

Delaney Conrad

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WELCOME

Thank you for viewing my portfolio!

My name is Delaney Conrad. I am a student at MSU studying cognitive science with a focus in computer science. I have an interest in data science and machine learning. I hope you are able to learn more about me and my experience with the honors program at Minnesota State University from my site. Enjoy!

My Purpose

As I continue on my journey, I am committed to constantly growing and having new experiences. I believe that being present in each moment allows me to fully learn, enjoy, and share. Through all that I do, I hope to bring this energy and presence to others and to the work that I do. I am dedicated to constantly learning and evolving, and I strive to bring this growth mindset everywhere I go.

Competencies

Throughout the Honor's Program



LEADERSHIP

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

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RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, and CREATIVE ACTIVITY

"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."

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INTERCULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

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

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Why Honor's?

a reflection on my experience with the Honor's Program each year

HONR 475:
3rd Year
Spring 2023

I wrote this reflection at the beginning of my final semester of undergrad. Though my life was at a stage of many unknowns in terms of going to grad school, getting a job, or moving, my sense of "Why Honors" had solidified immensely.

[Read My 475 Reflection](#)

HONR 375:
2nd Year
Fall 2021

This reflection from my sophomore year gains new insight and understanding of where I want to go. I have had many more experiences and grown significantly as a person.

[Read My 375 Reflection](#)

HONR 201:
1st Year
Fall 2020

My experiences with the Honors Program began my first semester of college when I took HONR 201. Though I thought I knew a lot at the time, I look back and laugh at how much I have grown. Many of my values have changed due to experiences that caused me to grow significantly and reevaluate what I care about. Unfortunately, when I took 201, I did not have to write a "Why Honors" essay. But, I did find this "Values" worksheet from my time in the class. I have updated it with my current value rankings. Feel free to see how I have changed.

[Read My 201 Values](#)



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ABOUT ME

Who I Am

I grew up in a small town in Iowa and decided to attend college in Minnesota, where I am currently studying cognitive science with a focus on computer science. I am also a member of the golf team, handball club, and intramural volleyball at my university. In addition to my studies and athletics, I have been actively held leadership roles on the Honor's Executive Board, Cognitive Science club, and Maverick Software Consulting internship. I enjoy meeting new people and staying active, and I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to learn, grow, and give back through my various activities. I am excited to see what the future holds as I continue my studies and explore new opportunities.

Family, athletics, and education are three of the most important parts of my life. Click below to read more.

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Leadership

During my time at MNSU, I have stepped into many leadership roles, and it has become my favorite competency. Through my experiences as a member of the honors executive board, the cognitive science club, a Maverick Software engineering internship, and the golf team, I have had the opportunity to develop and apply various leadership skills.

Though I am naturally inclined towards leadership, taking the [Gallup Strengths Finder](#) quiz during my freshman year helped me understand my leadership strengths better. The quiz revealed that my strongest leadership traits are competition, achiever, individualization, learner, and analytical. These traits have strengthened my leadership roles as well as my personal and professional development. Still, I am continually working to improve upon my strengths and develop new ones to become an even more effective leader.

In addition to understanding my leadership strengths, the three main concepts that I have developed and applied through my experiences are communication, time management, and adaptability. My experience on the [honors executive board](#) was a great example of developing my communication skills. At first, I had trouble communicating with faculty members and felt like my opinions were not valuable enough to share. But, through regular interaction with the program, I came to realize how much the faculty valued our feedback, which helped me gain more confidence.

This experience helped me in my role as president of the [cognitive science club](#), where I have had to navigate a variety of personalities and communication styles within the group and adapt my approach accordingly. In addition, doing all of these activities while completing classes definitely challenged my ability to manage time.

Working at [Maverick Software Consulting](#) has taught me the value of accessing information and communicating with others quickly and effectively. Furthermore, while playing [golf](#), I have had to manage my time effectively in order to balance the demands of practice, competition, and classes. Finally, as a member of all of these activities, I have observed the different leadership styles of teammates and coaches and have had to adapt my own approach to being an effective leader. By being a member of these various teams, I have learned to be flexible with different groups of people and their expectations of me.

From all these experiences, I have developed my personal theory of leadership. I believe that an effective leader should strive to create a productive, positive, and fun environment. They should be flexible and ready to adapt to the style and needs of their team. There are many leadership qualities that can contribute to a successful leader, but they should be able to effectively communicate, confidently collaborate, and remain organized. A good leader is willing to work hard and lead by example, so they can empower their own team members. Ultimately, a leader has the ability to bring a team together and motivate them to achieve their best!

