

# THE HONORS BEACON

Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato



LEADERSHIP • RESEARCH • GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Issue XII, Winter 2017



## Forging a Path to Learning

by Sophie Hoiseth, '21 (Social Studies Education; Doha, Qatar)

My high school experience was a bit different from that of the average Minnesota State University, Mankato student. I attended an American school in Doha, Qatar. These American schools exist all over the globe and are created to support families living overseas who want to give their children an American education. For the last 26 years, my parents have been teaching at schools like this, and because of that, I have lived in Poland, Peru, and most recently Qatar. I also had the incredible opportunity to travel—a lot. At just 18 years old, I have been to more than 30 countries. Because of my travels, I have become extremely passionate about global human rights. I have exercised this passion over the last three years at my high school within a club called Girl Up Qatar.

Girl Up is an organization that was started by the United Nations Foundation and is based out of Washington D.C. The organization galvanizes adolescent

girls across the globe to fundraise and advocate for projects which benefit girls' education. Girl Up is a high-profile organization with celebrity endorsements and an annual leadership summit. In 2013, my sophomore year of high school, an upperclassman at my school started our very own chapter of Girl Up in Doha, Qatar. I joined my high school's branch of Girl Up, eager to learn about education, feminism, and how limited access to education for girls is a huge problem globally. In the club, we would fundraise, advocate, and send our money to the UN where we hoped something good was happening with it.

Throughout my time at Girl Up Qatar I had incredible opportunities to do some amazing things. The most inspiring opportunity was the chance to connect with a girl named Esther, a 13-year-old orphan in rural Kenya who was being taken care of by her grandmother. Her story

was brought to us by a security guard at our school. He was wondering if Girl Up Qatar would be willing to sponsor Esther in order for her to get an education at a private school. Hearing about this girl who, for no apparent reason, didn't have the same educational opportunities as I had motivated me to help. I was determined to do something for this child. How could I say no? Technically our club should not have sponsored Esther. Our money was supposed to go to the United Nations Foundation who then would do something with it. But there was no way to know where that money would end up or whom it would help.

The club unanimously agreed to this new assignment, and for the last three years we have been able to ensure a private school education for Esther.

We will follow through until she graduates. Being able to help Esther taught me

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The Honors Beacon newsletter was awarded 1st place in the student print category of the National Collegiate Honors Council's newsletter contest for the 2014-2015 academic year.



## The Winter 2017 Beacon Team

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## A Word from Honors Staff

by Ginny Walters, Assistant Director of the Honors Program

The theme of this newsletter, chosen by The Honors Beacon student staff, is growth. We have witnessed various forms of growth

within the program since 2009. The program has grown from XX students in 2009 to a current enrollment of approximately 200 students. Honors students have expanded their reach into the greater Mankato community through service experiences. Leadership opportunities within our program have blossomed, most recently including our Equity Ambassadors, a group of students of color committed to increasing the diversity within our program. Innovative research projects have emerged. Opportunities to engage with people from various cultures and regions of the world have materialized. However,

the most inspiring, motivating, and exciting form of growth that Honors Program staff have the privilege of witnessing is the growth that occurs within our students. We have the pleasure of watching students grow from nervous freshmen into confident graduates, ready to embrace their next step in life. We observe their development as leaders, researchers, global citizens, scholars, and professionals. Being a part of and bearing witness to this growth is a privilege that none of the honors staff take lightly. I hope that within this newsletter you find evidence of our program's growth and the impact that growth has on the university and greater Mankato community; but, I also hope that you see indication of our students' development as adults. After all, they are the reason we come to work every day and they are the reason you hold this newsletter in your hands.



## Editor's Note

by Sara Baranczyk, '19 (Communication Arts and Literature Education & Physics Education; Saint Paul, Minn.)

Welcome to the twelfth issue of the Honors Beacon newsletter! It has been an honor to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of

this amazing newsletter for the past two years, and I am so excited to see how it's grown. Next semester, Josie Braaten (Creative Writing, '19) will take over the position. It has been such a pleasure to work with her, and I wish her all the best in the future. Congratulations Josie!

This issue focuses on the theme of growth. In celebration of Minnesota State University, Mankato's sesquicentennial, the articles in this issue take a look at where we've been as individuals, a program, a

university, and a community, and how our experiences have helped shape us and will continue to shape us in the future.

This issue's cover story celebrates the work of one of the Honors Program's first year students who has made large strides toward global equal educational opportunity for women. This issue also features the reflections of an international student, a first year honors student, and an honors senior, all of whom have different perspectives on growth.

I would like to thank the writers for their outstanding work and their dedication to this publication. Without their passionate involvement, the Beacon would not be what it is today.

Happy reading!

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## From Mentorship to Friendship Across Disciplines

by Katelynn Malecha, '18 (Exercise Science & Pre-OT; Lonsdale, Minn.)

College is where you meet some of the best friends of your life. Most students do not realize that some

of those friends will be professors and mentors. Kurtis Malecha (Chemistry, '13) and Dr. Christopher Corley's relationship started as an honors student in the piloted program and director. They have remained in contact with each other nearly four years later after Malecha graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato.

After graduation, Malecha went into a PhD program in Atmospheric Chemistry at the University of California, Irvine planning to graduate by June 2018. He has travelled to Washington D.C., Portland, Oregon, and recently Kuopio, Finland at the University of Eastern Finland all during and for his PhD work. Malecha was awarded the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, which has only about a 7% approval rating.

Dr. Corley is a history professor and the former director of the Honors Program. He currently serves as Honors faculty in addition to teaching history courses. During his time as the director of the Honors Program, Dr. Corley revised the framework of the program to have electronic portfolios and competencies. Throughout his time, he built relationships with students whom he challenged and

who challenged him.

In 2009, 12 brave students decided to join the piloted Honors Program. Malecha was one of them. He went to Dr. Corley after he received a D- on his very first college exam! This was something that made Malecha consider leaving college. Dr. Corley convinced Malecha to stay and showed him some of the available campus resources. Malecha ended up receiving an A in the course. What began as a mentor relationship turned into a colleague relationship, and the two remain in contact today. Whenever Malecha is back in Minnesota, he tries to meet with Dr. Corley for coffee or lunch. Malecha says, "it's nice to have a faculty member that is outside my field at Minnesota State that I can regularly chat with!" Dr. Corley has enjoyed watching Malecha grow from the student in his office to a confident leader attending graduate school.

