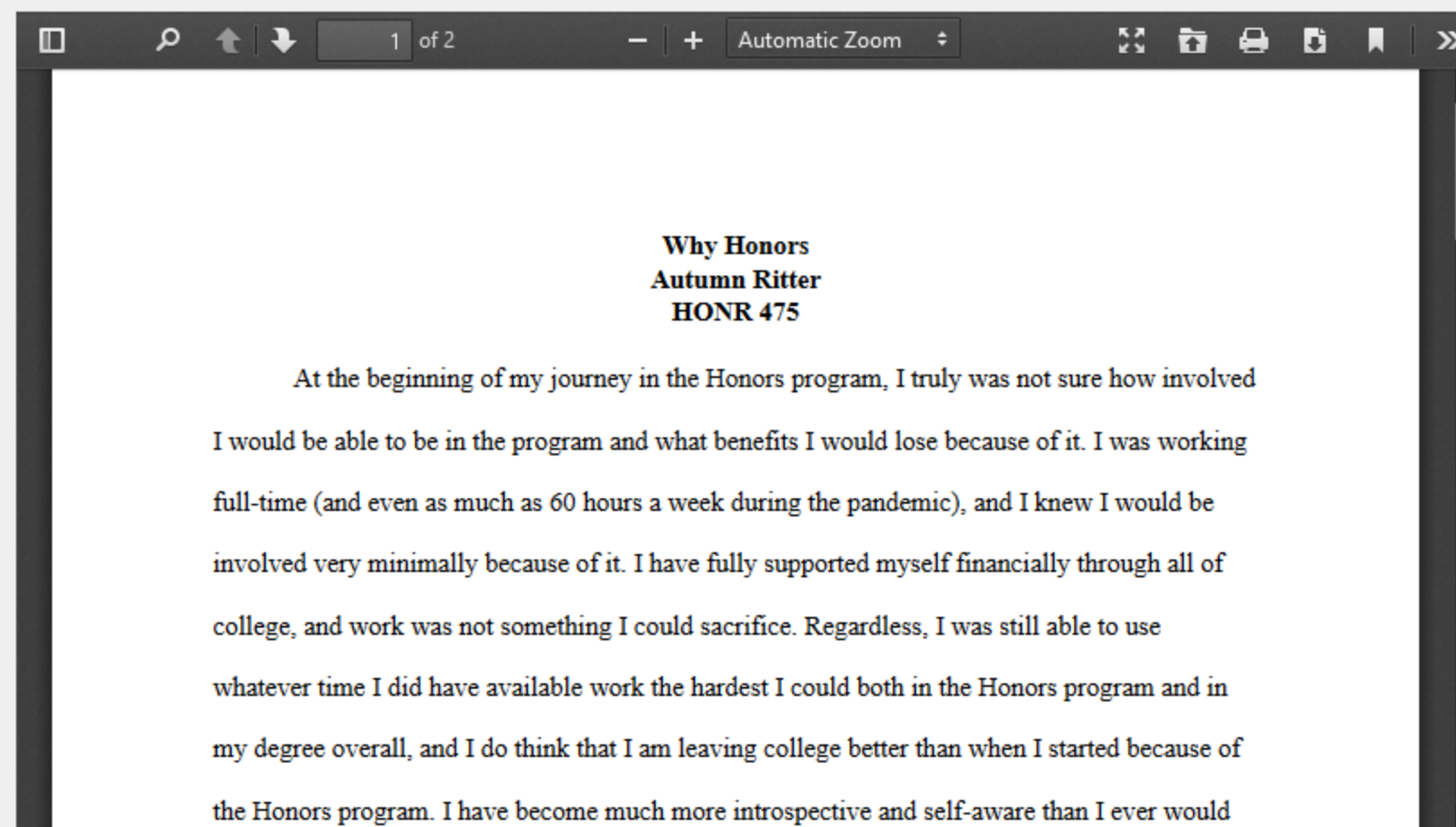
"Upon graduation, Honors students will have demonstrated the ability to utilize personal leadership values and guide groups towards a common goal."

### Research

"Upon graduation, Honor 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."

### Global Citizenship

"Upon graduation, Honors students will have demonstrated the ability to exhibit second language and communication competencies and exhibit cultural competency and awareness."



