



MINNESOTA STATE  
UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

HONORS

# THE HONORS BEACON



2023-2024  
ISSUE XXII

## Table of Contents:

Editor’s Note.....	3
Director’s Note.....	4
Creative Contemplation.....	5
Learning through Leadership.....	7
Leadership in the Lab.....	9
A Sense of Community.....	11
Research Reflection.....	13
How to Survive in an Elevator....	15
NCUR Presenters.....	20
URS Presenters.....	21
Crossword Puzzle.....	23

## THE HONORS BEACON TEAM:

### Editor-in-Chief

Carter Logan

### Writers

Evan Byrkeland

Emily Dittrich

Aidan Forberg

Yodahe Kebede

Klara Lybeck

---

## Honors Student Body

*Honors Student Body President*

Aidan Forberg

*Honors Student Body Vice President*

Will Anderson

*Honors Student Body Secretary*

Marielle Calanza

*Freshman Class Representative*

Klara Lybeck

*Sophomore Class Representative*

Yodahe Kebede

*Junior Class Representative*

James Hawco

*Senior Class Representative*

Brooke Andel



# EDITOR'S NOTE

Carter Logan '24 (History)



One of the qualities that makes the Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato unique, is a curriculum that focuses on reflection and the development of three competencies. In this issue of the Beacon one of those competencies, leadership, serves as the overarching theme. In doing this, hopefully you will be able to see how leadership influences students in a variety of experiences. This issue highlights how reflection correlates with understanding and developing an individual leadership philosophy, different ways in which leadership can be applied to interests, and how leadership is crucial during times of conflict and change. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the writers and I am very pleased with the final product we came up with. I would also like to thank Dr. White and Destiny Lee for all of their guidance and feedback throughout this process.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

DR. LEAH WHITE

**\*NOTE: RIGHT CLICK TO OPEN HYPERLINK**



Given the significant changes in administrative leadership roles at Minnesota State University, Mankato over the past year, focusing this issue of The Beacon on the leadership competency seems appropriate. Honors Program students often assume the leadership competency will be the easiest of the three competencies to complete. However, although finding leadership experiences comes naturally to many students, meaningfully reflecting on growth in this area can be much more difficult. Thinking critically about the decisions we make individually and in teams requires self-awareness and humility. One of the main goals we have for students in the program is for them to graduate with a developed understanding of their personal leadership philosophy. You will see evidence of this growth in the experiences shared here.

# Creative Contemplation



This “article” is actually a poem written by Evan Byrkeland. It was originally an alternative format submission for a HONR 201 essay on leadership. He chose to write a poem to more adequately portray emotion, but in a compact manner. The prompts for the assignment were:

- In your own words, explain the competency area. What skills will you be developing? Why do these skills matter?
- What past and/or present experiences have you had that helped you grow in this competency area? Specifically, explain what you learned and why that learning mattered to your growth in this area.
- What future experiences would you like to have to continue growing in this competency area? Explain why you think those experiences are appropriate choices for your further growth.

## Evan Byrkeland '26 (Creative Writing)

This is a poem essay  
Because it felt right this time  
And I think it fits my type of leadership well  
Brief but impactful

Leadership is the way you present yourself  
How you work with your strengths  
And make up for your weaknesses  
Within yourself and with others

You'll learn how to work in a group  
How you participate in a group  
Take a couple personality tests  
And overall look inside of yourself  
Which will all give a perspective  
That will help you out  
Not only in the now  
But in the future  
And even in the small things

I went to a group project-oriented school  
And I was never that assertive  
Liking to hang back  
Letting everyone guide me along

But it was only this semester  
That I found that I do lead  
Not as a big voice or a spread-sheet  
But like a safety net

If everything goes to plan  
I just continue on doing what I do  
But when a teammate slips and falls behind  
I catch them and fling them back into action  
And when said that way  
I do lead  
Just not how we're told leading is

Everyone leads in their unique way  
Care free  
Control freak  
Communicator  
We all lead in ways we don't hear often  
But we see everyday

In the future  
I want to be a net with a voice  
So when my teammate is balancing on their beam  
I can shout out from below  
And say  
"Twist your feet in a bit more  
Make sure your body is steady  
And keep looking ahead"

I want to participate in groups that can bounce ideas  
Where I can expand on other's ideas  
And throw mine into the pot

I want to have control over a project  
Be the head guy  
The commander  
And see how it goes  
Even if I'm not good at it

Because both of these will help me  
Show my voice  
Which when I lead now  
I often lack  
And just end up as a net  
I hope in the future  
Through experiencing more groups and friends

I can unzip my mouth  
And add something

That's what I think leadership is.



## LEARNING THROUGH LEADERSHIP: INTERVIEW WITH DEAN BROWN

The following interview was conducted with Dr. Brown, Founding Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The interview revolves around the relationship between change and leadership and how Dean Brown has utilized his leadership to combat adversity. Following the interview, Dean Brown mentioned his earliest experience in contemplating different methods of leadership came as a young child in Chicago observing gang interactions. Throughout these observations, he found that charisma, transparency, and trust were critical elements for effective leaders. Although this is an unconventional example for what people may think of when they hear the word “leadership”, it serves as a paradigm of what leadership can look like. Evaluating individual leadership values and acknowledging different leadership types are essential aspects of the leadership competency in Honors. Dean Brown’s description of early leadership influence in his life is a perfect example of how there are many different approaches to leadership outside of what may be considered traditional.