The Honors Program has changed since Malecha was a student. "Of course it's changed a lot since then, but it was pretty magical to be part of something in its early stages and now blossom into something truly remarkable" Malecha said. The competencies were and still are leadership, global citizenship and research. During his time in the program, Malecha and fellow honors student Cameron Hovey (Chemistry, '13) created the Honors Student Council. "Honors helped me by challenging me to think differently and to push as far as possible," Malecha said. The program grew with students like Malecha making college an experience—one that is memorable and allowing students to reflect upon multiple events rather than simply attending class after class.

Dr. Corley appreciates Honors for how it challenges students' way of thinking and how they learn from experiences, rather than just in the classroom.

The Honors Program has helped Malecha tackle the challenge of attending graduate school, and he is now entering the "real world." He is currently applying for careers in the California monitoring and regulatory agencies and updating his eFolio to be better suited for a career and an extension of his LinkedIn and ResearchGate networks. He has grown a lot throughout his PhD work. Instead of being directly mentored, he is working on projects where he only answers to himself. He takes the themes of honors: leadership, global citizenship, and research and applies them to a variety of situations. He conducted research in Finland, where daily life is very different from California culture. He calls this his "switching hats," depending with whom he's speaking and where he is. His speaking skills have also improved as the portfolio defense was not easy, but it helped him when he had his PhD oral advancement exams.

Malecha suggests to "take opportunities that may not seem worth it now, but they might pay off in the future. It made all the difference in my PhD program, and I learned more about the world than I ever would if I hadn't been in the program. Challenge yourself everyday – after all college costs money – so get your money's worth!" He also advises students to take courses that they would not typically enroll in, utilize professor's office hours, and create lasting experiences and relationships that they will reflect upon as some of the fondest memories. 



*Make a difference in the lives of those preparing to make a difference.*

*Because they have the opportunity to push themselves to do more here at Minnesota State Mankato, students in the Honors Program will be ready to push for success in the real world as well.*

*Supporting the Honors Program has an impact on students who will become widely recognized, prominent, distinguished leaders, researchers and global citizens who are able to bring about change in the world, no matter what their chosen discipline may be.*

*Giving to the Honors Program is easy; simply visit [mnsu.edu/giving](https://mnsu.edu/giving) and designate your gift to the Honors Program.*



something.

Instead of saying “we raised \$1,000 for girls’ education” our club was able to say “look, look at this girl whose life is different because we did something” and that was so powerful.

The next year I was able to act as president of Girl Up Qatar. At the same time, I met an incredible individual by the name of Peter Dalglish. Mr. Dalglish was in Doha to speak at our regional Model United Nations conference and agreed to come to our school as well. He has spent most of his career as a humanitarian working with various organizations and was the Senior Urban Advisor for the World Health Organization to help coordinate global efforts in stopping the Ebola crisis. When Dalglish came and spoke to our club, I knew that what my high school club was doing was something I was going to do for the rest of my life. He put us in contact with an incredible organization based out of Nepal called Himalayan Volontourism. This company helps schools, organizations, and individuals go on service learning trips to various communities in Nepal and is “dedicated to the socio-economic development of rural Nepal through the spirit of volunteerism.” The next fall, Girl Up Qatar was going on its first ever service learning trip to Bandipur, Nepal. For just one brief week, 17 students from my school spent time at a rural local school, each bearing 30 pounds of supplies. During that week, we interacted with students in four concrete classrooms which contained

wobbly benches and a chalkboard. We painted, jumped rope, said our ABCs, played soccer, wrote our names, and learned all about life at their school.

I am the first to admit that one week at a poor school with children who live in poverty did not actually help anyone. Our service trip didn’t change any lives in Bandipur. I want to make that clear. I do not want anyone to get the impression that

if you go to an under-developed country and take pictures with poor children and recite the alphabet a couple times that you are somehow a better person. But this trip showed the students on the trip, including myself, how lucky we are to have a school with running water, access to laptops, individual desks, extremely qualified teachers and more resources than imaginable. At my school and many schools around the world we take our education for granted.

The school year after our trip to Bandipur, Girl Up Qatar paid for the rural school we visited to have running water, for the salary of another day care teacher so students don’t have to watch their younger siblings while attending school, and for a lunch program so no student had to go to school hungry. We tried to actually do something meaningful.

That money technically should have gone to the UN. That’s where it was supposed to go under our name and club purpose, but we chose to send our money elsewhere. We saw greater value in sending money to a place where we have a connection. Where one community could help another community instead of sending money to some huge organization where our money *might* have helped a girl or *might* have paid a hefty salary for some UN official. The time and energy we dedicated to this cause made a tangible difference to people we knew and interacted with. Making connections and doing service out of the want to help an individual or a community is far more ef-

fective than just raising money and sending it off somewhere.

Girl Up Qatar is still doing amazing things in Doha. I have now graduated from high school, and I want to keep doing humanitarian work for the rest of my life. I have decided to create my own non-profit called For Girls’ Education (ForGE). This non-profit, like Girl Up, focuses on educating girls on a global scale through fundraising and advocacy. It currently takes the shape of a Recognized Student Organization (RSO) here at Minnesota State, and I hope it will grow into an official non-profit in the state of Minnesota. I am so excited to connect the Mankato community with the opportunity to change lives and provide an education to someone somewhere across the globe. We focus on sending our money to grassroots efforts in order to create direct, on-the-ground change across the globe based on connections that we create. Our organization is not creating these solutions but is simply funding them—one person or school at a time—and getting resources to where they need to be.

Our first goal is to raise money for a young woman in Nepal to go to nursing school. The club has met only a few times this semester, but it has already found a home with a great group of students who are eager to make a difference. At each meeting we discuss a topic that relates to the issue of girls’ education and then focus on how to reach the community receiving funds or on raising awareness.

I have huge plans for this non-profit and club. This is the next chapter of change that I want to help make. It has been fascinating to watch the service work I have been involved with grow and take shape into different things. All of the people I’ve talked to and the experiences I have had have created this new organization. I am so excited to see what the next four years of university here at Minnesota State will teach me and will take this organization to places I cannot even imagine.

