

THE HONORS BEACON

Honors Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato



LEADERSHIP • RESEARCH • GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Issue XVI, Fall 2019



Pictured from left to right: Nicole Jecha, Kassidy Tocco, Sarah Wall



Photo: Kassidy Tocco

Being at Pride

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

In September, we celebrated the LGBTQ+ community, allies, and the wide diversity in Mankato at the 18th annual South Central Pride Festival. This year's celebration consisted of Queeraoke and the Pride Parade, followed by the Pride festival and dance party. During the parade that passed through downtown Mankato, spectators saw their peers and community supporting them, with parade participants ranging from local businesses and ministries to Minnesota State University, Mankato organizations including the marching band. The festival was held at Riverfront Park after the parade, where the outdoor stage was utilized to put on a fantastic Drag Show that had some jaw dropping performances. Some little kids even went up to dance with the performers! I have loved going to Pride events to support my family and friends and to have a genuinely fun time. These events and the individuals who attend create a safe and welcoming envi-

ronment. This year, I ran into other honors students at Pride too. I was able to speak to them and follow up afterwards on what Pride means to them.

One thing that was unique to Pride this year was the tribute to Jessica Flatequal, who passed away in April. As the Director of Sexuality and Gender Programs and the first full-time Director of the LGBT Center here on campus, Flatequal was a cornerstone for the LGBT community at Minnesota State Mankato and a beloved figure in the Mankato area. Though I did not know Flatequal personally, I could feel the tremendous loss and the enduring love for her during the entire event. At the Pride Festival, there was a speech paying homage to who Flatequal was, the work she did for the community, and the inspiring legacy she leaves behind. It was incredibly touching and there were very few dry eyes in the crowd.

When asked, "What would you say to some-

one who has never gone to but is considering attending Pride events or visiting the LGBT center?" honors student Mackenzie Glaser responded, "I would definitely tell them it's worth going. No matter who you are you'll be accepted as you are and celebrated as an individual. The event just leaves you with a good feeling." Another honors student says, "I highly recommend attending Pride or the LGBT center. You don't have to be "out" or even be a part of the community. Going with a friend or friends is always a good idea in my opinion." These are both sentiments with which I would venture to guess Flatequal would whole heartedly agree.

Personally, this is my third year attending Mankato Pride as an ally. I have always enjoyed the genuine love and acceptance of anyone within or outside the LGBTQ+ community that is portrayed during this event. In one word, Pride is truly a celebra-

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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.



Editor's Note

Emily Schiltz, '21 (Exercise Science and Psychology; Detroit Lakes, Minn.)




As I reflect on my final semester as Editor in Chief, I am shocked by how much I have grown. I have become technologically savvy, improved my editing skills, and now know what it takes to pull together a newsletter. While

none of these skills directly apply to my major or my future career, I know that they have made me a more well-rounded individual and will be useful in my future. This idea is what inspired the theme of the sixteenth issue of the Honors Beacon: "Life Outside

Honors." While Honors may be a large part of our education, it isn't what defines us. It is one part of the whole, one sliver of what makes us unique individually.

In this edition of the Honors Beacon, the stories told and articles written focus on who Honors students are outside of the Honors Program and what they are accomplishing. Between interviews, informational pieces, and reflections, this issue touches on how students are impacting the community.

I would like to thank the writers for a wonderful semester, my co-Editor Jonathan, and the Honors staff for their hard work in making this edition of the Honors Beacon come together. Happy reading! 

Director's Note

Dr. Leah White




I am writing the Director's Statement for this issue of the Beacon at the end of my favorite week of the semester; the week when students enrolled in HONR 475 defend their final portfolios. Portfolio

defense week is rewarding because it provides an opportunity to celebrate student achievements. However, I most enjoy the week because I am able to learn more about the many incredible experiences our students are having outside of honors. Certainly, the honors lens provides students a meaningful way to reflect on and process these experiences, but beyond this reflective framework, the students are fully outside the comfort of Morris Hall 265 or the traditional boundaries of a classroom.

This past week I was able to listen to Special

Education major, Melanie Bengston speak passionately about her work with The Miracle League and the mentor relationships she developed with her athletes. Bio-Medical Sciences majors Bethany Haus, Hunter Herber and Nickolas Rockenback explained how their time studying in Thailand (Haus) or assisting on a medical mission trip in Guatemala (Herber and Rockenback) helped shape them as future physicians committed to equity in healthcare. Yuseina Brito Lino spoke eloquently about how her student teaching experience in a 4th grade classroom in Texas has affirmed her belief that representation matters in education and her commitment to being a positive role model for students of color.

These are just a handful of examples of the amazing work our students are doing outside of honors. Having this opportunity to reflect on these experiences in their portfolios allows students to fully appreciate the advantages of their risk taking. 

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Discovering Campus Resources

By Amber Chrischilles, '21 (Mass Media; Storm Lake, Iowa.)

LIBRARY SERVICES

MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

As I approach my last few semesters as a student at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I realize that while I've utilized some of the amazing campus resources here, there are so many resources that are unknown to students. After digging deeper into resources available to students on campus, I found a few that I hope students can learn more about and utilize themselves.

For new or first-year students at Minnesota State Mankato, one great resource is New Student and Family Programs. New Student and Family Programs is designed to provide students with helpful tools to make the transition into college and to stay in college. If students are curious about changing their major or are undecided, one of the first places on campus they should visit is this office.

Their staff coordinates first-year experience classes and orientations throughout the year. They provide undecided academic advising as well as events throughout the year for students to explore their options, such as Majors in Minutes. Honors students utilizing this resource may even build their honors competencies by discovering their leadership traits and how they may be applied in the workforce. This office is located in Preska 103, conveniently located close to students living on campus.

Wouldn't it be great to travel the world while in college? Well luckily for all of the travel bug students, there is a resource on campus to help them make their travel dreams come true. The Center for Education Abroad and Away (CEAA), in Morris Hall 002, is happy to help students explore their travel options. The CEAA advisors can help students choose between over 60 countries and 300 programs as well as between faculty-led, National Student Exchange, MSU exchange, and partner programs.

Utilizing the CEAA is a great way for honors students to complete part of their global citizenship competency. Being immersed in a


new culture and language is a great way to learn more about the world. If students are worried about paying for studying abroad, the CEAA can show them how to apply for financial aid or scholarships. Even if students are just curious about their options, the CEAA advisors can help them sort through all of their possibilities.