**Do you have a personal leadership philosophy you generally follow that you take, have you ever noticed you had to adapt your leadership style depending on the**

**circumstances of your situation and/or leadership position?**

There are three components to my leadership. The first is collaborative leadership style. It is a process of working with others to problem solve in hopes everyone developing their own leadership skills. My second approach to leadership is because everyone you work with is so different. I being a humanizing leader. That means you can enact three or four different leadership styles, always think about others’ feelings and depending on what is going on in that particular circumstances to determine how different situation. Sometimes a decision needs to be made, issues might impact them as you make and if things are stagnant, then I have to practice decisions. My third approach to leadership is more top-down leadership. It is rare however, other about advocacy and empowerment. I feel it is times I might have to watch how discussions are important to always allow individuals to use their voice to advocate for themselves in ways collaborative leadership style, allowing everyone to that impact them or that create change. It is work together in the decision making process. very important that individuals be confident in

[Continued Top of Page 8](#)  
expressing their viewpoints.



Continued from Bottom of Page 7

One style does not fit all; there can be multiple things going on in one situation where you have to engage a certain leadership style to come to a desired outcome.

**At Minnesota State University, Mankato there have recently been some major administrative changes, could you briefly summarize some of those changes?**

We underwent a college merger where we had to combine eighteen departments into eleven. I made the quick decision to take a humanizing approach to leadership because I knew that it was going to be difficult for people to think about the fact that their department had to merge with another department. In some of these departments the academic identity is intrinsic in defining the discipline. To have one department merge with another department will impact how faculty see themselves in a new administrative structure. It is important to keep that in the back of your mind.

**What has been the greatest challenge you have faced as Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences?**

There is a challenge every day to be honest with you. There is always something different that I haven't faced that comes before me. I have been dean for four and a half years, so you would think that I probably would have faced the vast majority of problems, but that is not the case. The greatest challenge that I have faced as a leader has been figuring out strategies to have the merging process go as smoothly as possible.

**How do you, as a leader, navigate supporting university policy while also being cognizant of any concerns held by students and staff in your college?**

Of course there are university policy or rules that I have to enact as a leader. I think the best way to handle those is just to be honest with the people who have to initiate the change. Be honest about the policy, but at the same time recognize the difficulties of these individuals enacting or supporting policy. I understand that as a dean, as an administrator, there are certain policies that I have to bring forward to my departments or the department chairs. The best thing is to be honest about these policies, but also to recognize how these policies might impact them and working through the difficulties of each policy.

**Have you consciously made any changes or noticed any changes that were subconscious in your leadership throughout your time as dean?**

I have always been helpful, collaborative, and a problem solver. In some ways, subconsciously, I have had to engage in authoritative leadership, so I have had to figure out how to balance the collaborative and humanizing style with the authoritative style of leadership style. The authoritative style involves me being honest and being direct about what I see. The human side requires understanding how what I have been honest about may impact people. The collaborative style is saying, "Okay I have stated honestly what we have to do, I recognize your emotion and how you feel about it, but now how can we work together to resolve this particular issue".



## Leadership in the Lab

### Aidan Forberg '24 (Biomedical Science)



My name is Aidan Forberg, and I am a senior premed student from Sartell, Minnesota majoring in biomedical science and minoring in chemistry. My research journey at Minnesota State University, Mankato began during my initial campus tour when my tour guide mentioned a program she had been involved in called RISEbio. This program sparked my interest and was a contributing factor to my decision to attend MNSU. The mission of the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded RISEbio program is to develop undergraduate students into leaders and effective researchers. This is done through participating in a learning community and joining a research stream where you're mentored by graduate students and former RISEbio scholars.

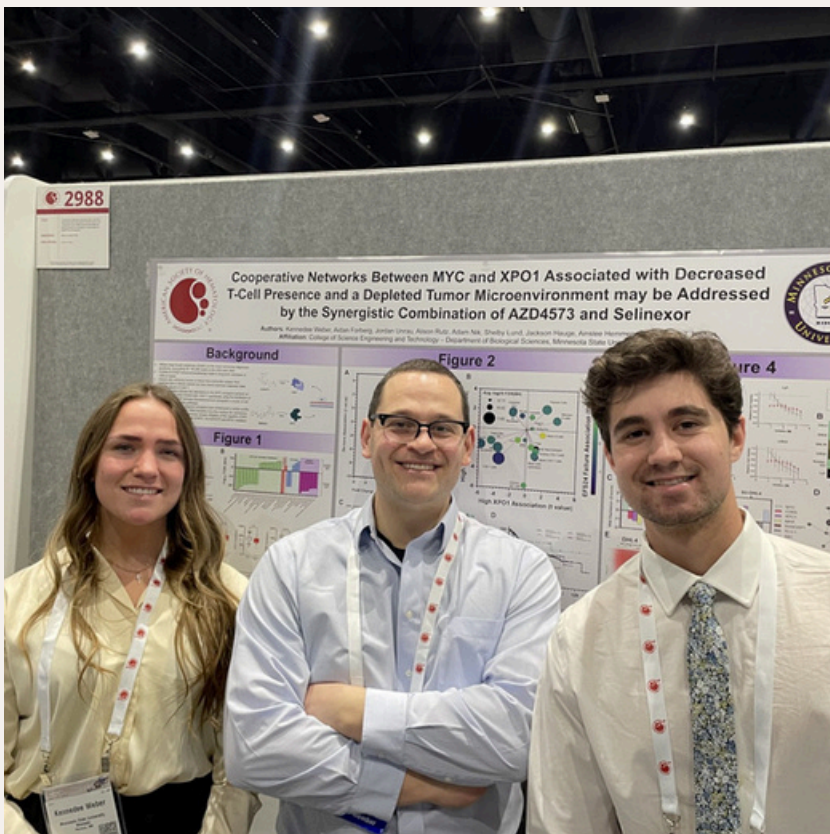
After finishing my research in the cancer stream with Dr. Land, I presented my work in front of biology faculty and representatives from the NSF. This was the first formal poster presentation I had done, and it set me up well for future presentation opportunities.