If you are reading this and anything I have said has resonated with you then please contact me. Let’s collaborate on ways to get resources directly to the people who need it. I am eager to work with you. 

# Growth Through Fear: A Reflection on Studying Abroad

by John Shrestha, '21 (Civil Engineering; Kathmandu, Nepal)



Studying abroad is the perfect time to bring change and step outside your comfort zone. Studying in a foreign country where people speak a different language and knowing no one beforehand is terrifying. I'm sure I'm not the only one who has felt this way. How would you feel if you woke up in a different bed and saw yourself in a strange land with people speaking a different language? That's how I felt in my first week in the United States. Everything was new for me. Every day, I woke up and watched cars passing from my apartment window. This was part of my daily routine for about a week.

With the struggle of juggling student life and adjusting to the culture, I have survived my first three months, but there are still more to go. The ways people do things and the ways they are different from me made things very difficult.

Above all, difficulty in communication was the main problem I faced. Whenever I would hear someone speaking Nepali, my ear used to feel pleasant, because I was tired of hearing complex English. During classes when I didn't understand what the professor was saying in English, I always wished I could add subtitles like on YouTube. As time goes on, I am getting used to it.

I remember when I was in grade 4 or 6 we studied Robert Frost's poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." While explaining the poem, the teacher gave the example of me being that traveler who is lost in the beauty of a foreign land, like in a study abroad experience. Since that day, I've wanted to experience a new culture and see how the other half of the world thinks.

The first time I met the professor whom I had been contacting through email from Nepal was registration day. I was in hurry to register for class and he was busy giving instructions to everyone. There was no time to have a conversation. All of the students were in a hurry for registration. Finally, when he came up, I was not sure if he would still remember me, as it had already been more than a year since our last conversation. As I talked to him, I asked him if he still remembered any person who sent an email to him or not. His response was kind of confusing

to understand, but he said, "I remember yours." That was enough for me. I felt like I was living my dream.

After coming here, what I have learned is that fear hinders people from creating memories and experiences. If you don't open yourself up and experience life, what stories will you be able to tell to your grandchildren? The people you meet and the experiences you have end up staying with you for years to come. Deeply immerse yourself in the culture, and push yourself to grow and discover. I am sure that you will be surprised to see yourself at the end of the trip.

I know that it's lovely to live surrounded by people who you know deeply, but that's not a life. Life is about going on an adventure and flying like a bird before you sleep for forever, which is what Robert Frost wrote in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." As I study abroad, this poem stays in my brain as a constant reminder of why I'm here.

In closing, I want to share an excerpt from "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost, which inspired me to study abroad:

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

## Creating a Sense of Community

by Jonathan Fjeld, '16 (Creative Writing; Mendota Heights, Minn.)

The Equity Ambassadors, in its second year, continues to serve students at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The group was an initiative started by the Director of the Honors Program, Dr. Anne Dahlman, last year as a way to ensure that domestic students of color could have a voice in the Honors Program in order to make the program more equitable overall. Dahlman had noticed that, while the Honors Program was mirroring the general Minnesota State University Mankato population in terms of international students, the Honors

Program had fallen behind in terms of mirroring the number of domestic students of color enrolled in the program. Along with giving current domestic students of color in the program a stronger voice, it was Dahlman's hope that having a group like the Equity Ambassadors would help to increase the number of domestic students of color joining the program.

During its first year, there were eleven students in the pilot group from many different backgrounds and majors. Though many founding members of the Equity

Ambassadors graduated last year, the diversity of the group's students has not changed. However, the structure of the organization is changing. Honors Student Council President and Equity Ambassador Ana Leyva states that upon its inception, The Equity Ambassadors were considered to be an "Honors faculty-run advisory group." The group is now considered to be a student-run advocacy group which is open to anyone that aims to advocate for domestic students of color.

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## Student Spotlight: Delaney Rietveld

by Sarah Wall, '21 (Exercise Science; Saint Paul, Minn.)

This past summer Rietveld gained her first experience in a professional theatre setting, working as a “summer stock” actor. Over the summer she had roles in *Legally Blonde* at the Paul Bunyan Playhouse, in Rietveld’s hometown of Bemidji, Minnesota, and *The Little Mermaid* at the Highland Summer Theatre at Minnesota State.

Working in an off-campus environment taught Rietveld about professionalism. She observed the importance of holding yourself accountable. Understanding the individuality of each role helped her realize that “you cannot control the outcome of the show, but you can control how your role as an individual actor influences the performance.” Depending on the situation, she was able to set examples for others and other times she was looking toward others for instruction. Through these re-

alizations, Rietveld improved her leadership.

While performing in *Legally Blonde*, Rietveld was introduced to actors from across the Midwest. This exposure helped Rietveld to broaden her global citizenship. Acting in an environment outside of Minnesota State helped Rietveld research the different aspects of theater. This inspired her to think that her undergraduate research will be related to the business aspect of theater.

Following her professional experience as a “summer stock” actor, Rietveld offers this advice to students who are looking into diverse potential careers and research studies: “You won’t be successful with your research if you aren’t interested in the topic ... As cliché as it may sound, go into something that you love, and to give it 110%.” She also

suggests that theatre students take a wide variety of classes, as it will help diversify their abilities.

The most important take-away Rietveld had from her summer experiences was to have a tough skin. Rietveld states, “The theater industry comes with a lot of criticism. In order to be successful, you must use the criticism to grow and improve, rather than letting it discourage you.”

Rietveld’s experience as a “summer stock” actor helped her grow as a leader, global citizen, and researcher. Her involvement with *Legally Blonde* and *The Little Mermaid* also reinforced how professionalism can be applied to disciplines outside of theater. Rietveld was also able to learn about different aspects of her major, gain experience and confidence with her craft, and enjoy her summer. 

Delaney Rietveld (Theater, '19) began acting in middle school. As she continued acting through high school, her passion for theater grew, and she discovered her desire to become a professional actress. While at Minnesota State University, Mankato, Rietveld has acted in the theatre department’s productions of *Frankenstein*, *The Aeneid*, as well as, the “kiddie tour” show, *Zeusical at Olympus*. In February, Rietveld will be appearing in Minnesota State’s production of *1984*.