A hidden gem of a resource that's right in front of our eyes is Student Health Services, located in Carkoski Commons 21. Through this resource, students can not only schedule a doctor's appointment on campus, but they can also get prescriptions, visit the Relaxation Station, and buy lower-cost cough/cold medicines, pain relievers, and feminine hygiene products.

An on-campus organization integrated with Student Health Services is Health Peers Reaching Out (Health PROs). If students are looking for an organization on campus to help them build their leadership competency, this organization may be a great one to join. This is a volunteer organization where students plan events to help educate their peers about alcohol, safer sex, healthy eating, stress management, and others.

Another helpful on-campus resource that I have started to use more is Library Services. Along with being a comfy place to catch up on homework, the library also has a number of study tools available. Each floor of the building has separate areas for both social and quiet study environments, which also includes study rooms for group and individual use.

The library also has an anatomy room, located in Memorial Library 86, that provides free-to-use models and tutoring. Additional services that the library provides are textbook rentals, laptop and equipment checkout, a copy shop, writing centers, and as always, librarians eager to help students in any way they can.

There are a number of resources on our campus that tend to go unnoticed. After some exploration, I have discovered how useful some of these hidden gems are. To learn more about any of these campus resources, visit their office or find their contact information on the school's website. These resources are already paid for through tuition and fees, so take advantage of them and encourage other students to do the same! 

To learn more about the resources offered on campus: <http://www.mnsu.edu/ext/student-resources.html>



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 and designate your gift to the Honors Program.

Headline (Continued from page 1)

tion. I can think of few places today that can evoke such joy and love. People with varying life experiences, identities, or hardships come to Pride to just be who they are. Baggage is left at the door and there is a certain lightness that comes with being in an environment of total acceptance. I value the fact that Pride events provide individuals with a place to be seen for who they are when everyday life may not allow them the same opportunity. Visibility is so important today and it is a beautiful thing to watch.

Attending events like Pride and actively interacting with the LGBTQ+ community plays a huge role in global citizenship. What better way to immerse yourself in a culture than by going to an event that celebrates it? Through my engagements and conversations with individuals in this community, I have had the privilege to listen to many other life experiences, struggles, hardships, joys, and celebrations. Though I acknowledge I will never be able to ful-


ly understand these things, as they are not my own experiences, there is value in simply listening to them. This mindset has truly molded me into a stronger global citizen. Listening to and acknowledging other identities and experiences is foundational to being a global citizen. Keeping an open mind and heart is essential to truly embracing another culture.

Other honors students note how Pride events are important to society, Minnesota State Mankato, and Honors and how it has helped them grow in global citizenship:

-Miranda Bass: "Pride is important to society because it encourages an environment of love and acceptance for everyone. Pride can be used in the global citizenship competency since the LGBTQ+ community is its' own culture that can be explored. Being a member of the LGBTQ+ community has help me grow as a global citizen because it helps me reflect on my own culture and learn more about different communities within the community."

-Junior honors student: "Pride has allowed me to grow as a global citizen because I have gotten to interact with people who have a different background from me. Moreover, I have learned about their identities and how they've handled dealing with controversy."

-Mackenzie Glaser: "Pride is important to Honors, Minnesota State Mankato, and society because it is an important demographic that needs more focus. This event and being a part of the community has helped me grow as a global citizen by allowing me to take a step back to really look at my assumptions based on my experiences and being able to broaden my mind to different aspects of the community."

Embracing our diversity is part of what makes us honors students. Let's encourage each other to reach out, listen, learn, and participate in events where we can celebrate who we are. 

Into the Corral with Ferdinand



Ferdy loves children and children, like Nuella, love Ferdy!



Ferdinand and his friends having a blast at the Honors Cabin!



Ferdy had the chance to visit the Eiffel Tower!



Ferdy loves the beignets in New Orleans!

This semester will be our third semester featuring Ferdinand—the Honors Program mascot and stress bull that accompanies students and faculty on their adventures.

Since our last corral, Ferdinand has traveled to Europe and seen the Eiffel Tower, has relaxed by the water on multiple occasions, and has tried new foods that were delicious.

However, Ferdinand has also made some great memories close to home. This fall, he and his friends went camping at the Honors Cabin and won the Homecoming Decorating Contest!

Are you going on a trip soon and need a Ferdinand to bring along? Come grab one!



Pictured from left to right: Mason Vlaanderen, Abby Larson, Meaghan Keohane, Jacqueline Tomas, Shamsudeen Adediji

Learning about Learning Community Coordinators

By Samantha Kozelek, '22 (Elementary Education; Waukesha, Wisc.)

The following features excerpts from interviews conducted with five Honors students at Minnesota State University, Mankato who work as Learning Community Coordinators (LCC). The LCCs are: Mason Vlaanderen (Sophomore Business Learning Community), Abby Larson (Freshman Elements of Nursing Learning Community), Meaghan Keohane (Pre-Professional Learning Community), Jacqueline Tomas (Sophomore Elementary Education Learning Community), and Shamsudeen Adediji (Exploring Business Learning Community).

Kozelek: Why did you choose to apply for a learning community coordinator (LCC) position?

Larson: I chose to become an LCC because I wanted to improve my interpersonal skills and help create a safe and helpful community for incoming students. I am a pretty shy person, so I thought that taking on this opportunity would help me improve my skills as a leader.

Keohane: I was in a learning community (LC) during my freshman year of college and really enjoyed the experience. My LCC was super helpful and truly made my transition to college easier. I saw the position of an LCC as an opportunity that would allow me to help incoming freshmen transition to living away from home while helping them reach their academic goals this year.

Tomas: As a freshman, I was really looking at how to get involved in my major. Being an LCC seemed like a good leadership position to get me involved.

Vlaanderen: The learning communities program at MNSU has been such an integral component to my college experience

and I wanted to give back to a program that has positively influenced who I am today.

Kozelek: Were you ever in an LC? How did you transfer your experience of being in one to leading one?

Larson: I was in the Freshman Elements of Nursing LC last year. My experience was phenomenal. I made so many friends through the LC, and the community really helped me grow as a person. It was nice to be surrounded by like-minded people. I have tried to create a similar close-knit community for my students this year, and so far, it seems as if I have succeeded.

Keohane: I was in an LC my freshman year of college. I think being in an LC and running one have both been very beneficial experiences for me. It is a lot more work to run an LC than to be a student in one! To figure out how I wanted to be a leader in this position, I had to do a lot of reflection on what worked and didn't work for my LCC and different leaders I have seen in the past. When I was in an LC, developing communication skills with other students was the most important thing I learned. Now that I am running an LC, I have used the skills I've learned to develop techniques to communicate in a professional way.

