

MALLORY STEINMETZ

MSU Honors Student

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HELLO, A BIT ABOUT ME:

Hello! Welcome to my Honors Portfolio. My name is Mallory Steinmetz and I am an honors student here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I am a nursing major and plan to graduate in the spring of 2023.

Personal Mission Statement: As an honors student I hope to better myself not only academically, but as a functioning member of society. I will strive to put forth my best effort in order to gain more knowledge about both healthcare and nursing in order to further prepare for my future career while helping others do the same.

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"The mission of the Honors Program at Minnesota State Mankato is to encourage 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."

MY WHY: I joined the Honors Program here at MSU, Mankato in order to challenge myself academically and create connections with other like-minded individuals while preparing myself for a future career in nursing.

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Why Honors Essay

My time in the Honors Program could be described as positive, fun, and full of personal development and reflection. Being a part of the Honors Program has helped me to easily connect with other students, faculty, and staff who I would have otherwise not known, allowing me to create great relationships with my peers. In addition, the Honors Program has helped me to grow as an individual by guiding me through reflection and pushing me to do activities outside of my comfort zone, such as research. Overall, the Honors Program has helped to make my time here at Minnesota State University, Mankato even more positive by guiding both personal and professional development.

Although the Honors Program here is different than a traditional program the goals are still similar: student development and future success. Being able to surround myself with other like-minded individuals helps foster growth in the areas of leadership, global citizenship, and research. This sense of community that was created pushed me to set high standards and goals to reach throughout my four years here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Without my involvement in the Honors Program, I would not have gained the skill of reflection. I tend to be very busy and enjoy being surrounded by people, hence why reflection is hard for me. Through this process that is required as part of the program, I have grown to enjoy taking a step back from life and reflecting on experiences I have had throughout my time at college. Although some of the projects or assignments I completed may have seen like a check box on my to-do list, I did not realize the impact they may have on me when growing my competence. These projects include the quantitative study project, article review paper, and video chatting with students from a university in Mexico for a Spanish class. A unique experience I had within the Honors Program was being a part of the Honors Student Body executive board, most notably as the president my junior and senior years. This experience allowed me to further build upon my leadership skills, work closely with the Honors Graduate Assistant as well as Leah, Ginny, and Emma, and participate in social events with my peers.

As I end my time in the Honors Program, I have come to appreciate the support I have pushing me to succeed both now and in the future, the amazing connections I have made with staff and faculty, and the progress I have made both personally and professionally. In my long list of things I was involved in during my time in college such as Student Ambassadors, Student Nurses Association, Learning Communities, and Intramural Sports, the Honors Program is sure to be added. The Honors Program has made my experience at Minnesota State University, Mankato even more positive and is something I am proud to have been a part of.



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

Leadership Synthesis Essay

Leadership has always been one area that I have felt that I have exceeded in as an individual which stems back to my position on the Student Council in 3rd grade. Since then, I have had an immense number of opportunities to grow in my leadership skills, including during my time here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Opportunities have included being on executive boards of multiple organizations, learning my leadership values through Honors 201, and growing through my peers.

One of the largest leadership development experiences I had was being on the Honors Student Body Executive Board ([Honors Student Body Leadership Positions](#)). Through this, I held the positions of first-year class representative, secretary, and then president for two years. Some of the main skills I feel I developed were delegation and building trusting relationships within the group. For example, when planning events I have learned to delegate tasks such as reserving rooms, sending emails, and creating flyers to promote the event. I use my strengths discovered through the StrengthsFinder assessment such as empathy and hard work to strengthen the leadership within the executive board ([HONR201](#)). In addition, during my junior year the executive board was trusting in one another enough to tell each other about the highs and lows of our days, what we had been struggling with in school, and admitting when we may have needed help with planning events or finding motivation to get our homework completed. As the years went on, I was better able to understand group dynamics and how to best approach the groups based on their personalities and values.

A challenge I had as a leader was engaging both the executive team and other students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most activities had to move online to a Zoom format, causing it to be harder to get people to attend events, remain engaged, and have fun. As a leader, I tried to do my best to facilitate events to help my peers get to know one another better and make the best out of a tough time. This held true with another large part of my college experience – being a Learning Community Coordinator ([HONR455 Practicum](#)). I attempted to cater to my student's needs in this position by offering some in-person study session options as they had requested with the little turnout, feeling as though I had failed as a leader. Later on, I realized that although I was disappointed in myself, my students were burnt out from online classes and just needed support, whether academic or emotional. I led by example, which is my main leadership philosophy. My students followed and during the 2021-2022 school year the students were happy to see me in-person, were excited to make new connections with their peers, and ensured they were communicating their needs to me. I tried to do the same by improving my communication with them and fulfilling all roles they could view me in such as a student, mentor, and teacher ([LCC Experience](#)).