## Student Spotlight: Sajid Sarkar

by Sarah Aldrich, '18 (Spanish Education; Jordan, Minn.)

DENSO is a multinational automotive company with a couple of businesses in the United States. As an intern, Sajid was a process engineer who made sure that all of the machines produced parts and created consistent quality. Previously, Sajid held an internship in Minneapolis at a public corporation dealing with city infrastructure. His experience at DENSO allowed him to step into his future career for the summer and see what life will be like as an engineer.

Sajid’s advice to honors students seeking out an internship is to look earlier rather than later. He said, “Don’t be

afraid to start the search as early as your freshman year! Regardless of if you get the position or not, it is good practice for the application and interview process, which will only help you as you apply for jobs after graduation.”

An internship is also a great way to develop your honors competencies! Sajid grew especially as a leader this summer. He collaborated with various departments at DENSO, which required him to work with people who have different goals, personalities and mindsets. Sajid learned “how to respect other points of view, while also sharing [his] own opinions and ideas” of how

to make changes to better the manufacturing process. Collaboration was key in this internship, as Sajid worked with three other interns as well as engineers who had 20+ years of experience. Together, DENSO interns delegated tasks and helped each other be successful within the company.

Sajid’s highlight of this summer was gaining experience in his future field and getting to know the expectations of that career. After graduation, Sajid plans to find a career in Minnesota, where he will use his experiences as an intern in his mechanical engineering profession. 

University is a time to discover one’s passions and merge those into a career. Honors student Sajid Sarkar (Mechanical Engineering, '18) gained real life experience in his field this past summer as an intern at DENSO Manufacturing Michigan in Battle Creek, Michigan.



## Student Spotlight: Anjola Onadipe

by Sara Baranczyk, '19 (Communication Arts and Literature Education & Physics Education; Saint Paul, Minn.)

during this experience, especially about the physiology of the heart and how the heart functions. "I was blown away at how something so seemingly simple, such as how our hearts beat, takes a complex cascade of events to occur on a cellular and molecular level," Onadipe said about his experience.

During his internship, Onadipe "learn[ed] the value of being curious." His research mentor encouraged him to always ask questions in order to gain a better understanding of how things work. He said the most rewarding part of this experience was learning from the people around him. He was able to work collaboratively on a team with other students and researchers, and he "got to see how effective communication between coworkers can work well and ways that it doesn't." He said that being

autonomous was sometimes very challenging. "It took me out of my comfort zone," he continued, "but throughout the summer I learned to be more confident when given a task."

The simplest way for students to get involved in research opportunities, according to Onadipe, is by "showing a genuine interest in research. If you apply for [a research] program, they really want to see that you are eager to get experience." While research might seem like a daunting task, putting oneself out there is one of the most effective ways to get started. "If you think you might be interested in doing a summer program, definitely apply to some and see what happens." He also said that "being immersed in a huge research environment with lots of resources opens up many areas of your field that you did not know about."

Onadipe is no stranger to research. In the fall of his sophomore year he worked with Dr. David Sharlin on a research project on the thyroid hormone in the development of the brain. He continues to work with Dr. Sharlin on research. Onadipe credits the Honors Program and the Office of University Fellowships for helping him get involved with research and other opportunities like his Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. Because of this opportunity, Onadipe said he has "more knowledge about the research process [and he] will surely use some of those lab techniques and knowledge ... for [his] undergraduate research projects at Minnesota State University, Mankato." Onadipe hopes to become a medical doctor, and he feels that his research experience has greatly helped him to reach that goal. 

Anjola Onadipe (Biomedical Science, '19) spent his summer as a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow at the University of Michigan's Cardiovascular Center in the Center of Arrhythmia. He was one of twenty-five students to work in this program this summer. The research with which Onadipe was involved focused on studying irregular heartbeats on a cellular and molecular level in the hopes of finding a potential cause and treatment for these irregularities. Onadipe learned a lot

## Honorable Mentions

- The following students served as Learning Community Coordinators for the Learning Communities in the 2017-2018 academic year: Shavonne Edison, Ana Leyva, Emily Holt, Hallie Uhrich, and Alicia Utecht.
- The following students were selected to present at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in 2017: Katelynn Malecha and Sarah Aldrich. Other attendees of the conference include Hunter Herbert, Ana Leyva, Samantha Campa, Ginny Walters, and Dr. Anne Dahlman.
- The following students received emerging leadership scholarships to attend the YWCA's Women's Leadership Conference: Omele Edeh and Rachel Uwimbazai.
- The following students currently serve as Executive Officers in Recognized Student Organizations on Campus: Alysia Przybilla, Alyssa Carverm Anver Chrischilles, Anjola Onadipe, Avery Whooley, Ayoola Okuribido, Brooke Jones, Emily Schiltz, Ibelizet Dominguez, Libby Guss, Omoleso Ogunnowow, Samuel Oluwadoromi,

Sara Baranczyk, Sophie Hoiseth, Spencer Sulflow, Ugochi Nwachukwu, Victoria Camasmie, and Yuseina Brito-Lino.

- Sophie Hoiseth was selected to participate in a Public Policy & International Affairs (PPIA) Public Service Weekend at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.
- The following senior students passed their Honors Portfolio Defenses: Sarah Aldrich, Rasheed Al-Arami, Nicole Johnson, Tyler Keller, Katelynn Malecha, Muna Omar, Stephanie Peterson, Parker Scott, Jonathtan Smith, Kayla Smith, Jacob Tschann, and Jacie Ulrich.
- The following students were awarded grants from the Center for Undergraduate Research: Steven Arriaza, Aspen Curtis, Bethany Haus, Linh Hoang, Brooke Jones, Brennah McCorkell, Anjola Onadipe, Stephanie Peterson, Casey Schneider, Kellie Wong, and Erya Zuker.