Vlaanderen: I was a part of the First-Year Honors LC and Emerging Leaders in Honors LC my first two years of college. I had the opportunity of being involved in two separate learning communities and experiencing different relationships with my peers. Having been in an LC before leading one helps me understand what students would be interested in and how they can get the most out of the program.

Kozelek: What have you learned so far in this experience? What are you hoping to gain from this experience?

Adediji: I have learned the importance of having a community that supports growth. This experience has allowed me to intensively analyze my leadership and team bonding skills. I have also learned my weaknesses and areas that need improvement while in this position.

Larson: I've learned that some people want to be involved and others don't, and there isn't anything that I can do besides encourage them to come. I have also learned more about how I interact with people one-on-one and in a larger group successfully. I am hoping to gain leadership experience and really improve upon my interpersonal skills.

Tomas: I've learned a lot about planning. One part of teaching is how to lead a group of students, which is something I do in the LC as well. I feel like I've had a lot of experience with planning and working with students that has made me more interested in becoming a teacher and made me more ambitious. This experience has also helped me learn how I can be a resource and help others.

Vlaanderen: I have discovered that I love building relationships with people. I enjoy being a resource for students and giving meaningful advice that can shape them into who they want to be. I am always learning and hope that this experience will help strengthen my coordinating abilities in my future career.

Kozelek: What are some challenges you have faced? How did you or will you ap-

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Keohane: The most challenging part of my job has been knowing how to deal with conflict. Finding the right way to approach challenging situations with the students can be a struggle. I think my best approach when I need to have a tough conversation with a student in the LC is to analyze the situation from the student's perspective and see how I would want to be approached about the issue. Every situation and student is different, so I try not to approach two situations the same way.

Tomas: I think one of the most difficult parts of the position is that I am catering to a lot of different students and their personal needs. This makes planning events more difficult because I want to find things that interest everyone. I make sure I talk to my students a lot and try to have close relationships with them. This way I can understand what they need.

Kozelek: In what ways has the experience helped you develop the three Honors competencies?

Larson: It allows me to work on my personal leadership styles and to figure out what kind of leader I am. However, it has also helped me figure out how I work in a group setting with my students and fellow coworkers. I now have a much better view on team/group work than I did before starting this job.

Adediji: It has improved my global citizenship and leadership competencies. My LC is made up of individuals from different backgrounds, which has made me more aware of the role my cultural identity plays in exchanges with other cultures. This is an experience that has taught me perseverance, understanding, and leading without compromise.

Kozelek: How did the experience allow you to connect with other people or organizations that can aid you in pursuing your academic and career goals?

Keohane: Being an LCC has allowed me to connect with so many people that I wouldn't otherwise be in contact with. One of the benefits of this position is that I work very closely with biology department staff.

Tomas: In my position, I have been plan-

ning an event at a local elementary school. To plan this, I've gone to meetings with the elementary school principal and have been in contact with a PTO board member. These connections have given me a better understanding of the environment I hope to work in. One of my favorite things about the position is getting to work with professors towards a common goal.

Vlaanderen: This role has allowed me to meet and talk with other student leaders of organizations within the College of Business. I have also developed deeper connections with professors and I have also developed connections with professors that will be beneficial for me in the future.

Kozelek: How did the experience allow you to connect with yourselves on a deeper level?

Larson: This experience overall has been very good for me. I am a very shy and introverted person, so by taking on this job, I was really pushing myself out of my comfort zone. I have come more to terms with some of my social anxiety and I have worked through some of the barriers that I have faced. I have learned that when I am in my element, I feel more capable to lead because I know the content well and am giving facts. I have really pulled in my observational skills and have learned where my strengths lie when it comes to interpersonal interaction.

Adediji: This experience has allowed me to ask questions about myself and my new surroundings. This experience, through various events and happenings, has shown me the importance of understanding and engaging with diverse individuals and cultures.

Vlaanderen: This role has allowed me to discover that I love helping other people. I truly want students to succeed and be able to say that I helped them find their way.

Kozelek: What are some things that you hope your students will get out of being in your LC?

Larson: I am hoping that my students have found a close-knit community in which they feel comfortable and liked. I hope that the study sessions help them perform their best in their classes and that they form habits they can use in their future. I hope that through their interactions

with me as a leader, they understand that it's okay to ask for help. I hope that the learning community helps them find their place on campus and determine who they are or want to be.

Keohane: I hope the students can develop connections with each other in the LC. I also hope that I can help them build relationships with their professors and develop good resources they can use throughout the next four years.

Tomas: I hope my students feel connected to their major while being in the LC. I also hope that they are inspired to push themselves and be self-directed in their learning. Since my students are sophomores, many of them are looking to get more involved in the elementary education department. I think it is important for them to take initiative on things in order to do this.


Kozelek: What is your favorite part about being an LCC so far?

Larson: So far, my favorite part of being an LCC is being able to help my students in the same way my LC helped me last year. I like helping people find solutions to their problems, and as an LCC, I am constantly guiding my students through the thick and thin. I enjoy creating a community for others to thrive in.

Adediji: My favorite part of being an LCC is seeing how students evolve and grow into their own selves and succeeding in their academics.

Keohane: My favorite part of being an LCC so far is being able to help the students with their homework or answer their questions when they seem confused. School is so stressful, especially your freshman year. The idea of giving students reassurance about their studies is something I really enjoy about being an LCC. It has also been great to see all my students adjust to being in college away from home more and more as the semester goes on.

Tomas: My favorite part is the people I've met. I think they are all inspiring people who are passionate about the things that interest them.

Vlaanderen: My favorite part about being an LCC is developing relationships with the students in my LC and seeing them grow by finding their interests. 



Friendships Created Through a Learning Community

By Courtney Kellenberger, '23 (English and Chemistry Secondary Education; Sioux Falls, S. Dakota.)




Similar to many first year students, I had some feelings of concern leading up to when I started college. Personally, I have never been the most outgoing or extroverted. As an incoming first-year student who struggles with making close friends, I wished there was a way to bring together a dozen students who had similar interests—oh wait, there is.

Last spring, I received an email regarding Learning Communities (LC) for students at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I looked at all the different first-year learning communities and found the Exploring Careers in Education LC. I read about the opportunities offered through this LC such as priority move-in, early registration for classes, study sessions, and more. I decided to join this LC and I'm so glad I did.

Almost everyone from my LC moved in a day early, allowing us the chance to get to know each other that night after dinner and the

following day while we helped other first-year students move into the residence halls. These first initial hours were a great time to hear about everyone's hobbies and career goals. Through this, I realized I had a lot in common with my fellow classmates in the LC. It allowed us the chance to get to know one another on a personal level prior to classes starting. We all became close friends through the classes we have together, our study sessions, weekly events and activities, and going to the dining hall together.