The RISEbio program sparked my interest in research and continuing in the field of cancer research aligned with my experiential learning goals and trajectory toward medical school. I joined Dr. Hartert with his work on Diffuse Large B Cell Lymphoma (DLBCL) in the spring of 2022 and have been working with him ever since. My research tenure includes one first-author project, a presentation at the St. Paul Capitol Rotunda, three abstracts through the American Society of Hematology (ASH), an Undergraduate Research Center (URC) Foundation award, and an upcoming presentation at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. My work involves testing novel drug combinations on live cells from Diffuse Large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL), which affects over 90,000 people in the United States annually. This December, I had the pleasure of presenting my work at the ASH Annual Conference that took place in San Diego. The ASH conference is one of the largest in the world, attracting over 20,000 clinicians, scientists, and allied health professionals. As an aspiring physician, it was great to network with leaders in the field, and it gave me experience presenting and exposure to large and current advances in medicine.

I look forward to presenting my work at the URS this spring, and mentoring the new wave of students researching with Dr. Hartert. Mentors have always been a big part of my learning since I started college and I'm excited to have the opportunity to do the same for others. While working alone in my first two years, I tried to ensure the work in the lab was completed to my standards.

As I began mentoring students, I adapted and wanted to teach the students how to be successful by giving them more independence each week. I've learned how a mix of delegation and collaboration can strengthen a team and ensure they are successful when I graduate this spring. My approach of gradually delegating responsibility is something I learned firsthand in RISEbio. Having been in their position, I understand they may feel tense and afraid to make mistakes. I try and maintain a supportive environment and remind them that mistakes are opportunities to learn and a part of lab work.

To anyone interested in research, I have three pieces of advice. First, get started early. This will give you enough time to meaningfully contribute to a project and possibly have some published work to show for it. Second, find a professor you enjoy working with on something you are passionate about is also very important. Working in the lab or presenting will be so much easier if you enjoy what you are talking about. It is also likely that your mentor will write you a letter of recommendation for jobs or future schooling. Lastly, take any opportunity presented to you to share your work. Your research mentor may mention opportunities like the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, URS, or a discipline specific conference. These are all great opportunities to make professional connections and practice presenting. Looking back at my four years at MNSU I can happily say I made the right choice and I know it has prepared me for my future scientific endeavors.



(From right to left) Aidan with with Dr. Hartert and fellow undergraduate research student Kennedee in front of their poster at the American Society of Hematology Annual Conference. Aidan says this photo is important to him because it represents the hard work his research team had done paying off.

## A Sense of Community: A Reflection on the Honors Learning Community

### Klara Lybeck '27 (Sociology)

When I was first applying to colleges, I was looking for a sense of community. As an incoming freshman, you are never sure what will happen or who you will meet. I saw that a lot of schools had learning communities (LCs), that would help you get acquainted with other first-year students before the term even starts. After committing to MNSU, I was not sure which learning community to apply for. I did not have a major picked out which ruled out most LCs. When I was accepted into the Honors Program, I was excited to discover all the new opportunities I could have. This then also opened a learning community option for me. One thing that makes the Honors Learning Community unique is that all of its members live close by.



While a common major or field connects most LCs, we are connected by participating in the Honors Program. This means that we are less likely to have classes with one another because there are numerous majors in the LC which makes living together a way for us to see each other more often.

I asked members of the LC to share some of their thoughts on what they envisioned a learning community to be. The most common answers were: to meet people who are like you, make friends, and have some common connection, usually a major, interest, or mindset. The Learning Community website adds, "Learning Communities are groups of students who have something in common, take courses together on campus, and have opportunities for weekly events and study sessions together. Each group also has an upper-class peer mentor that helps the group learn about campus and provides support for you to be successful socially and academically." Most members believed the Honors Learning Community (HLC), has fulfilled the purpose of a Learning Community and felt they made worthwhile friendships within the LC and in the Honors Program. They agreed that they were able to keep busy, feel more connected to campus, and attend campus activities with friends without feeling like they had made an overwhelming commitment.

All students have a unique college experience. Being in a learning community is just one way to make memories with familiar people. HLC members emphasize the friendships that have been made and how much easier it feels to become accustomed to college. There is a lot of diversity in our LC, but that has not affected the group dynamic negatively. For example, one student expressed that they were nervous to meet new people and make friends when there was an obvious age gap. They added that they felt awkward initially because of this gap, but have since become more comfortable.

All members have shown kindness and respect towards one another. There was a mutual understanding that none of us knew what we were doing but felt supported in that we were all in this together.

One of the three competencies that Honors focuses on is leadership. Students can learn and experience leadership from themselves and their peers. When I asked the HLC members about how leadership has impacted their experience in the LC, they all recognized our amazing Learning Community Coordinator (LCC), Haylee. One member summed it up by saying, “She’s made us all feel at home in our LC.” The LC has continuously been fun and engaging thanks to the leadership and hard work of our LCC. Members have been able to learn more about different leadership styles and tactics from interacting with our LCC. They also found that they were surrounded by motivated individuals in the community who were also looking to improve their skills. With this in mind, they have been able to reflect and grow their personal leadership skills.