## LEARNING PLANS



DOCX

2018-2019 Learning Plan



DOCX

2019-2020 Learning Plan



DOCX

2020-2021 Learning Plan



DOCX

2021-2022 Learning Plan

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## LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY

### LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS

View my reflections and artifacts for my four most impactful leadership experiences here:

[YMCA Mentor Program](#)

[Dunkin' - Shift Leader](#)

[IBE - Vice President](#)

[CBC Fisher Group](#)

### SYNTHESIS OF LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Before college, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what made a leader great. Although my perspective wasn't necessarily wrong, I have grown immensely in my understanding of leadership, especially when it relates to my own life. I have taken numerous classes to learn about all the different types of leadership that exist, and along with my collegiate experiences, I have been able to put this knowledge to practice in developing my own personal leadership style.

As a freshman - and then again as a senior - I took the StrengthsFinder test and identified my most prominent leadership strengths. These strengths turned out to change a lot over 4 years, which I believe can be attributed simply to my personal growth throughout this time. My most recent StrengthsFinder assessment identified intellection, individualization, and achievement as some of my top strengths. In combination with my values of empathy, communication, and passion, a leadership skill set completely unique to me is created.

The application of my newly acquired leadership knowledge came in an array of opportunities such as my role as a [Shift Leader at Dunkin'](#) and a [YMCA Mentor](#). Both of these experiences showed me new ways to lead and adapt to the group being served. At Dunkin', I was leading a team with a very wide age range (going from 15 to almost 50 years old). This role taught me how to be consistent with leadership and provide everyone with the same guidance and attention regardless of status. In contrast, my role as a YMCA Mentor showed me how to adapt my leadership to fit children, since their development requires different forms of leadership and communication.

However, one of my most impactful leadership opportunities was the Integrated Business Experience (IBE), where I served as [Vice President](#). This experience made me very acutely aware of my own leadership practices, especially due to the team-based nature of the program. In the IBE, I struggled at first to navigate the wide spectrum of leadership personalities within the group, and it seemed that it would be impossible to find harmony. However, when I truly focused on the leadership styles of each individual group member, it became clearer to me how each member could be utilized to the benefit of the team. All the leadership instruction I had been given was fully realized in that moment, and it became a huge turning point for me.

I also recently began my journey in the corporate world at [Coldwell Banker Commercial Fisher Group \(CBC\)](#) here in Mankato, where I am working towards becoming a certified commercial real estate agent. This experience is another that has been extremely impactful to my journey, as it has helped me realize that my most significant leadership style is servant leadership. Although I am technically at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy, I utilize servant leadership to individually help each member of the team, which in turn benefits the entire company.

I don't believe there will ever be a "final step" in my leadership journey, but I am very aware (and appreciative) of the progress I have made in these short four years. I know now how to capitalize on my strengths and focus on improving my weaknesses to benefit the groups I will serve and potentially lead. I hope to use this knowledge and self-awareness to continually grow, while still remaining true to myself and the leader I hope to become.

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## RESEARCH COMPETENCY

### RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

View my reflections and artifacts for my four most impactful research experiences here:

[HONR PSYCH 101](#)

[GWS 330](#)

[Nonprofit Experience](#)

[IBE Market Research](#)

### SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

At the start of my time in the Honors program, I truthfully was very worried about my research experiences. I only thought of research in the traditional sense of doing science in a lab or studies in humanities, and I was very aware of the fact that I was neither studying these areas nor talented in them. However, I have learned that research is much broader than just a science experiment, and because of that I have been able to incorporate research ventures into my studies that better align with my goals and aspirations as a business professional.

In general, my four most prominent research experiences can be separated into two categories - formal research and hands-on experience - with on in each category acting as a foundation for the next. Both of my formal research opportunities occurred in classes I was taking at the time. The first was during [Honors Psychology 101](#), where each student conducted research on a specific study tip, the psychology behind it, and how an individual student can incorporate this into their study habits. Although it seemed like every other school project at the time, the Honors component of this course helped me more consciously realize effective methods for gathering and synthesizing information, as well as the impact these have on the final product of research. This awareness was then further employed within [Gender & Women's Studies 330](#), where I conducted a much more in-depth original research project on the Black Panther Party. The results of this research was an informal thesis on the BPP's history of activism, usage of feminism, and evaluation of the overall effectiveness of these methods.