Some of my favorite LC events I have attended or volunteered at were the hypnotist and cosmic bingo as a group during welcome week, going through the haunted houses on campus with my LC, and creating a carnival for elementary students for our LC's Make a Difference (MAD) project. These fun events have not only been a great time to do something other than homework, but they have also allowed our LC to get to know each other more and make new memories and inside jokes—while also making a difference.

Being a part of the Exploring Careers in Education Learning Community has provided me with the opportunity to get to know a group of people who have similar interests, attend events I would not have gone to by myself, register early for education major-related courses, and volunteer to help children in the community. The LC has made my transition to college incredibly smooth and has helped me grow in my knowledge about education, my friendships, and my schoolwork. Overall, being a member of the Exploring Careers in Education Learning Community has been a very positive experience for me, and it has helped make Minnesota State University, Mankato feel like home. 

Honorable Mentions

- The following students were awarded scholarships for the 2019-2020 Academic Year: Katie Leibel, Melanie Bengston, Kaitlyn Graning, Shayla Schumacher, Jonathan Fjeld, Meaghan Keohane, Alana StCyr, Lillie McDermott, Mallory Steinmetz, Nick Rockenback, and Emily Smith.
- Kaitlyn Graning presented at both the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association Conference and MRTA Conference.
- Katie Leibel earned a full time job at the Mankato Free Press.
- Shelby Hartmann completed an internship in the operating room at a hospital this summer.
- Lillie McDermott was selected as a student spotlight for the Undergraduate Research Center this fall.
- The following students are executive board members of current Recognized Student Organizations: Shayla Schumacher, Dhavalkumar Bhakta, Shelby Hartmann, Emily Schiltz, Alana StCyr, Lille McDermott, Mallory Steinmetz, Nick Rockenback, Emily Smith, and Cassidy Tocco.
- Alana StCyr attended the University of Northern Iowa Resident Assistant Conference, The Midwest Affiliate of College and University Residence Halls Conference, and the National Association of College and University Residence Halls Conference.
- Yuesina Brito Lino is currently student teaching in Texas.
- Nick Rockenback and Rebecca Guss both volunteered abroad this summer.
- The following students presented at the NCHC Conference in November: Melanie Bengston, Samantha King, Eryn Zuiker, Bethany Haus, Emily Schiltz and Sarah Wall.
- The following students are a part of Student Government: Shayla Schumacher, and Dhavalkumar Bhakta.
- Serida Zosse attended a Sustainable Leadership Conference and the Village of Information Technology and Biotechnology Conference.
- Jamie Rogers is a volunteer at Open Door Health Center.
- The following students were Orientation Peer Assistants this summer: Emily Smith, Jonathan Fjeld, Alana St. Cyr, Tamara Abou Mourad, and Lizzie Putnam.
- The following students passed their portfolio defense this semester: Melanie Bengtson, Yuseina Brito Lino, Bethany Haus, Hunter Herber, Alycia Holwerda, Samantha King, Katie Leibel, Ana Leyva, Nickolas Rockenback, Nellie Welsh, and Christopher Zuelsdorf.

Now Creating Honors Citizens

By Emily Schiltz, '21 (Exercise Science/Psychology; Detroit Lakes, Minn.)


Before attending the National Collegiate Honors Conference (NCHC), I had never traveled south of Kansas. I was thrilled to have the chance to travel as well as share my research with others. NCHC was a five-day conference held from November 6th-10th in the heart of New Orleans. The conference included activities and sessions for both faculty and students that ranged from workshops to poster presentations to roundtable discussions about different Honors Programs. Outside of the conference, there was plenty of time and opportunities for us to go out and explore, experience the city and take in the culture.

I knew this opportunity would help me further my research competency, but what I wasn't expecting was how much I would also grow as a global citizen. While in New Orleans, not only did I have a chance to interact with students who have had different experiences than me, but also a variety of different cultures than the one in which I had grown up. The residents of New Orleans

had a demeanor about them; they were content and passionate about their city, all the parts of it. I met individuals who made me step back and examine how I felt about them and myself, as well as my surroundings. Each part of the city, from the French Quarter to Bourbon Street, had its own atmosphere. The best part of the city is that there were surprises around every corner and no matter how much ground I discovered, there was always something left to explore.

At the conference, I presented my research project alongside my research partner. While presenting, I was able to explain my project to both faculty and students from across the country and share our knowledge. I also walked around and learned what other students had completed as their projects and learned from them. The types of projects that were presented ranged widely from literary analyses to surgical implants in rats, with topic areas ranging from social justice to software development ethics. I found

students whose projects hit home with me and with whom I could talk for hours, but I also learned something new from other students' projects. It was a potpourri of research, but every student who I talked with was equally passionate about their projects.

Through NCHC, not only did I have the chance to learn from other students and faculty from across the country, but I bonded with other students from our own Honors Program with whom I traveled. Now, not only do I have the memories of New Orleans, I have new friends to share them with as well. 



An Interview with Dr. Emily Stark

By Masaki Hara, '22 (Biology; Minami City, Japan)



Masaki Hara: Where did you get your undergraduate degree? Graduate degree? What are your degrees in?

Emily Stark: I was an undergraduate student at Hamline University where I graduated with degrees in English and Psychology. Then I went to the University of Minnesota and received my Ph.D. in Social Psychology.

Hara: How long have you been teaching here at Minnesota State Mankato? What brought you here? What types of courses do you teach?

Stark: I began teaching here in 2007. I ap-

plied for a job in the Psychology Department at Minnesota State Mankato because this campus has one of the largest psychology departments in Minnesota and there are a lot of different students to interact with. In the past, I have taught classes such as Social Psychology and Psychology and Law; however, this semester I am teaching HONR401: Critical Thinking and Pseudoscience.

Hara: Tell me about the Honors seminar you're teaching.


Stark: The class is focused around the research competency and aims to teach students how to think critically about research, especially topics in the realm of pseudoscience or paranormal. The class is divided into two parts: a hands-on project and a class survey. For the research project, students pick a topic that is pseudoscience or in the paranormal realm and design a project to test their claims. Along with gaining experience in designing a project and collecting data, students learn how to write about their findings and how we talk about research. Then, as a class, the students put together a survey asking questions about a

variety of pseudoscientific topics to look at the beliefs of their peers and distribute it.

Hara: Why did you choose to teach this class? What are you hoping students achieve by the end of the class?