The role of the Learning Community Coordinator is to be a mentor and resource to students. Haylee adds that she, “Plans events that help students grow personally and academically, build a community, and create a positive and safe environment.” We have had events such as Slime Night, Registration Information Session, a hike at Rasmussen Woods, and our weekly study sessions. Haylee also encourages members to attend the monthly Honors event put on by the Honors Student Body. Every Learning Community participates in a Make a Difference (MAD) Project. The Honors LC chose to volunteer at Kiwanis Holiday Lights in October. After reflecting on HONR 201, Haylee said that her focus was to create a positive and fun environment for the Honors Learning Community. She is very hands-on and enjoys input and ideas from members. She keeps a balance between easygoing and maintaining a mentor/student relationship. With this, she remains open and engaged for anyone to talk to about anything. Her goal for all members to feel valued and appreciated has been achieved.

My time in the Honors LC has been extremely successful. I have made lifelong friends and found important resources. Right away, we began eating meals together and having game nights. This community has helped me feel more comfortable and secure in myself. While I was nervous about starting the college journey, I now feel more confident knowing that I am not alone. I found that I got a better understanding of campus and adjusted to college life just a bit easier with the help of eleven other friends.



**The Honors Learning  
Community volunteering at  
the Kiwanis Holiday Lights.**



## Research Reflection: Cultural Learning Strategies

### Yodahe Kebede '26 (Economics)

The demographic of students in U.S. universities is becoming increasingly diverse. The number of international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities increased 12% in 2022-23, according to the just-released Open Doors report by the Institute of International Education (IIE). Total international enrollment stood at 1,057,188, up more than 100,000 students over the 2021-22 total. Given the substantial number of international students, it is essential to acknowledge that their diverse backgrounds and cultural upbringing influence how they absorb and remember information. As of 2022, at Minnesota State University, Mankato, over 1,700 international students are enrolled and pursuing a variety of degree programs. Recognizing the significance of cultural learning strategies is vital for understanding these differences and establishing a supportive environment that caters to their needs.



The title of my research project is, “Cultural Learning Strategies in Ethiopia and the United States Experienced by International Students at a Mid-size Midwestern University”. For this research I decided to do a case study on Ethiopian international students at Minnesota State University, Mankato. My research question stemmed from my personal experience as an international student from Ethiopia studying in the United States. I was curious to know if other Ethiopian international students share similar experiences, prompting me to explore the commonality of such experiences within this demographic. This research project investigates the integration of cultural learning strategies in the educational systems of both Ethiopia and the United States. However, its significance extends beyond the realm of education. In today's diverse world, effectively educating students from various backgrounds is paramount for the future of our society. This underscores the global importance of multicultural education and the incorporation of cultural learning strategies, as they have profound implications for multiple facets of our society, including social inclusion, peacekeeping, and heritage preservation. Therefore, the outcomes of this project hold substantial weight, as they can guide the development of educational policies, curricula, and teacher training initiatives, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and culturally aware society. Our findings will be presented at MNSU Undergraduate Research Symposium and National Conference on Undergraduate Research (2024) at the University of California – Long Beach.

The research team consists of Dr. Elizabeth Sandell, a faculty member in the Elementary and Literacy Education Department; myself, Yodahe Kebede, a student in the Economics Department; and Ryuto Hashimoto, B.S., from the Sociology Department. The research responds to an interest in how cultural learning strategies in Ethiopia compare to those in the United States. Ethiopian students experience cognitive dissonance because their previous educational experiences are so different from the experiences they have in the United States. This research will provide suggestions for current and future Ethiopians who are adapting to college in the United States. Our research employs a comprehensive content analysis to answer the research question: How do cultural learning strategies in Ethiopia compare to the United States? Our initial intention was to collect articles which discuss similarities and differences between cultural learning strategies in the U.S. and Ethiopia. This contextual information was not as helpful as we anticipated due to the lack of articles written regarding the matter. We then categorized the few collected articles found under each subtopic of the research. We worked as a team to prepare a literature review using sheets to identify key information such as the purpose of the study, main points from the discussion section, and significant quotes.

We plan on conducting interviews with current Ethiopian students enrolled in various majors at the university. The interviews will consist of open-ended questions aimed at understanding the cultural learning differences experienced by these students and how they navigated and overcame related challenges during their university education. We anticipate finding a clear contrast between the cultural learning strategies in the United States and Ethiopia. We will interpret the findings in a culturally appropriate way that considers the foundation of multicultural education in both countries. The findings will inform educators in the United States to employ effective instruction that fosters Ethiopian students' ability to work with people from diverse cultures in the United States.

The objective of this research is to enhance my academic achievement in college and prepare me for my future career in developmental economics. The leadership and research experience gained through this project will forever hold a special place in my heart and memory. The various meetings and brainstorming with my research team have been a great platform to exercise leadership skills. Having a deep understanding of cultural learning strategies is pivotal for effectively engaging with diverse backgrounds within this field. Development economics focuses on low- and middle-income countries, making it imperative to grasp cultural nuances for fostering their economic development. This acquired knowledge will be invaluable as I pursue a career as a developmental economist, equipping me with essential research skills that will form the basis of my future professional endeavors.

## Excerpts from “How to Survive in an Elevator with Strangers”

### Emily Dittrich '27 (Business Management)

The following is the beginning of the story, setting up the main development of the plot. After the introductory segment the characters find themselves in a crisis and have to utilize their leadership styles to help come up with a solution, despite animosity between two characters. A link to the full story is provided on the bottom right of page eighteen.