Q	M	M	L	R	K	C	D	T	N	Z	M	S	J	M	A	E	B
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M	S	I	L	A	N	O	I	S	S	E	F	O	R	P	R	I	B

Answers to last issue's puzzle:  
*Domestic, Authentic, Animal, Collaborative, Accounting, Glaucoma, Fundraiser, Future, Resource, Fun*

## Clues:

1. What was the name of the 13-year-old girl from Kenya for whom Girl Up Qatar sponsored a private education?
2. Where does Kurtis Malecha say you might meet some of the best friends of your life?
3. Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening by \_\_\_\_\_ inspired John Shrestha to study abroad.
4. What topic on the honors application did the Equity Ambassadors help revise to be more equitable?
5. What did working in an off-campus environment teach Delaney Rietveld about?
6. Libby Guss's friend told her to find her "\_\_\_\_" during one of her low points freshmen year.
7. Two thousand student protestors blockaded the \_\_\_\_\_, Highway 169, and the intersection between Mankato and North Mankato to protest the Vietnam War on May 9, 1972.
8. The Honors Fall Retreat occurred for \_\_\_\_\_ year in a row.
9. Cassidy Tocco describes the Honors First Year Learning Community as a big, weird \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Madie Hoffman's tutee, Karin Nakagawa is from \_\_\_\_\_, Japan.

# Finding Passion in Uncertain Environments

by Libby Guss, '18 (Social Work & Spanish; Mankato, Minn.)

When I first started college in 2014, I was terrified of the older honors students; they had all accomplished so much and definitely had their “stuff together.” I felt like I did not belong in the program. Even now, as I’ve progressed through the program in good standing, I still sometimes hear that whisper in the back of my mind that says that I’m just not as good. I have learned, however, that this simply isn’t true. It isn’t true for anyone. Everyone has their own unique strengths and brings something important to the table. If you don’t believe me, just give it some time. Your strengths will emerge.

To me, growth means having a deeper understanding of who you are, how you fit into the world around you, and what you can do to impact it. Katelynn Malecha (Exercise Science & Pre-OT, '18) added that “every aspect of my life has some form of growth in it. I’m stronger than I have been in years.” Growth means that you have had experiences that have shaped how you see the world and what you add to it.

My freshman year was characterized by many “low” periods. I did not know what I wanted to study, I missed my high school friends, and I felt like I was just drifting between classes and my job with nothing changing. I was apathetic in most areas of my life and I closed myself off from my peers. (As it turns out, this way of thinking is not actually normal and if you find yourself relating to anything I just described, reach out to someone.) However, with the help of my friends and others, I was able to find my drive again. I’ve turned that low period into a source of strength and an experience I can draw from in my future career as a clinical social worker. Malecha went through a similar experience her freshman year. “Freshman me didn’t know how to handle college. I was stressed nearly all of the time and not managing time the best. I broke down freshman year ... [But now] I know how to ask for help, whether that be in or outside the classroom.” Building

a support system around you is a key part to finding success in college and beyond.

I am heavily involved throughout the campus and community in activities I find meaningful and these have all led me to people I know I can count on in times of need. Finding support and getting involved are both changes that did not happen overnight. My involvement in other activities was gradual and based in passion and not just out of obligation. Passion has had the biggest influence on the growth I have gone through since my freshman year. This is a factor that is common amongst many seniors. Courtney Sill (Physical Education & Health Science, '19) said “I now feel as though I am following my own heart and becoming the person I want to become.” Sedona Kintz (Psychology, '19) said “I am a lot more confident and sure of myself and way more outgoing than ... when I first came to college.” Malecha added that she “will occasionally think that something is impossible, but with the right support system in place, [she] will continue to grow.” Find something that excites and motivates you and you’ll be unstoppable.

During one of my low points in my freshman year, a friend told me that I needed to “find my why.” Why did I join the honors program? Why was I in college? Why did I even get out of bed in the morning? Conceptualizing my goals and motivation helped me when I felt overwhelmed. Take advantage of opportunities that interest you and then take time to reflect on what you learned and why that opportunity captured your attention. “Speaking with my advisors and having them reassure me that this was *my* college experience and in the end *my* life that I was going to live” is one of the factors that influenced the changes Sill experienced during her college career. Similarly, Malecha said, “speaking to honors faculty and finding a mentor that could answer [her] questions and concerns anytime” helped her feel supported. For me, college has shown that I am never alone and I can always

find support if I just ask.

The honors program has been an integral part of my college career. It has given me a sense of community, a variety of resources, and many unique opportunities. By encouraging me to step out of my comfort zone through classes that, for example, took me to other parts of the country with people I hardly knew, I have been able to make new connections and build a better understanding of the world around me and how I fit into it. Malecha added, “[Honors] challenged me [more] than anyone else ever has. They have asked me to ‘step out of my box’ and do the unexpected ... I would not be the individual I am today without the Honors Program. It has taught me to challenge my thinking, know my own privilege and what to do about those.” Growth is always occurring in all facets of life. This will not stop when you leave the program. Sill hopes to grow more in research and said “surprisingly, that’s been my favorite part of college so far.” Malecha said “I will continue to grow every day at every place ... I take everything as a chance for growth.”

To those who feel overwhelmed by college, know that you will grow and learn so much more than you could predict now. Malecha put it this way, “Never give up ... I believe learning is never ending ... Get involved, challenge others, let others challenge you, and challenge yourself.” College is what you make of it; if you’re feeling overwhelmed, try not to isolate yourself. Reach out to others when you need support and remember how far you’ve come. You have a story to tell and the world is waiting to hear it.