Stark: I chose to teach this course because there are big issues about fake claims in our society and as a result, people spend a lot of money. During the class, students can learn how to critically think and understand research so they are able to separate fake claims and real facts and apply them to our society. I also chose to teach this course because my own research interests lie in critical thinking.

Hara: What types of challenges have you had in this course? How have you countered them?

Stark: I think that one of the biggest challenges I have had working with the students in my class is that each student has had a different experience with research in their education. Because of this, I try to find common ground with students to help them with their own research interests. 

Things We Have Learned Outside of the Classroom

by Amber Chrischilles, '21 (Mass Media; Storm Lake, Iowa) and Cassidy Tocco, '21 (Special Education; Marshall, Minn.)

This column is co-written by two juniors, Cassidy Tocco and Amber Chrischilles. Cassidy is studying Special Education and is a member of the Speech and Debate team. Amber is a Mass Media major with minors in Marketing and Communication Studies and is the Emerging Leaders Honors Learning Community Coordinator. Throughout our three years, we have learned a lot! Here are a few tips that will hopefully help you in your college experience.

Strive for greatness, not perfection.

Life isn't perfect and neither should you be. Allow yourself to make mistakes and learn from them, but also learn to forgive yourself. Mistakes are inevitable. Try to embrace them, be compassionate toward yourself, and apply what you learn to the future.

Do things that you enjoy.

A huge part of college is finding your passion, so do things that interest you. Don't just sign up to be in a club because you think it will help you complete a competency or add to your resume. Your time is valuable, so don't settle for things that you don't fully enjoy.

You can never have too many internships.

There are so many internship opportunities that you can take advantage of right here in Mankato! Not only do they look great on resumes, but they help you figure out what you want, or don't want, to do after college. They are also great ways to complete competencies while gaining hands-on experience.

Time-management is always a struggle, but it is necessary.

Use a planner and set goals for yourself to get things done each day. Time-management is difficult and is probably something you will never stop struggling with, but you need to figure out what works for you to get things accomplished. Focus on what is really important to you and make sure that you can fit those things into your life before you take on more activities.

Don't give up on things that challenge you.

Yes, you may feel like you have a million things to do, between honors, classes, jobs, and extracurriculars, and that may seem too overwhelming right now, but you can do it. Talk to the honors faculty and to help you get a grasp on the skills you can work on to stay on top of everything. This program is greatly beneficial and has given us a lot of tools that we will continue to use for the rest of our lives.

Change will happen, and that's a good thing.

Coming to college is a big change. It is exciting, overwhelming and difficult, but know that all of these emotions are completely normal and valid. College can push you out of your comfort zone with coming to a new place, meeting new people, and earning so many new things about the world and about yourself. This is a time of growth and adapting and finding out who you are as a person. Allow yourself time to figure it out and to make the most of the changes that will inevitably come your way.

Balance is key.

It is frustrating that one of the most important aspects of life is also one of the most elusive. Sometimes it is easy to just focus on your social life and fall behind in school. It is just as common to overwork yourself and lack a support system. But balance is achievable with mindful scheduling, planning, and most of all, taking care of yourself. Self-care is so important, and often, when actively carrying out self-care, you feel more balanced in your life.


It is ok to ask for help.

College brings on a lot of very difficult decisions. Don't be afraid to seek out help; it is ok and even encouraged! We have so many people here willing to lend a hand, from honors faculty and staff to academic advisors to professors. If at any time during college you feel like you don't know what to do or you're struggling, please reach out to those who are there for you.

Don't rush.

Maybe it's a cliché, but there really is no other time in life like college, so enjoy it. This time is about more than just getting a degree so you can get a job. We are discovering ourselves as individuals, engaging in new experiences, and meeting new people. Personally, for both of us, our three years have flown by. Soon we will be working and moving on to different phases of our lives, so let's enjoy the one we are in first.

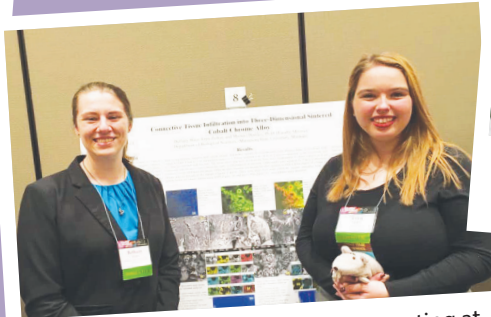
There are so many amazing resources; utilize them.

Both our Honors Program and campus have some amazing resources that are helpful for students at every point of their journey. The entire honors office has some great faculty and staff who seem to know just about everything. The Career Development Center, the Counseling Center, the LGBT Center, the Women's Center: they all have resources and programs to take part in. It is important to know all of the resources we as students can take advantage of, especially since we are already paying for them! 

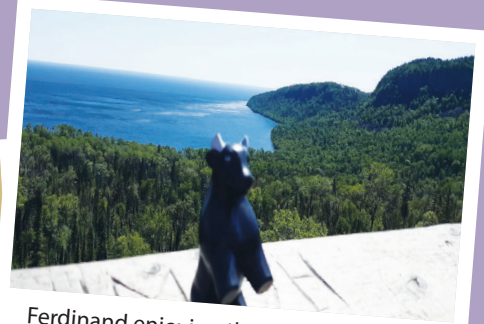
Honors in Pictures



Students are hard 'at work' during a Wellness Wednesday presentation



Bethany Haus and Eryn Zuiker presenting at NCHC



Ferdinand enjoying the view of the water



Honors staff sporting Ferdinand on their Halloween costumes



Our Painting with Bob Ross event was a hit!



Shelly Baldrige during her Twinternship!

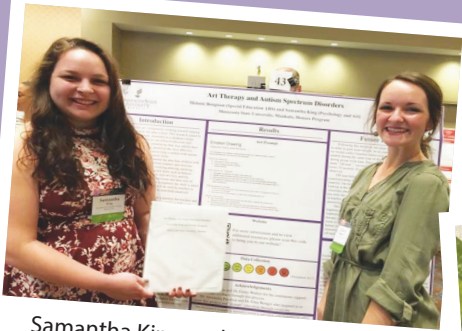


One of our community's supporters at the Pride Parade



Emily Schiltz and Sarah Wall presenting at NCHC

Honors in Pictures



Samantha King and Melanie Bengston presenting at NCHC



The Maverick Band at the Pride Parade



Two of our students who are on the Speech Team in California at the National Tournament



Past and current learning community coordinators for the Honors Program: Madison Hoffman, Alicia Utecht, Amber Chrischilles and Kade Patterson



Students during one of the NCHC workshops exploring the city: Sarah Wall, Emily Schiltz, Eryn Zuiker, and Alaina Bierman (VA)



Corinne Koffi at the hospital during her time abroad



Eryn Zuiker with some statues during her summer undergraduate research fellowship



Staff and students at the Honors Cabin for Homecoming decorating

Eryn Zuiker: Life in a Lab

By Eryn Zuiker, '20 (Biomedical Sciences; Woodbury, Minn.)