It's early summer in Chicago Illinois and the misery brought on from blistering heat is second only to the misery from the record high humidity. A black sedan with a pink Lyft sticker pulls up in front of the Congressional Hotel and Conference Center. Andrew Mickelson steps out of the car. He's in his late twenties with an average height and slim build. He has pale blue eyes, and his light blonde hair appears carefully styled. Tan colored chinos and a tailored light gray button up shirt adorn his lean frame. A pair of leather shoes in a dark caramel color complete the look. Without glancing at the building, he moves to the rear of the car to retrieve a small rolling suitcase and garment bag. After shutting the trunk door, he signals the driver, extends the handle on his suitcase, and slings the garment bag over his shoulder.

As the Lyft pulls away from the curb Andrew looks up at the building, taking it in for the first time. He looks quizzical and apprehensive. The hotel's entrance was covered by an old, faded awning with cracked and peeling letters that had once spelled The Congressional Hotel and Conference Center, but now could only be legibly read as Th Congr ssio al Hot l an Co feren e enter. One of the sliding glass entrance doors leading to the lobby appeared to be stuck in the open position. Wiping away the beads of sweat that have already begun to form on his forehead, Andrew clenches his jaw and steps onto the curb and heads toward the entrance to the hotel. As Andrew approached the broken sliding door he paused. To the right of the door, half hidden by a planter of wilting vegetation, there was an aged bronze plaque. It read “~Congressional Hotel~ Established 1891 in Chicago, Illinois.” Andrew examined the plaque thoughtfully, but the heat quickly brought him back and he resumed his gait and headed inside.

After entering the lobby of the Congressional Hotel and Conference Center Andrew was immediately hit with the air blowing from one of four large noisy and rattling fans that were making a valiant attempt to keep the lobby cool. While the lobby of the Congressional was certainly a more comfortable temperature than the sidewalk outside, that was about the only positive thing Andrew could have said about it. It was clear that the lobby had once been quite grand. It boasted vaulted ceilings that met with carved arches of dark oak that cut into the marble walls.

A young man stood behind the hotel desk where he was reading a large book. There was no line at the front desk as Andrew made his way over to it, but as he approached the desk, he began to hear heavy footsteps coming from behind him. Seconds later he felt a whoosh of air on his right side. He spun on the spot and looked around for the source of the sound and the sudden wind, seeing nothing but another ugly painting of sad children, Andrew turned back to the front desk where he saw the cause of the previous commotion. A man was now in front of him in line. He was wearing a dark suit with sleek black hair and carried a black briefcase. The man spoke loudly and had a strong Chicagoan accent. “Name’s Whitmore, GABRIEL WHITMOORE, W.H.I.T. MOORE with an E at the end. I’m here to see Mr. Hubbard. He’s staying in your penthouse suite; he should be expecting me.”

It took Andrew a moment to process what had happened, but after he did his brow furrowed and the corners of his mouth curved downwards. He took a few steps closer to the man who had yet to stop talking. “Hey!” called out Andrew, startling a young woman who had just emerged from a hallway a few feet away. “Did you just rush past me all so you could cut in front of me?” The man paused his verbal onslaught toward the front desk attendant and turned around to face Andrew. The two men were roughly the same age and height, but Gabriel appeared to have a heavier build than Andrew. Gabriel had a strong jaw, thick black eyebrows, and large brown eyes. He wore his black hair short on the sides, but long in the center which he combed back. His suit was a charcoal gray, off-set by a crisp white dress shirt, and dark gray tie.

Gabriel looked at Andrew and shifted his weight from one foot to the other. “Look pal,” he said, “I’ve got important business here today, and I don’t have time for lollygagging vacationers who want to stop and admire the décor.” With that Gabriel turned back to the front desk.

The young man at the desk looked apologetically at Andrew whose face had started to redden, his fists were clenched, and he looked to be contemplating a fight as he stared into the back of Gabriel’s head and muttered several curses. The attendant looked back at Gabriel. “Uh, Yes Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Hubbard left instructions for us to call him when you arrived.” Gabriel smiled broadly at that and bounced on his toes in anticipation. The desk attendant picked up the phone on the desk and dialed a number. “Hello, Mr. Hubbard? Oh, I’m glad to hear you’re enjoying your stay sir, uh, Mr. Hubbard I’m calling to let you know that Mr. Whitmore has arrived in the lobby. Yes, Mr. Hubbard I’ll let him know. Thank you, sir.” The young man hung up the phone. Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Hubbard has asked me to send you up to meet him in his suite.” The young man extended his right arm and pointed across the room where the woman from before was disappearing down a hallway. “At the other end of the lobby go through the first hallway, and you’ll get to the elevators. Mr. Hubbard is in our penthouse suite, and that’s gonna be on the top floor or the P button on the elevator.”

Before he had even finished, Gabriel had begun to walk off in the direction the attendant had pointed. As he walked away, he called out “Thanks, kid!” and threw up his right hand.



Andrew stood with his gaze fixed on Gabriel as he walked off. His concentration was only broken when the young man at the desk spoke. “Uh sir? Did you want to check in”?

Andrew unclenched his fists, exhaled deeply through his nose, and stepped forward to check into his room. “What a piece of crap, who thinks they can act like that”!

The attendant smiled weakly and responded, “Yeah, that guy sucks, but I’ve gotten used to it by now. Kind of have to in this line of work ya’know.” Andrew seemed to start to shake off what had just transpired and pulled out his wallet.

“Yeah, I bet you have to deal with all kinds of jerks, huh? But yeah, I should have a reservation under Mickelson, with a SON at the end, first name Andrew.” The attendant chuckled and smiled as he finished checking Andrew in. While he waited Andrew let his eyes wander around the room. There was a sandwich board to the left of the desk that proclaimed “Welcome Dental Hygienists! Midwestern Dentistry Conference Check-in” along with an arrow that pointed down a hallway that the young woman he startled had come from. “You guys host a lot of conferences here”?