In terms of where I will go from here in my leadership journey, I do not have specific plans, although I have goals for myself. I will finish my senior year holding multiple executive board positions for different recognized student organizations on campus. Upon graduation, I hope to find a position as a nurse within the hospital setting and eventually be a part of a nursing council or organization to promote positive change within the industry and continue developing as a leader. The leadership positions I held throughout my college career helped teach me how to communicate with others, delegate tasks when needed, stay organized, and act as a role model to other students. With these leadership experiences, I feel I will be a better nurse and employee due to my personal growth.



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"Upon graduation, honors students will have demonstrated an increased self-awareness of their own and other cultures, knowledge and understanding of cultural perspectives, and awareness of the connections between language and culture in communication."

Global Citizenship Synthesis Essay

Prior to attending college, I felt as though I was competent in my Spanish studies and was learning a higher level of Spanish than many of my peers, but my cultural knowledge and understanding of diversity was low. I grew up in a suburb outside of Milwaukee, WI with very few individuals that were not of the white race. Coming to college caused a bit of a culture shock for me as I was not used to being surrounded by so many different cultures, races, and ethnicities. Although this was a bit uncomfortable and unfamiliar for me, it was a good experience and allowed the opportunity for me to grow in the global citizenship competency through my involvement in the Honors Program.

Since I was younger, I have always been interested in understanding other cultures and learned the Spanish language since 2nd grade. This mentality continued throughout college as I took a couple of Spanish courses: SPAN102 and SPAN201. One of my notable projects in Spanish 102 included my final project in which I researched the culture of Costa Rica and created a presentation entirely in Spanish to educate others on what I had discovered about the country ([Spanish Language Learning](#)). This project was completed my freshman year of college and helped to build my knowledge and understanding of other cultures. In addition, I was able to compare their culture to the culture in the United States. Another way I started to learn about culture and develop a better understanding of global citizenship was through Honors 201 as we watched a TED Talk regarding culture and I also created an identity chart to understand who I am as a person ([HONR201](#)). During my sophomore year of college, I took Spanish 201 and the most notable experience was having the opportunity to video chat with students at a college in Mexico ([Spanish Language Learning](#)). Most of the students I talked to said they also have learned English since they were young which helps to bridge that gap in culture. There are major differences in culture that were discussed such as Cinco de Mayo being an Americanized holiday, or the tacos that we think of here in the United States being much different than those from Mexico.

While taking Spanish courses, I was grateful to have been a part of Language Partners ([Language Partners Program](#)). Through this program I was able to connect with international students, both helping them improve their English as well as learn about their culture and past experiences. The student who I connected with most closely was Woosuk, who was an international student from South Korea. When talking with him, I tried to keep an open mind and avoided having bias. He talked about the way relationships are perceived in his home country, which is very different from the United States. Relationships here, whether with friends, family, or significant others are very open and it is acceptable to do things such as kissing or hugging in public. I thought that this was fascinating and it made me further think about the culture within American society. Another opportunity I had was to be on the executive board for Spanish Club ([Spanish Language Learning](#)). Through this organization, I was able to connect with other students who are passionate about learning Spanish culture. I had the opportunity to speak with Jose, who was a Native Spanish speaker. He was so understanding of me and my learning process and provided me with great feedback for improvement.

Although my experiences related to my Spanish courses provided me with an increased knowledge of the language and culture in Spanish-speaking countries, I also learned a lot from my real-world experiences as both a Learning Community Coordinator ([HONR455 Practicum](#)) and as a Clinical Assistant at Mankato Clinic ([Mankato Clinic](#)). At Mankato Clinic, I learned to frequently interact with patients needing interpreters to increase the quality of communication between the patient and the provider. It is vital that an interpreter is used whenever possible as it ensures that information is not being interpreted incorrectly due to the language barrier. In addition, I was able to learn about cultural beliefs and rituals as I prepared patients for radiologic exams. Some women were not able to take off their headdress or would ask to keep on their long pants due to cultural or religious reasons. As a LCC I was exposed to several different cultures through my students ([HONR455 Practicum](#)). In addition, with so many international students at MSU, Mankato I was able to compare the traditions of those students to those from Pewaukee, WI where I am from. I hosted an event with my students where I held multiple activities to increase awareness of diversity and explore each individuals' differences. This was beneficial to all of us as we were able to learn more about each other as well as each other's traditions and norms.