As a biomedical sciences major hoping to get into a M.D. /Ph.D. dual degree program, I knew I would need to expand upon my previous research experience. I also knew that a fellowship would be a great chance to diversify my resume and I had heard about Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) programs from other students and professors. The Association of American Medical Colleges had a list of SURF programs and after looking at multiple programs across the country, I applied to a program through the Mayo Clinic Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. At the end of February, I had received an offer to join the lab of Dr. Lichun Lu in the Depart-

ments of Biomedical Engineering and Physiology, and Orthopedics.

When I arrived in Rochester in May, I had no idea what to expect. My only lab experience was through coursework and undergraduate research at Minnesota State Mankato, so this was my first professional “big girl” job, and I was nervous about what to expect. Eventually, after a whirlwind of paperwork and orientations, I settled into my lab and worked closely with Dr. Matthew George to complete a facet of his research.

In addition to my lab work, I took every opportunity to expand my knowledge,

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Corinne Koffi: A Trip That Changed Me

By Corinne Koffi, '21 (Nursing/Spanish; St. Cloud, Minn.)




My name is Corinne Koffi and I am a third year student double majoring in Nursing and Spanish. I just recently returned from my summer abroad in Costa Rica. While in Costa Rica, I made the most of my experience. I traveled and saw a lot of beautiful sites the country has to offer. I was able to hike a volcano, go surfing, and learn how to dance bachata! Despite all of these experiences, what made my time in Costa Rica exceptional was the people that I got the opportunity to know. Some of the most impactful people to me were Marianela, my teacher for two months who ended up being a good friend; my host family who was an extension of my biological family; and Doña Mildred, the head nurse at my internship site.

Doña Mildred is one of the best people I have ever met and I am so thankful to have been under her supervision for the month that I worked at el Hospital para Indigentes (The Hospital for the Homeless). It is thanks to her patience, teaching, and confidence in me that I was able to learn how to give shots and do wound care. She pushed me not only in my nursing internship, but also in my language abilities. She allowed me to do “curaciones” for patients by myself, giving me time to not only practice my skills and bedside manner, but also my Spanish conversation ability. She invited me to staff lunches, taught me what medications were called, and even showed me around the city after work one day. I went to San Jose

not knowing what to expect but I left with a better understanding of healthcare, homelessness, and an example of the kind of nurse I want to be in the future.

While abroad, I developed the most as a leader through simply navigating daily life. The biggest challenge for me was figuring out the bus system in the city. I genuinely went broke trying to avoid it. I knew something had to change, but after realizing that my weekly bill could quite literally be cut in half if I stopped taking Ubers to get everywhere, I made it a point to take the bus every day. It terrified me, but after getting lost and missing my bus a couple of times, I said to myself, “If this is the worst that can happen, this is not so bad.” By the end of my month in San Jose, I was showing other people how to take the bus. Being able to go from a girl who couldn’t drive through her hometown without a map to independently navigating the capital city of a foreign country was a big deal to me. In doing so I realized my potential independence.

This fall, I started the student organization “Students Advocating for Global Health” in hopes of bringing a little bit of what I learned in Costa Rica back to campus. My main goal for this organization is to find ways to bring cultural experiences to students without studying abroad. I want the members of this group to realize their own independence, create their own global goals, and develop a relationship with the world. This can be done by having difficult conversations that bring new levels of understanding about other cultures as it relates to our future healthcare practice. The best way to learn is to do, so as an organization we aim to go out into the community to put into practice what we discuss in our meetings. My hope is that this solidifies our new and improved understanding of our world, our community, and our role in both. I know that I will never be able to recreate all that I felt and experienced in my three months in Costa Rica, not for myself or for others. However, I hope that with S.A.G.H. I am able to give back by allowing people space to have their own experiences, and maybe even inspire them to go abroad for their own reasons. 

Article Continued (continued from page 12)

challenge myself, and discover my passions throughout the summer. Every day at lunch, Mayo had research seminars I could attend to hear more about noteworthy advances in science and medicine and figure out what research areas I'd be interested in pursuing in the future. I was also able to shadow a few doctors, which helped me figure out what specialties I would be interested in pursuing. At the end of the summer, I presented my project, The Degradation of Injectable L-DOPA modified Oligo(poly(ethylene glycol) fumarate) Hy-

drogels for Tissue Engineering, with other SURF students at the Mayo Summer Student Symposium.

This experience helped keep my lab skills sharp over the summer and taught me how to use many different machines to achieve a variety of research goals. I also gained many professional contacts and fostered friendships with peers who I'll be able to collaborate with in the future. What I loved about the Mayo Clinic was that I never met an employee, physician, or faculty member who wasn't willing to have discussions with me or help me learn.

The Mayo Clinic's SURF program helped me

confirm my career goals and become more confident in my abilities as a student and as a researcher. Currently, I am in the process of applying to M.D. /Ph.D. and graduate programs, and I'm excited to see where my career will progress from here!

Life is not about checking boxes in a carefully thought-out plan; instead, it's about finding out who you are and where your passions lie. I encourage anyone who's thinking about their future career path to step outside their comfort zone and experience as much as possible. 📧

Michelle Baldrige: Building Connections Through Baseball

By Michelle Baldrige, '21 (Sport Management; Ames, Iowa.)



In the fall of 2018, I applied for a game-day internship with the Minnesota Twins and after several rounds of interviews, I was hired at the end of November. My specific job title was Intern, Ticket Sales and Service Game Day. The last week of March included both my orientation and my first game – Opening Day of the 2019 MLB season. While I didn't sell any tickets during my internship, I did have the opportunity to manage national anthem groups, assist with on-field pre-game promotions, help with parades, be a part of the theme night distribution crew, and set up the suites before the game. I especially enjoyed being on the field for pre-game promotions because the atmosphere around home plate before the first pitch is so electric and you can feel how excited everyone is for the game. I discovered this internship while I was completing an assignment for a sport management class and realized that it would fit nicely into my schedule since

most of the season was during my summer. I knew that I needed an internship for my major and thought that working in the MLB would be an amazing first experience. With the Twins, I was able to expand my network within the sports industry, learn more about what it takes to put on an MLB game from a behind-the-scenes perspective, and build my resume with experience through a competitive internship.