*Note: If you find yourself thinking that maybe you could benefit from counseling services, then you could definitely benefit from counseling services. The on-campus counseling center is here for you and is free. College is a turbulent time for many and seeking professional support is a sign of strength. To get started, visit the counseling center in CSU 285. *

# Honors in Pictures



Members of the 2017-2018 Honors Student Council at a monthly meeting



Nick Linde discussing Networking at September Cookies and Conversation



Students attending "I Am Somali" panel at Minneapolis Institute of Art



Students getting to know each other at the first Honors Student Council meeting



Students raking leaves for Mankato residents

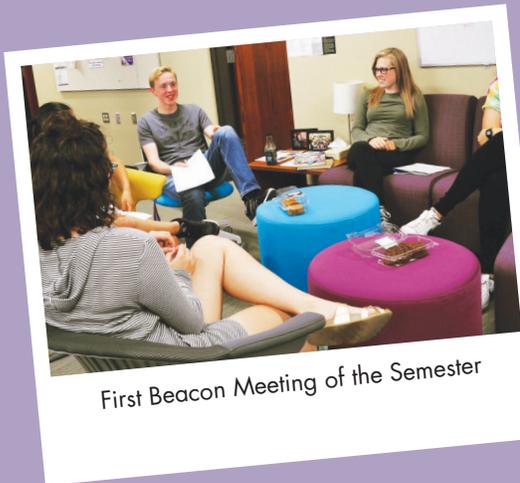


Students learning more about the IELI Tutoring Program



Honors students decorating the Honors Office for Homecoming

# Honors in Pictures



First Beacon Meeting of the Semester



Honors students learning about study abroad opportunities at this Scoop on Study Abroad



Honors students making food for the Fall Cookout



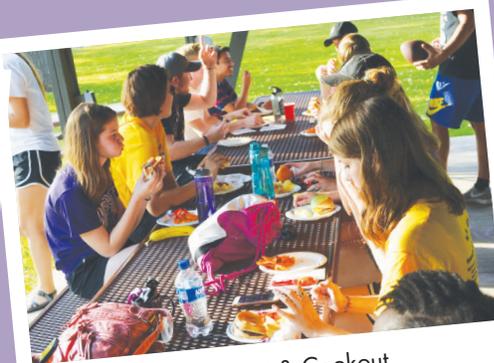
Honors students learning about class opportunities for next semester at this Pizza'n'Profs event



Honors Student Council President Ana Leyva (left) and Vice President Katelynn Malecha (right)



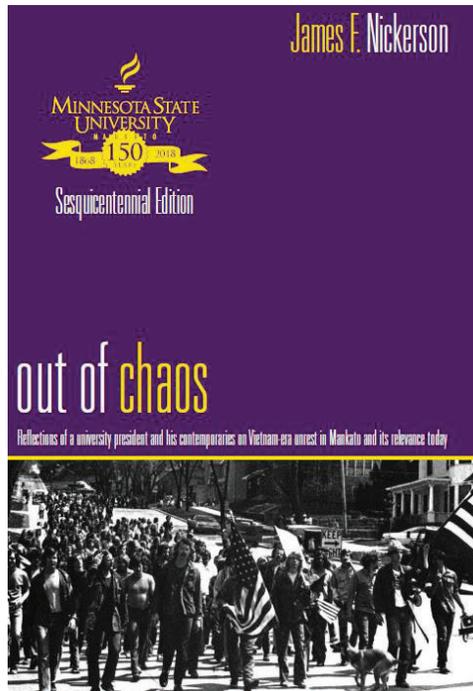
Students decorate gingerbread houses at the December Honors Student-Council Meeting



Fall Retreat & Cookout

# Finding Common Ground: A University's History

by Alicia Utecht, '19 (Communication Studies & Creative Writing; Rogers, Minn.)



of a University President and his Contemporaries on Vietnam-era Unrest in Mankato and Its Relevance Today by university President Emeritus James F. Nickerson is a collection of reflections about the situation on campus and in the communities of Mankato and North Mankato during the Vietnam War. Throughout the text, many contributors also reflect upon how the unrest during the Vietnam War era has echoed in more recent years. At the time of the novel's original publication, much of the echoes were in response to the United States going to war in Iraq and Iran; it continues to echo in today's world with political unrest and social movements around the country and on college campuses.

During the Vietnam War, protests occurred on college campuses all across the country, but those protests turned tragic at Kent State University and Jackson State College in May, 1970, when the National Guard was called in to manage the protests and instead fired on the protestors, killing four students at Kent State and two at Jackson State. Minnesota State College, as it was known then, created a memorial for the Kent State and Jackson State tragedies, which was installed two

years later in May, 1972. This was when protests at Minnesota State College became a powerful force both on and off campus, as was addressed in the documentary film *Two Weeks in May*, which had its world premiere as the Minnesota State Common Read Keynote event on November 1, 2017.

On May 9, 1972, two thousand student protestors blockaded the North Star Bridge, Highway 169, and the intersection between Mankato and North Mankato. The protest was peaceful, largely due to the combined efforts of student leaders, President Nickerson, and Mankato's Chief of Police Charles Alexander. However, as the protest's planned end time of 6:00 PM approached, the Nicollet County Police began throwing tear gas into the crowd to get them to disperse sooner. Protestors responded by throwing the tear gas canisters back at police, but as the winds shifted, the tear gas ended up impacting both protestors and officers alike before the blockade was dispersed. This incident, however, was the most that any Minnesota State College protests escalated, and this was the only violent portion of the protest.

*Continued on page 15*

As Minnesota State University, Mankato, celebrates its sesquicentennial anniversary this academic year, this year's Common Read novel was chosen to reflect specifically on the university in relation to the big picture of the world around the school as well. *Out of Chaos: Reflections*

## Growing and Learning Together

by MacKenzie Glaser (Interdisciplinary Studies; New Brighton Minn.)

The third annual Honors Fall Retreat was a fantastic addition to the lineup of honors events this year. This event gave its participants a more in-depth explanation of the competencies for the Honors Program. The mission, goals, and competencies of the program were explained to incoming honors students by other students who are further along in the program. Listening to the upperclassmen's experiences in the program gave the incoming honors students an opportunity to have their questions answered on a more personal level. The event was a great way to forge a connection between upperclassmen and underclassmen in order to create a more in-depth learning experience.

The first competency discussed was leadership. We partook in an activity where one person led a blindfolded person through an obstacle course to retrieve cones. This taught us how to listen to others when taking the lead and how important that is. We also had the opportunity to discuss how participating in different clubs and being a role model to others allows us to take the lead, which was something I was not aware of at the beginning of this event. This portion was a very eye opening and reinforced the importance of how teamwork in accomplishing tasks,



especially since we will have to utilize leadership in each of the different competencies.

Next, we talked about global citizenship. We learned how to better understand different beliefs and social norms. We played a game where each of us was given a cultural norm, such as talking loudly or being touchy, and asked to display it.

*Continued on page 14*

# A First-Year Family

by Kassidy Tocco, '21 (Special Education; Marshall, Minn.)