In my future career as a nurse, I hope to perform culturally competent care and be aware of the cultures of the patients for whom I am caring. In addition, I hope to be able to use my knowledge of the Spanish language with Spanish-speaking patients to provide quality care. Lastly, I will advocate for an interpreter to be provided for these patients outside of their family to accurately provide information and exclude possible bias. As a nurse, it is important to provide quality care for all patients and advocate for their needs, while being understanding of their differing values and beliefs. My experiences in the Honors Program have helped to shape my cultural awareness and build upon the global citizenship competency.

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"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."

Research Synthesis Essay

Although I originally thought the research competency would be the most boring and difficult to achieve, it has proved to challenge me in a positive way. When I came to college, I saw many flyers and posts about undergraduate students completing research projects and although I found it interesting, I would have never thought that would be a possibility for me. I am so glad Ginny Walters, the former Honors Associate Director, pushed me out of my comfort zone and encouraged me to find a research team.

Throughout both high school and college, I had several opportunities to complete research projects and papers. I gained greater knowledge on research terminology, concepts, and evaluating sources for credibility during the past few years. For example, through the library activity in Honors 201 I learned the factors that ensure credibility of sources. For example, the criteria include if they are peer-reviewed, their relevance to the topic, when they were written, and if the authors are trusted in their field ([HONR201](#)). After learning about evaluating sources, I was better prepared for completing future papers and projects.

During my freshman year of college in GEOG103 I was able to put this knowledge to use as I was tasked with an assignment where I needed to find five articles from credible sources to review ([Article Review Project](#)). This assignment was geared towards learning more about the relationship between geography and nursing while also evaluating articles for credibility. During the summer of 2020, I challenged myself by taking an Honors 400 level seminar course regarding the Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas. This was one of the most difficult courses I have taken in college as it was both rigorous and on a topic I have little interest in. None the less, I took this course and our final project allowed us some freedom by choosing a topic related to our career field while researching to learn more about the topics discussed in the course. I used the research skills I had previously developed to write a research paper on medicinal practices in the ancient Aztec, Maya, and Inca populations ([Ancient Medicinal Practices Project](#)). This project proved to challenge me in a positive manner as I found the information I learned to be extremely fascinating, despite typically having a lack of interest in the overall topic and having to learn how to write using the Chicago format - something I had not done in the past. During my pathophysiology class sophomore year, we were given a group project where we were tasked with researching a specific disease to create both a paper as well as a diagram to show important information an individual should know ([Alzheimer's Disease Group Project](#)). The information included items such as risk factors, signs and symptoms of the disease, and how the disease process occurs within our bodies. At the time it was difficult to connect all of these pieces together, but using accurate and relevant information found within articles was helpful and helped to build my skills in using information to create new products, such as the diagram.

During my junior year of college, I was a part of a group project in which we had to create a theoretical quantitative research project to close a gap in research. For this project, I used my previous knowledge to find scholarly, peer-reviewed articles to gain more information and determine our research topic. My group and I chose to examine "the relationship between alcohol consumption among nursing students and their educational performance" ([Quantitative Project](#)).

Aside from learning and understanding the importance of using credible sources, this project also helped me understand terms such as quantitative data, independent and dependent variables, correlation, null hypothesis, standard deviation, and sample ([Link to Quantitative Project](#)). Since then, I have had the privilege to work alongside Dr. Tammy Neiman and Dr. Maya Bastian on a research project that looks at LGBTQ+ older adults views on aging and end of life care. Through this I have learned about creating an outline, defining criteria for eligibility of participants, how to find participants, and conduct surveys and interviews to collect data. We then compiled all the research information together to understand our findings and overall results ([Conducting Research with Professors](#)). Next steps include presenting our findings at the Midwest Nursing Research Conference.

The most beneficial experience for me was being pushed to complete a research project with professors, although it was challenging at the beginning. Each of these projects have helped me to better understand research terminology, evaluating sources for credibility, and ultimately the research process. I hope to take the concepts with me in my future as a nurse to ensure I follow evidence-based practice.