Overall, my time at MNSU has been instrumental in growing my leadership skills. I am grateful for all the opportunities that challenged me to work on my skills, and I am ready to put them into practice in the future. I will take these experiences with me into my future endeavors, whether it be a job or further schooling. Wherever I go, I can now confidently envision myself leading teams and making a positive impact on those around me. I am excited to continue my growth as a leader and an individual.



Strength Finder and Past Experiences

In the Introduction to Honors course, I wrote an essay to reflect on my past leadership experiences and discussions in class. In the class, I learned how different characteristics can be more effective for different types of leadership, and that all kinds of leaders are necessary. Click below to read and learn more!

[Read My Reflection](#)



Honor's Executive Board

Each year I have been at MNSU, I have served on the Honor's Executive Board. This experience has given me a better understanding and appreciation for the Honor's Program. I am extremely grateful for the fellow board members and advisors who have made this such a fun position. Read my reflection to learn more.

[Read My Reflection](#)



Golf Team

Golf has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Though I originally was unsure if I wanted to continue playing in college, it is one of the foundational parts of my college experience. I am beyond grateful for all of the people I have met, places I have traveled, and things I have learned about myself from playing this game. Read my reflection to learn more!

[Read My Reflection](#)



Cognitive Science Club

The cognitive science club has allowed me to serve a leadership role in a group of people with no guidance. This role taught me the difficulties of leading and bringing people together. Read my reflection to learn more about my experience creating and being a member of the cognitive science club.

[Read My Reflection](#)



Maverick Software Consulting Internship

Maverick Consulting has been a constant for the majority of my college experience. I have learned much more about leadership and hierarchies in the corporate world, and I am happy I can enter the workforce with this insight. Read my reflection to hear more about the leadership skills I gained from this experience.

[Read My Reflection](#)

Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activity

Reflecting on my experiences as an honors student, I am proud to say that I have grown significantly as a researcher, student, and person. Throughout college, I have participated in several experiences that allowed me to further develop my skills in research. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have taken part in and the growth that has resulted from them.

One of my first exposures to research was in my [Research Methods and Design](#) course. Through this course, I learned more about the different steps and terminology involved in conducting research. Some of this involved developing a research question, reviewing the literature, and collecting and analyzing data. This course helped me to understand the fundamentals of research, and provided me with a strong foundation for my future projects. However, I still did not think of myself as a researcher nor was I confident to conduct my own research.

Later, I met Dr. Rushit Dave, a new and eager professor who had lots of ideas for research. At the same time, I was preparing to work on my [senior thesis](#), so it seemed like the perfect opportunity to expand my research abilities. With his help, I began my project focused on detecting deepfakes using machine learning. The project was challenging, as it required me to understand complex technical concepts and analyze data on various deepfake detection methods. However, the experience taught me the importance of persistence and problem-solving skills, and I am thankful for the chance to contribute to the field of deepfake detection.

A cherry on top of all of my hard work was presenting my work at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research (NCUR) and the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS). Both of these were rewarding experiences, as I was able to share what I had learned and learn from others. It was awesome to teach others more and hear their admiration for my work. Through these presentations, I demonstrated my growth as a researcher and student. I am proud of stepping outside of my comfort zone by doing something I would not have thought possible just a year prior.

Overall, my experiences through college have greatly developed my research abilities, and I now have the skills and knowledge to continue my development in the future. As I move forward, I am excited to continue building on this foundation and explore new opportunities that come my way. The lessons and hard work I learned through research will stay with me as I consider grad school or future career options!



Research Methods and Design Course

In my sophomore year at MSU, I took PSYC 211W: Research Methods and Design. This course helped me develop my research abilities and learn more about the process. I feel excited and ready to conduct my own project now!

[Read My Reflection](#)



Senior Thesis: Detecting Deepfakes with Machine Learning

Through my research on detecting deepfakes with machine learning, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of how these techniques can be used to identify fake videos and other media. I was also able to apply what I learned to develop my own machine learning models and analyze data to detect deepfakes. This research project was both challenging and rewarding, and it helped me to grow as a researcher and develop new skills in data analysis and machine learning. Overall, I am proud of the work I did and the impact it had on my understanding of this important topic. I know it will set me up for success in my future career.