The attendant paused, “Well, yes and no. Most of the really big conferences are held up the street at the expo center, or at the more uh, popular hotels with conference centers nearby. We get the smaller ones or ones whose organizers are trying to save money. What brings you to the Congressional sir”?

“I have a work conference at the expo center tomorrow,” replied Andrew, “My coworkers all opted to stay at the Hilton that was closer, but I saw a documentary about historical hotels, and it had mentioned the Congressional Hotel, but so far it’s not what I expected.” A frown had returned to Andrew’s face, but this time it was different.

Brooke Wilson, a 27-year-old dental hygienist, was considered short for a woman, but through regular exercise and weightlifting she had developed a well-toned physique. She had light brown eyes and wore her long brown curls in a pastel blue hair clip. Her olive skin had begun to develop a tan. She was wearing a lavender camisole and a pair of light wash skinny jeans. She carried a dark brown sweater in one hand and in the other was the gift bag she had received courtesy of the conference’s welcome table. Brooke’s employer had booked and paid for her and her co-workers to attend the Midwestern Dentistry Conference in Chicago, Illinois, promising them all a three-night stay in a luxurious historical hotel in Chicago. Instead, what Brooke and her co-workers received was a three-night stay at the Congressional Hotel and Conference Center.

Even with the air conditioning operating at full blast, the record high heat and humidity from outside, and the heat from hundreds of bodies gathered at the hotel’s conference center were more than the cooling system could handle. Upon entering the lobby Brooke was startled by a sudden outburst from a man in line at the reception desk and hurried in the direction of the elevator. Brooke had never been fond of confrontation, and desired to be away from the commotion and its source.

The doors to the elevator were just closing as she rounded the corner. She lunged for the door but missed them and heard the elevator shudder to life with a loud groan as it lifted its current occupants. “Come on!” she said exasperated, then hit the call button and stepped back to wait. Brook looked up at the illuminated lights above the elevator that showed the present location of the elevator. She watched as the lighted numbers went on and off as the elevator rose higher and higher until it reached floor number fourteen. The light for floor 14 remained on for what seemed like forever. Despite knowing the ineffectualness of the action, Brooke started mashing the call button willing it descend back to her. “C’MOOOOOOON!” She said through gritted teeth. As she stood waiting for the elevator to move from floor 14, she began to hear footsteps. She ceased her pleas for the elevator’s return, crossed her arms and stood silently in front of the elevator door.

Gabriel Whitmore was a man of confidence. Some that knew him would say he had too much confidence, and everyone else that knew him would say he was just a cocky malicious man. Gabriel had recently been made a VP for his firm’s investment banking division. He had come to the Congressional Hotel to meet with a potential client who he was told was known for his eccentricities and love of history, which Gabriel assumed was why he chose The Congressional Hotel, and why after seeing The Congressional in person, continued to stay. If Gabriel was nervous about meeting his important client, it didn’t show. Gabriel was a man who was confident in his abilities and believed that by always leading with a confident swagger he would communicate to others that he has everything under control. Which is important when you’re trying to convince someone to trust you with their thirty-million-dollar investment.

The pair spent a minute standing in silence until Gabriel said, “Hey look, it’s actually moving now,” as he pointed up at the lighted numbers above the elevator. It had gone from 14 to 12 and was at 11 when Brooke looked up. “Oh, thank god.” She thought to herself. Shortly after, the elevator arrived in the lobby with an ear-piercing creak. The doors rattled open with the sound of steel scrapping angrily against steel. “God, this place is a dump, should maybe even be condemned,” said Gabriel, his feelings of disgust and general dismay contorted his features into a grimace. Brooke couldn’t help but agree with that sentiment as this place was most certainly a dump. Gabriel extended his left arm toward the open elevator, “Ladies first,” he said with a handsome smile on his face. Brooke looked at him and his extended arm, then sighed and stepped onto the elevator followed by Gabriel. The elevator was large enough to accommodate a large group of people, although Brooke doubted that such a group would have been on this elevator anytime in the last decade. They turned around after entering the elevator. Gabriel pushed the button with a capital P and turned to Brooke with a small smile, “What floor”? Brooke continued to cross her arms after entering the elevator, looked at Gabriel, then at the floor button panel and saw the illuminated P and looked at Gabriel who was still smiling. She focused her gaze out of the elevator toward the opposite wall.

“Twelve,” she said quietly.

“Twelve it is,” Gabriel said cheerily. He punched the number twelve button on the panel followed by the close door button, but nothing happened. He hit it again more firmly this time; still nothing.

The doors remained in their fully open position. Noticing that the doors had yet to close, Brooke looked over to see Gabriel pushing the door close button with progressively more aggression each time. She shrugged her shoulders and leaned back against the elevator wall with her head tilted back. Footsteps and the sound of a rolling suitcase could be heard coming down the hall.

“Hey, I think someone is coming.” Brooke said to Gabriel who looked ready to break the button if that’s what it would take to close the doors.

“Yeah, it’s probably that idiot from before. I don’t want to ride with him, I’d probably have to listen to him whine the entire time.” He continued his attempts to get the door close button to do its job. Finally, the angry steel scraping sound from earlier resumed, just as Andrew came around the corner.