During my internship, I learned that communication, organization, and efficiency are the most important qualities you can possess. I also learned that the baseball industry is a lot more friendly and open-hearted than it is competitive and cut-throat. One challenge that I faced early on was being confident in myself and my abilities. I was often nervous that I would say the wrong thing to a fan, or I wouldn't correctly complete a national anthem. I had to remind myself many times that whenever a fan was angry with me, they weren't actually attacking me, they were attacking whatever policy they didn't agree with at the time and I shouldn't take it personally. I also had to learn how to take constructive criticism from my bosses, as it was a sign they wanted to help me grow as an employee, and not that they weren't a fan of what I was doing. Finally, I really learned how to work as a member of a team. My intern position was a partnership, so constant communication and respect of my coworkers' methods was key. Particularly during theme nights, our crew had to work together to set up and tear down the event and be on the same page in terms of further promotional opportunities.

The competency that I developed the most throughout my internship was leadership. As a representative of the organization, I was responsible for maintaining the team's reputation for being community-based and fan-centered. Through all of my interactions with fans, I had to stay professional no matter what happened. One example of when I was able to put my leadership skills to the test was when I was the point person for Cancer Awareness Night. This meant that I was in charge of selecting participants to be honored for their fight against cancer, communicate with them about where and when to meet at the game, carry out the pre-game promotion, and ensure that they were well-informed and comfortable throughout the process. This had a tremendous amount of responsibility and allowed me to utilize the skills I had learned in order to have a successful outcome.

Through my experiences, I was able to truly come out of my shell. I realized how capable I am of tackling new tasks, meeting new people, and being assertive with my job. Concerning my future goals, this opportunity has set me apart as a candidate who not only has experience in the world of professional sports, but the most time-demanding sport with 81 home games. My internship also opened the doors to a close network of people that are willing to help each other out no matter what. Not only have I made friends and lifelong connections, but I know that the impression I made on so many of my coworkers will help me when a "friend of a friend" has a job posting. 📧

Tackling Food Insecurity at The Crossroads

by Jonathan Fjeld, '21 (Mass Media/Communication Studies; Twin Valley, Minn.)



Food insecurity is a prevalent issue among college students. A study done by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab in 2018 indicates that around 42% of college students struggle with some form of food insecurity in the past year. Food insecurity is an issue that affects all college campuses, including Minnesota State Mankato. Here on campus, Campus Kitchen and Campus Cupboard are looking to be one part of a national solution.

Campus Kitchen (CK) started at Minnesota State Mankato in 2005 with the goal of recovering and harvesting food from the community and making meals for people facing food insecurity. According to Campus Kitchen Manager Karen Anderson, the organization has served such a purpose in its 14 years, but has evolved over time. "I took on this role in 2014 and when I first started, it was a service-learning class for the College of Business that would be used as a business model for getting direct service and understanding how to manage people, food, and delivery. When I first started here, there wasn't much of a manual so my advisor from Campus Kitchen said to start my own."

Campus Kitchen originally started in a cafeteria in the basement of Gage Towers with Graduate Assistants as shift leads and volunteers working alongside them. Now, they are housed at Crossroads Campus Ministry and have expanded their volunteer opportunities by adding new shifts, such as a Tuesday meal-making shift for the Boys & Girls Club and giving people the chance to hone in on leadership skills.


One of the shift leads is third-year student Sophia Hoiseth. Hoiseth is a Political Science major who started as a shift lead this semester. She touched on her favorite part of the role and how it helps with the global citizenship competency. "My favorite aspect of working at Campus Kitchen is getting to work with all the international student volunteers," Hoiseth stated. "Not only do we get to volunteer for a bigger cause like food insecurity; we get to bond by talking about the parts of us that are most human: our favorite foods, our family members, our future careers."

Although Campus Kitchen is a pass-through kitchen, meaning that they don't cook there, they have added in things such as a bread cart and a "little fridge" to address food insecurity. Whenever the Crossroads Campus Ministry building is open, students can grab one package of food from either the cart or the fridge without having to fill out an application. Depending on the day, the "little fridge" can have a variety of foods, from PB&Js to fresh fruits & vegetables to food donated from various restaurants such as Olive Garden.

On Tuesdays, if you visit Crossroads Campus Ministry between 11am and 1pm you can get a \$1 Lunch: a home-cooked meal that is prepared and served by different churches depending on the week. Each week, there is a salad, dessert, and some sort of cooked dish as the entrée, such as traditional Minnesota hotdishes like red hotdish and tator tot hotdish.

Another resource Campus Kitchen works alongside is Campus Cupboard, a student food pantry that's managed by Crossroads Campus Ministry. A student started it as a class project and volunteers have helped to keep it going since then. In just one year, the Cupboard has gone from serving around 100 people a year to serving 235 this past September. This is among other positive strides for the Cupboard. "This year thanks in part to the Minnesota State Mankato/Winona State donations, we have a lot of variety so when people come they can have a good selection of food and then it expands," Coordinator Gail Fox explained, "We do have a SHIP Grant that we're using to purchase a new glass-front cooler which will allow us to get more fresh produce and dairy products."

The Campus Cupboard is open Tuesdays 12-3pm during the academic year, but appointments can be made by contacting the office. Like Campus Kitchen, the Cupboard is open to all in-need students from any background. Students can get one basket of food per week and only need to fill out a quick application before getting food.

Both Campus Kitchen and Campus Cupboard are actively open to new volunteers, including shift leaders, drivers, shoppers, and for donations. To find out more, students can look on Engage or contact Crossroads about volunteering or donating. The Crossroads Campus Ministry building is also open 8 am to 9 pm Monday-Friday, and 9 am to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. 



Campus Cupboard Staff for left to right: ShelbyLynn Hill, Gail Fox

Leadership Through Mentorship

By Brian Swancutt, '22 (Social Work; Rochester, Minn.)

Imagine: It is spring semester. You are beginning the process of creating your class schedule for next fall. You're a first year honors student, so you're looking for an honors seminar to take. It's looking like your class load is going to be pretty packed. You're already sitting on 16 credits and you haven't even begun to look at the honors courses. Reluctantly, you navigate to the honors website and click on the course offerings for the next fall. You scroll down, and... Eureka! A class that's only one credit! It's called Developing Your Mentorship Philosophy. You wonder to yourself, "What could that possibly be about?" Luckily, an explanation is coming!