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Intercultural Engagement

Throughout college, I have had several experiences that have allowed me to better understand and interact with other cultures, while considering my own place in the world. Each of my experiences has contributed to my growth in intercultural engagement. These experiences have begun to open my eyes to the experiences of others and the wide amount of possibilities out there. I am excited to continue learning and experiencing other cultures while gaining a better understanding of other people and myself.

I grew up in a small town of about 1000 people in Iowa, so I did not have many opportunities to interact with people from diverse backgrounds. This provided me with limited experience in other cultures and a small view of the world. However, it also made me aware that there is much to learn and experience, and there are so many different, diverse people to meet. Because of this, I approach every person with an open mind. I know everyone comes from different backgrounds, leading to unique ways of thinking. While our cultural differences and experiences may be significant, I also recognize that we share many common traits as human beings.

These ideas were highlighted in my [special education and disabilities course](#). Throughout the course, I learned more about the unique lives of people with disabilities and the support system of people that surrounds them. Still, it seemed a recurring theme that people just wanted to be treated as people and not looked at differently due to their disabilities. Through this experience, I learned the importance of considering individuals' unique experiences and perspectives. I also learned about the ways in which different cultural beliefs and practices impact how students learn and interact with their environment. This was also brought up in one of the [Diversity Institute](#) sessions I attended "Places as Spaces." This session brought up the importance of space being inclusive and belonging to the people that use it. Both of these showed me the importance of cultural competence everywhere, not just in intercultural settings.

My [trip to Cabo San Lucas](#) provided me with an opportunity to experience a different culture firsthand. Though I stayed at a resort, I was able to interact with locals and observe the ways in which the tourism industry impacted the local community, both positively and negatively. This experience showed a stark comparison of poverty to tourism and was eye-opening to me. This is related to the session "Equity 2030: Academic Equity and Culturally Responsive Teaching" I attended. Though it focused on teaching, the idea of equity is important for all. Being able to not only be equal but be equitable among individuals is so important. It is so necessary to give back where you can.

Additionally, I attended two more Maverick Diversity Institute sessions which were a Handling Microaggressions panel and a presentation about Reflecting on Social Identities and Intersectionality. These sessions taught me the importance of acknowledging and valuing diverse perspectives and gave me more insight into the lives of others. I am grateful I was able to attend and learn more about the experiences others go through and how these relate to me. All of the sessions helped to provide me with a strong foundation in intercultural engagement that I know future experiences will continue to build on.

Through all of my experiences, I have developed a deeper understanding of the importance of intercultural engagement and cultural competency. I have learned to recognize and address my own biases and assumptions, and to approach new experiences with an open mind and a willingness to learn. I have also learned about the ways in which cultural beliefs and practices impact individuals' experiences and how to adapt my behavior to best support and respect others. I know these lessons have made me a more aware and compassionate individual, and they will continue to grow in other areas of my life. I am excited to utilize what I have learned so far and continue becoming a more culturally competent individual.



Human Services and Disabilities Course

During my sophomore year at MSU, I took SPED 108W: Human Services and Disabilities, which introduced me to a culture that I did not have much exposure to and expanded my understanding of their experiences. The discussions I had in this class taught me about the diverse experiences and perspectives of individuals with disabilities, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have learned from them. I believe that engaging with diverse cultures is crucial for growth, and I am committed to continuing to learn and be involved in different cultures throughout my life. [Click the button to learn more!](#)

[Read My Reflection](#)



Trip to Cabo

During my final semester of school, I traveled outside of the country for the first time to vacation in Cabo with my boyfriend and his family. While there, I was struck by the beautiful scenery but also by the stark contrast between the luxurious resort we stayed in and the poverty-stricken town just outside its gates. This experience prompted me to reflect on my own privilege and the realities of economic inequality around the world. I hope to continue developing their intercultural competency by seeking out opportunities to connect with local communities and gain insight into their ways of life. [Please click to read more!](#)

[Read My Reflection](#)



Maverick Diversity Institute

I took part in four thought-provoking sessions offered by The Maverick Diversity Institute. These experiences helped me to increase my knowledge and understanding of inclusivity, accessibility, and equity in both my professional and educational settings. Through my participation in these programs, I gained a deeper appreciation for the value of diversity and inclusion and how to create more welcoming and fair environments. The intercultural engagement I experienced at The Maverick Diversity Institute had a significant impact on me, and I am grateful for the chance to have been involved in and learn from these programs. [Click to read further!](#)

[Read My Reflection](#)