Still angry from Gabriel’s behavior at the front desk, Andrew saw Gabriel look up at him, snarl and continue to rapidly press what he assumed must be the close door button, making Andrew even angrier. Prior to seeing Gabriel’s attempt to prevent him from entering the elevator Andrew had no desire to ride in the same elevator as him, but now that he saw Gabriel’s continued disrespect for him, Andrew charged ahead as the screeching elevator doors slowly closed. Just after Andrew boarded the elevator the doors behind him that had been closing slower than a glacier moves suddenly slammed shut violently, making Brooke jump. The elevator made another harsh sound of steel scrapping against steel and began to rise. Andrew let go of his suitcase and dropped his garment bag. He looked directly at Gabriel; he could feel his face growing warm. “You’re a real piece of work you know that? You saw me coming and you still kept hitting the door close button, didn’t you! Why? Are you too afraid to face me long enough to ride in the same elevator as me”?

Between the sudden slamming of the doors and Andrew’s outburst at Gabriel, Brooke was even more on edge than she had been in the lobby. She hugged her arms even tighter across her chest drew closer to the elevator’s rear left corner, turned her body away from the two men, and focused her gaze on the wall and floor. Despite his irritation Gabriel remained stone-faced throughout Andrew’s condemnation of him. After Andrew finished, Gabriel paused as he tried to think of how he wanted to handle this situation. A smirk quickly flitted across his face, before being replaced with an unassuming and polite smile, “What floor?” he asked as sweetly as he could.

Andrew’s face turned a bright shade of scarlet at Gabriel’s all too casual dismissal of his anger. He looked at Gabriel’s charming smile and wanted nothing more than to punch Gabriel in the face and shatter his nose.

Andrew looked away from Gabriel and toward the control panel. They

were currently passing floor number nine, then he saw the illuminated capital P and knew that must be where Gabriel was heading. He spotted the button for his floor and punched that with his fist instead. His punch

reverberated throughout the elevator with a loud metallic groan. A moment later they heard a thundering CRACK and immediately felt the elevator and themselves hurtling downward as the metal pulley that ran on the lift cable roared and screeched.

To read the full story

click on the

# NCUR Presenters

## **Brooke Andel**

The effect of neuron death in the amygdala in green anole lizards

## **Tinsay Gebremariam**

Machine Learning for Human Activity Recognition using Wearable Devices

## **Araya Lemma**

Data Privacy and Security in Autonomous Vehicles

## **Barkot Menkir**

Culturally Enriched Memory Books: Enhancing Engagement and Well-being in Individuals with Dementia

## **Nomin Senadheera**

Causes of Depression for International Students Studying in the United States

## **Marielle Calanza**

Changes in Cultural Learning Strategies in U.S. Youth Education K-8

## **Yodahe Kebede**

Cultural Learning Strategies in Ethiopia and the United States Experienced by International Students at a Mid-size Midwestern University

## **Aryee McCabe**

Contrasting Oak Responses to Water Stress- Osmolyte Profiling Across Species

## **Oltjona Muca**

Exploring meteoric fragments with microscopy and spectroscopy techniques

## **Amal Sharafkhodjaeva**

“Vibe Check”: Examining the Link Between Relationship Satisfaction and Life Goals

# URS Presenters

## **Carly Abelson**

Effects of Perchlorate on Behavior  
and Stress Levels in Mice

## **Hawi Atinafu**

A Comprehensive Review of  
DeepFake Detection Using Machine  
Learning

## **Marielle Calanza**

Changes in English Language  
Learning Strategies in US Education  
K-8

## **Aidan Forberg**

Cooperative Networks Between MYC  
and XPO1 Associated with  
Decreased T-Cell Presence and a  
Depleted Tumor Micro-environment  
May be Addressed By the Synergistic  
Combination of AZD4573 and  
Selinexor

## **Victoria Greene**

The Efficacy of Temozolomide in the  
Presence of Glypicans

## **Brooke Anandel**

The impact of a damaged amygdala  
on aggression in green anole lizards

## **Ephrata Bezuayene**

Characterization of actin capping  
protein dynamics during metastatic  
epithelial cell propagation

## **Emily Dittrich**

Diverse Perspectives on Disability:  
Exploring Cultural Perceptions,  
Stigmas, and Barriers Affecting  
College Students with Disabilities

## **Tinsay Gebremariam**

Comparative Analysis of Machine  
Learning Models for Sentiment  
Analysis on Amazon Reviews

## **James Hawco and Ainslee Hemmen**

Are Retinal Opsins Sensitive  
Biomarkers of Thyroid Hormone  
Disruption?

**Abby Heisinger and Paige**

**Goodnight**

How Jobs Impact Critical Thinking  
Skills

**Yodahe Kebede**

Cultural Learning Strategies in  
Ethiopia and the United States  
Experienced by International  
Students at a Mid-size Midwestern  
University

**Oltjona Muca**

Exploring meteoric fragments with  
microscopy and spectroscopy  
techniques

**Sachita Pokhrel**

Age Related Microaggressions: The  
Gender Disparity

**David Rezac**

Understanding the Role of Glypicans  
in the Human Body and Disease  
Development

**Nomin Senadheera**

Thriving Abroad: Factors Affecting  
Depression Among Undergraduate  
International Students

**Kendall Solomon**

Metabolic Diversity of Gut Microbial  
Genus Slackia

**Emily Hodge**

Domestic partnership: A  
comparative systematic review

**Alayna Kunshier and Megan  
Narvenson**

Narratives of Behind the Scenes  
Mental Health of College Athletes

**Stella Neophytou**

Age, Ethnicity, and  
Microaggressions

**David Rezac**

Herpes Simplex Virus 1 and its  
Interactions with Pro-Cancerous  
Human Immune Proteins