Being in the First Year Honors Learning Community (HLC) at Minnesota State University, Mankato provides exactly what the name indicates: a community. That community is not just composed of the people you live with and pass in the hall, but rather, it's made up of genuine friendships and close connections. The transition from high school to college can be a difficult one, but one of the best things about the HLC is that you have a built-in support system, whether that be a roommate, other HLC members, the HLC coordinator, or the Honors Program administrators. They are there for you in any situation, both academic and personal.

The HLC allows you to live with other people who are also in the Honors Program. While other learning communities are usually categorized by major, one benefit of the HLC is that it has a wide variety of majors, interests, and strengths. This means there is always someone who is able to help if another is struggling with homework, papers, etc. So when I can't figure out my math homework to save my life, I can just go across the hall or to the lounge to ask a math or science major. Even though we vary in majors and interests, we are all focused and academically driven honors students. It is so valuable to be in an environment where we have similar academic priorities and so many resources to help us succeed.

The HLC is also a great way to stay involved in the Honors Program itself. Because the Learning Community Coordinator (LCC) is in Honors as well, the answers to any questions about the program are right down the hall. In addition, all of the Honors Program events are communicated throughout the HLC and we



usually attend them together. It is always so much more fun to go to events with your friends, especially when the HLC coordinator is leading the way across campus for the lost first years!

The HLC has been the best part of my first year. It's like having a built-in community. It is strange to think we've only known each other for a couple months, because we are already extremely close; like one big, weird HLC family. We were "that" group of people in the dining hall that put together five tables so we could all sit together on the first night. The HLC has made me feel at home and included at Minnesota State, and I definitely have seen myself grow during my short time here, not only as a student in the Honors Program, but also as an individual in a diverse and inclusive community. I can't imagine my first year of college without the First Year Honors Learning Community and the amazing people I have met through it. 📍

*Article Continued (continued from page 5)*

As Leyva emphasizes, "[The Equity Ambassadors are] students in the Honors Program advocating for domestic students of color, [the] group is open for anyone in Honors to join."

Being an independent organization certainly comes with added challenges, and this year, the Equity Ambassadors are taking "small steps" and are aiming to advertise itself more through tabling at campus events, speaking in classes, and hosting events in order to make the group more well-known. This increase in notoriety will help them be able to better reach out to students who could benefit.

In their two short years of advocacy, the Equity Ambassadors have already made some positive changes within the Honors program. The group was able to give input on the Honors application, especially on the topic of leadership. "There were several things [wording] changed that made it more inclusive," Leyva stated, "in-

cluding [changing the wording of] 'What leadership roles you have been in?' for students who may not have the same opportunities." The changes were aimed at making it easier for the program reach out to those who may not have been able to be involved in traditional leadership activities, like sports and school activities, because of other obligations such as working and taking care of family. Some of the changes made to the application include asking about how the students have shown leadership skills in everyday life. The intent of these changes is to make applying for the program more reachable for and inclusive to everyone interested, while still keeping the application rigorous.

Looking ahead to the future, the Equity Ambassadors hope that in the next few years, they can grow and develop even more. Some of their short term goals include getting more students involved with

the group and making their presence better known. In the long run, they hope to make Dr. Dahlman's original vision for the group a reality by bringing more domestic students of color into the Honors program and increasing equity in the program. They realize that notoriety is a key factor in meeting these long term goals. As a result, their current focus is one spreading awareness about the organization and networking with all students interested in their mission to, "advocate for domestic students of color by enabling all students to provide encouragement and inspiration through community collaboration in able to grow their organization." With what's been done already by the group, along with their plans for the future, the Equity Ambassadors are already embodying this mission to the fullest extent. 📍

# Friendship Across Languages

by Madie Hoffman, '19 (Mass Media; Omaha, Neb.)



This past semester I got involved with an organization called the Intensive English Program (IEP) here at Minnesota State University, Mankato through the Honors Program. Working with an IEP student has helped me expand on some of the honors competencies like global citizenship, become familiar with a lifestyle and culture with which I was not previously familiar, and create connections and friendships that travel across continents.

I was really nervous starting out. I didn't fully know what I was doing when it came to teaching my student how to speak English or to what degree the language barrier would be an issue. Before starting any grammar or writing sessions I needed to get to know my student, what she liked to do, what were some things she wanted to do while in the United States, and what she wanted to gain from this experience besides improving her English skills. My student's name is Karin Nakagawa and she is from Tokyo, Japan and is majoring in Business. She spent the whole fall semester here at Minnesota State University, Mankato

to improve her English and learn about the culture to effectively communicate with American companies in her future business career.

The first few sessions were slow-going because we didn't know each other or how to help each other. Karin is in the intermediate level, so she understands how to read and write in English, but she wanted to improve her speaking and listening skills before she moves on to the next level. I learned that it is important to get feedback from her in order to inform my teaching. I needed to know what worked for her and what didn't and then change my leadership style to benefit her learning. She told me what exercises and learning techniques worked best for her understanding so we could focus on those. After talking and getting to know her better I found her to be a visual learner and talking and watching videos helped her when it came to speaking.

From this experience, Karin and I have become really close friends and see each other often outside our biweekly learning sessions. We even spent Thanksgiving together with my family in Nebraska. By being able to join the IEP program, I was able to meet some awesome people I may not have met otherwise. I have made lifelong connections with a diverse group of people, and by expanding my knowledge on other cultures I am able to communicate most effectively with diverse groups of people. I have grown as a leader and global citizen, and I will use my new skills in other organizations on campus and in my future career as a photojournalist. I encourage any student wanting to get involved with an organization on campus and to expand their global citizenship competency to join the Intensive English Program. I know I'll be back to volunteer my time for this program again. 📧

## *Gorwing and Learning Together (continued from page 10)*

Then, we were asked to go around and talk to each other, and if our partners did not recognize and imitate your cultural norm, they were given a clothespin, which represented a negative experience for the person whose cultural norms were not adopted. People operate on a variety of norms and beliefs, and in order to have global interactions, we need to be mindful of our differences and treat everyone with respect. This has come into play especially in college where I have met people from different backgrounds and have been more readily able to respect others' cultural norms.