In terms of my hands-on experiences, I have found these to be much more impactful to my studies not only because they are more closely related to my future career, but also because I learn best in interactive moments. During my sophomore year, I participated in a service-learning opportunity with [Habitat for Humanity](#). During this time, I was focused on learning as much as I could about nonprofit operations, which resulted in research via observation and conversation, rather than textbooks. The employees at Habitat for Humanity became my "primary sources", in which I was synthesizing information simply by taking each person's perspective and shaping it into a general model of good practices within a nonprofit organization. Ultimately, the culmination of my research development materialized as participation in the [Integrated Business Experience \(IBE\) Practicum](#) during the spring of 2020. Every research skill I had learned up until that point was put to work, both in formal research of marketing and sales, as well as hands-on experience through the operation of my group's company. The IBE Practicum included a dissemination of our hypotheses and a final analysis of our results, both of which helped me realize the importance of high-quality research dissemination. Especially in the business world, if you are unable to accurately communicate your hypotheses or results, you could lose an important deal or misguide the company altogether.

Throughout the entirety of my college experiences, I strongly believe that I have learned the importance of accuracy and ethics when it comes to research. I have participated in solo research as well as within a team, and both have provided unique insights into the utilization of research skills. Although my research capabilities and knowledge will not be used in a traditional research setting, I still believe they will be powerful tools as they are translated into the necessary experiential research of the corporate world!

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## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP COMPETENCY

### GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP REFLECTIONS

View my reflections and artifacts for my four most impactful global citizenship experiences here:

[IBUS 380](#)

[REHB 110W](#)

[Language Development](#)

[FOCP Internship](#)

### SYNTHESIS OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EXPERIENCE

Global citizenship is something I have been passionate about since I was fairly young. I grew up in an extremely small town - population 1,005 - where there was practically no diversity. Everyone looked like me, enjoyed most of the same things as me, had families that mirrored my own, and had life experiences fairly similar to me as well. I was very aware of this all through high school, and I knew when it came time to select a college, I was going to choose one that would provide me with more awareness and diverse experiences. That eventually led me to MSU, and I am thankful it did.

Even without my enrollment in the Honors program, I do feel that I have been provided with opportunities to become a better global citizen; however, the Honors program has been able to promote and enrich these experiences further than what I believe is the "college norm." It has encouraged me to think more actively about sensitivity to cultural differences, as well as recognize personal biases and stereotypes that I may have never realized otherwise.

My most foundational experience was [Sensitivity to Disability \(REHB 110W\)](#), where we discussed the prejudices that often exist around various disabilities. I grew up with a grandfather that was a quadriplegic and a grandmother that was paraplegic, so I felt going into this class that I already was a seasoned "global citizen" when it came to disabilities. However, I was able to become much more self-aware and really examine my internalized perspective on all disabilities, not just those with which I had been previously acquainted. To apply global citizenship to my business major, I also took an introductory [international business course \(IBUS 380\)](#). This course increased my awareness of distinct cultural differences that can exist within a business transaction, and I was able to not only gain knowledge of diverse cultural business practices, but also how to understand and overcome these barriers.

My primary real-world global citizenship experience is my current internship at [Feeding our Communities Partners \(FOCP\)](#). The nonprofit sector obviously requires me to have a huge understanding of different life experiences and cultures, as many of the individuals being served do not share my same identity. This internship has allowed me to put my current knowledge to work in the real-world, and I have already noticed a lot of growth in my awareness of cultural interactions within this internship. I am more knowledgeable on economic disparities and all the factors that may affect it, and that allows me to better serve FOCP's consumer demographic. In terms of language development, I was also able to put my [Spanish-speaking abilities](#) to work within a volunteer project with Habitat for Humanity. I further discuss my internal doubts of my language abilities within the corresponding reflection, but ultimately, this experience had a profound impact on my confidence speaking Spanish in out-of-classroom scenarios.

Overall, I do feel that I am able to leave college satisfied with my growth as a global citizen. Learning about cultures different than my own has led me to many topics about which I have now become deeply passionate, such as racial justice, socioeconomic disparities, and so much more. Within the Honors program, MSU has given me the global awareness I had been desiring so strongly in high school, and that is a pursuit that will continue long after I graduate.