**Yonung Rai**

Barriers To Dental Care Among  
International Students

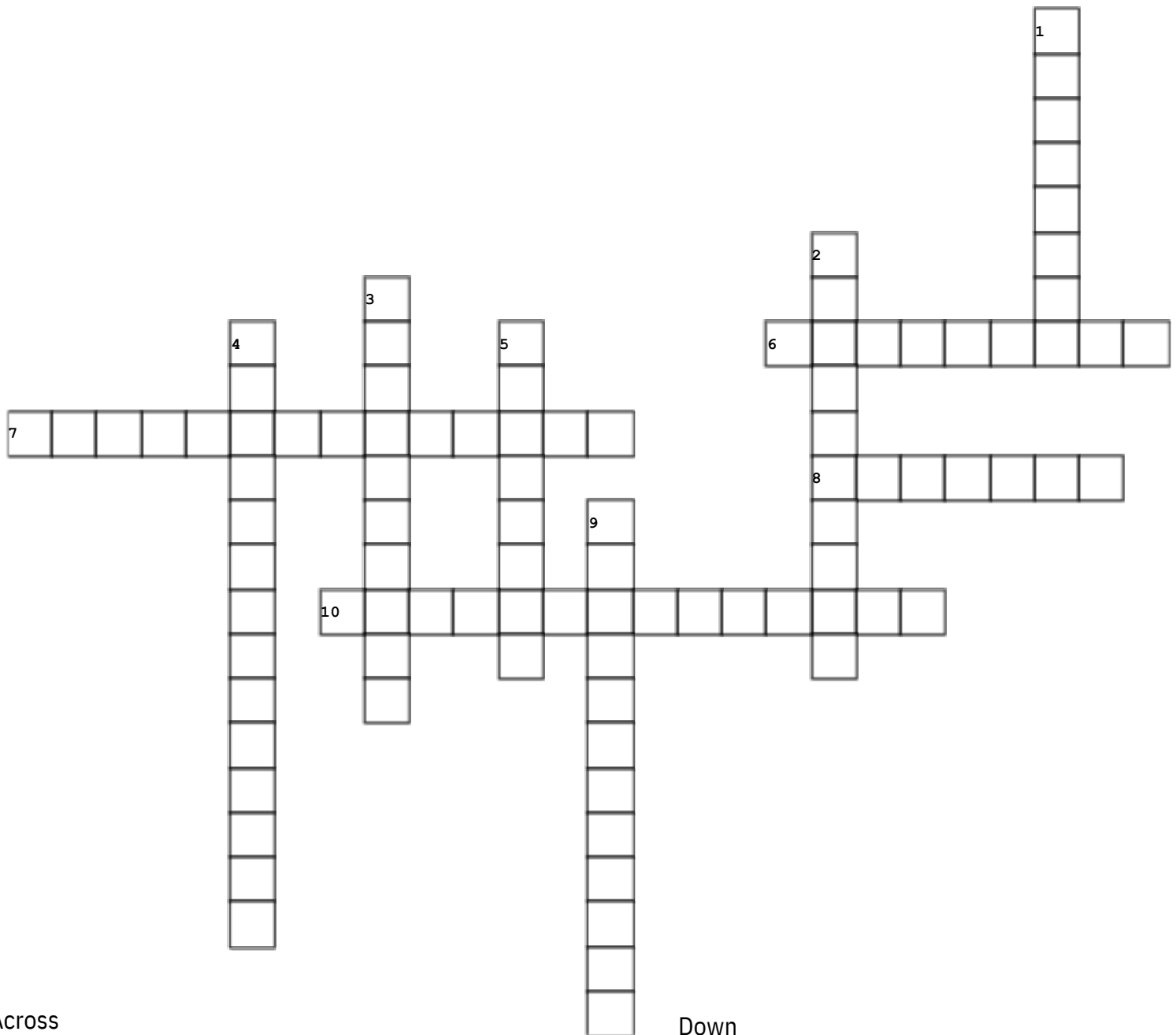
**Amal Sharafkhodjaeva**

Link Between Relationship  
Satisfaction and Life Priorities

**Akinahom Wabella**

Heart Disease Risk Prediction using  
Classification Methods

# Honors Beacon Spring 2024 Crossword



## Across

6. This stadium holds football games at Minnesota State University, Mankato and used to house Vikings training camp.
7. This library opened in 1958 in the valley Campus.
8. Minnesota State University, Mankato mascot.
- 10 Vice President under Lyndon B. Johnson and 1968 presidential candidate, this person gave multiple speeches at Mankato State College.

## Down

1. This building addition was completed in 2008 and became the new home for the university's Chemistry and Geology Department.
2. This person was one of the first woman to head a public college, Mankato Normal School, in 1872 and 1873. In 2009 a residence hall was named after her.
3. Described by William Lass as the "Father of the Mankato Normal School" this person was crucial in

Play online:  
<https://crosswordlabs.com/view/honors-beacon-spring-2024>

- the establishment of the school and had the first women's dormitory named after him.
- 4. Future democratic presidential candidate and Secretary of State who campaigned at Minnesota State University in the 1992 election.
- 5. This college president oversaw the university during a time of unprecedented growth and now has a residence hall named after him.
- 9. The second student newspaper associated with Mankato, this newspaper ran from 1929-1933.

# Answer Key

The crossword puzzle grid contains the following words:

- 1. Lincoln Library
- 2. Journal
- 3. Dean
- 4. Hall
- 5. Carr
- 6. Blackeslee
- 7. Lincoln Library
- 8. Stomper
- 9. Scripps
- 10. Herbert Humphrey