We also discussed research. The upperclassmen demonstrated the do's and don'ts of how to approach a professor which was extremely helpful. Next we were put into groups and were asked to create a marshmallow cannon with limited materials. This activity taught us how to more successfully work as a group, which is an essential skill to have when working on research.

I knew very little about research or how to tackle it before the retreat. Now that I learned that I will likely participate in a big project junior or senior year, and in the meantime I can complete smaller research projects or papers, this competency seems much more attainable.

Overall, this event was a great opportunity to get to know both the program itself and the people in the program. I personally got to get a more personal relationship with some upperclassmen and was reassured that the program wasn't as daunting as it seems. I got to get some ideas as to some activities I can do in order to fulfill the competencies and was given the tools in order to complete them. The fall retreat was a beneficial event that gave students some more in-depth aspects of the different competencies and to get the "inside scoop" on what the next four years have in store. 📧

The next day, over three thousand students from Mankato State College and Gustavus Adolphus College participated in a silent protest where they spent three hours walking seven miles throughout the city of Mankato. Although a small group of about three hundred students split off to participate in civil disobedience acts at the high school, the rest of the protestors continued their silent march throughout the city, walking down Val Imm Drive, through the downtown area, up Madison Avenue, and back up Victory Drive to return to campus. Throughout both the *Two Weeks in May* film and *Out of Chaos*, many contributors noted this as the most powerful experience of the Minnesota State College protests, crediting President Nickerson and student leaders for maintaining order.

Throughout the Minnesota State College protests against the Vietnam War, the Mankato community had divided opinions about President Nickerson's handling of the student protests. Many praised him for balancing the needs of students with the needs of the community, but some complained that he was not cracking down on the student protestors to focus on the college's role as a place of learning, not a place of protest. In response to one such letter, President Nickerson wrote, "Your opinion is respected, but I cannot agree ... I must choose between the policing of thought and suppression of peaceful demonstration inferred in your letter and providing a campus which recognizes the necessity of hearing all sides, the right of opinion and argument no matter how unpleasant and offensive. History will write which of us was closer to the truth."

In the United States today, protests occur

for a wide variety of reasons, ranging from political beliefs to social justice issues. These protests are different in cause than those which occurred during the Vietnam War, but they are the same in principle: bringing awareness to situations which are occurring in the world today and groups making their voices heard about their beliefs regarding these situations. It is incredibly powerful to reflect on how students on this campus participated in making history, yet deeply unsettling to realize that Minnesota State College has not gone down in the nation's history for its handling of the Vietnam War era protests. American history is comprised of tragic scenarios like Kent State and Jackson State, yet the silent, peaceful protests in Mankato had an incredible impact.

Certainly, this country has a lot of areas where growth is necessary; it always has and no doubt always will. The students of today will be the ones who go out into the world and not only inspire this growth, but create the opportunities for it. When reflecting on how to take full advantage of these opportunities for positive change, President Nickerson's words are well worth remembering: "[The escalation of the traffic blockade] represented one example of issues that might arise in each encounter until we can resolve in our minds how to handle angered demonstrators who cannot find alternative actions to take. This is not to suggest the inconvenience and danger to all those involved in the issue was unimportant, but we must realize that neither violence nor anger nor retribution can solve the problem. It can be resolved only through discussion, negotiation, and compromise." 



Attendees of the National Collegiate Honors Conference from left to right: Samantha Campa, Ana Leyva, Ginny Walters, Sarah Aldrich, Katelynn Malecha, Hunter Herber, and Anne Dahlman

## Spring 2018 Courses

### **The Mind-Body Problem** **Dr. Richard Liebendorfer**

This course explores questions such as "What is a mind?" and "What are particular states of mind?" and whether those questions have answers in science, religion, philosophy, or elsewhere.

### **Social Welfare Services** **Dr. Annelies Hagemester**

This course explores social welfare as a social institution, with an emphasis on comparative analysis between historical origins and contemporary contexts of social welfare.

### **Social Change in the 21st Century** **Dr. Carol Glasser**

This course explores of the main forms of generating social change in the United States, with a focus on social movements and social justice campaigns of the 21st century.

### **Study Away in Alabama** **Dr. Angela Cooley**

This course will help students become more engaged citizens and understand many of the civil rights issues of today by studying books, films, and other materials as well as traveling to three cities in Alabama.

### **Developing Your Mentor Philosophy** **Samantha Campa**

This course will explore leadership styles and methods, aiming to guide discovery and development of each student's personal mentor philosophy.

### **Writing Home** **Martin Mitchell and Kellian Clink**

This course explores the idea of a sense of place and analyzes physical structures and subsequent cultural imprints.

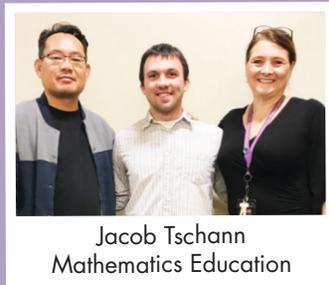
Full course descriptions can be found at: [mnsu.edu/honors/current-students/courses14.html](https://mnsu.edu/honors/current-students/courses14.html)

# Honors Portfolio Defenses

For more information on the Senior Defense experiences, visit the Honors Lounge Blog at [mnsuhonors.wordpress.com](http://mnsuhonors.wordpress.com), available January 2018!



Jaci Ulrich  
Ecology



Jacob Tschann  
Mathematics Education



Muna Omar  
Biomedical Sciences



Nicole Johnson  
Elementary Education



Katelynn Malecha  
Exercise Science & Pre-OT



Kayla Smith  
Social Work



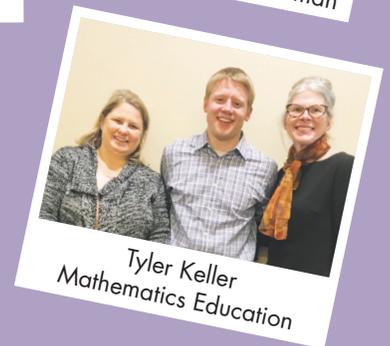
John Smith  
Law Enforcement & German



Rasheed Al-Arami  
Accounting



Stephanie Peterson  
Biomedical Sciences



Tyler Keller  
Mathematics Education



Sarah Aldrich  
Spanish Education



Parker Scott  
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