This semester, I took HONR401: Developing Your Mentorship Philosophy. The goal of this class is to enhance a students' understanding of mentorship through a multitude of readings, reflections, and discussions, as well as through mentoring a few Honors 201 students. The readings, discussions, and practical application opportunities have been extremely interesting and beneficial.

Developing Your Mentorship Philosophy is an amazing class to take if you want to develop your leadership competency. The thing that develops your leadership skills fastest is the practical application part of the class. I had to quickly figure out what my mentorship style is, how I relate to people, and how to approach mentor/mentee

relationships when problems arise.

One challenge that I've faced in this class is the number of papers I have to write. Each week, it is expected that you write a 1-to-2-page paper, something that can really start to pile up when other classes are taken into account. In addition to this, there are other assignments and papers assigned throughout the semester. This is much more work than you would expect for a one credit class.

Another challenge that I've faced in the class is scheduling times to meet with my mentees. Meeting with your mentees can be difficult, especially if your schedule is hectic like mine. This is something that I've been working on, however. My advice regarding this is to work ahead, take notes on the readings for the next couple of weeks, and have the notes for reference when you go over the readings in class. This tactic is especially helpful around midterms because it takes a lot off of your plate.

Overall, Developing Your Mentorship Philosophy has been a rewarding class to take. This class is beneficial because it has prepared me to take on a mentorship role in the future. The most rewarding parts of what I learned in the class are that I now know what it means and takes to be a mentor and I know what mentor/mentee relationships should look like. I'm excited to see how my mentorship skills will develop in the future. 

Courses Spring 2020

Dare to Tell Your Story (HONR 401)
Ms. Ginny Walters

This course will encourage academic, personal, and professional development through activities and reflections influenced by Brene Brown's work. Students will encounter vulnerability and courage as key goal-setting and risk-taking components while utilizing self-knowledge to convey unique qualities to others.

GIS and Modeling (HONR 401)
Dr. Rama Mohapatra

This course will introduce to theories, tools, and techniques within the setting of modeling geographical data. Students will be provided with skills necessary to investigate space-time patterns that occur from human environment interactions.

Performance and Social Justice (HONR 401), Dr. Leah White

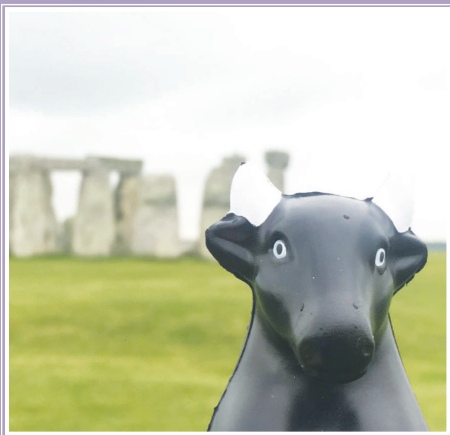
This course will teach how to identify cases of racial injustice and how social change can be promoted via personal reflection, theoretical analysis and performance techniques.

Introduction to Sociology (SOC 101)

Dr. Paul Prew

This course will help make sense of existing sociological perspectives & theoretical orientations within the World. Students will develop an awareness of the issues social scientists cover and the tools they use to understand those issues, and aim to challenge the status quo understanding of issues.

Full course descriptions can be found at: mnsu.edu/honors/currentstudents/courses14html.html



F e r d - Search!

Throughout this edition of the Honors Beacon, there are a number of hidden Ferdinands.

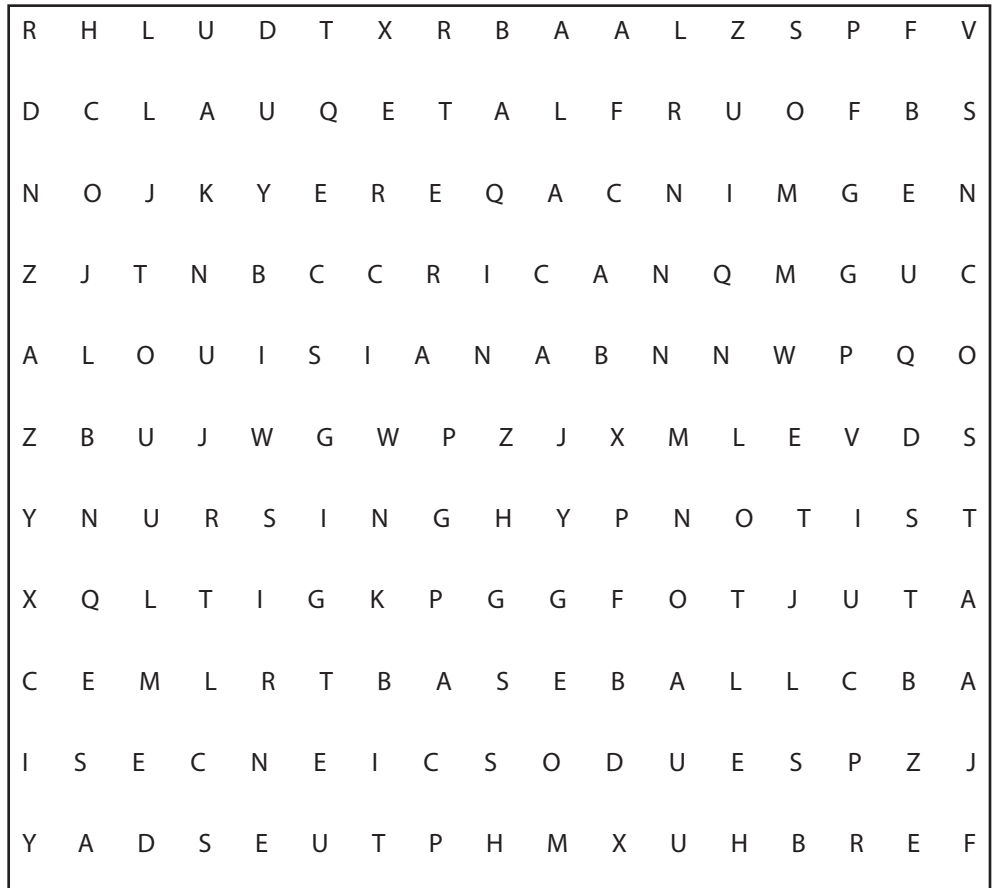
How many Ferdinands can you find?

Honors Fun Corner: Word Search

by Emily Schiltz, '21

Clues:

1. Which sport was Michelle Baldrige an intern with this summer?
2. What is the last name of the Director of the LGBT Center that passed away in April?
3. What day is Campus Cupboard open during the week?
4. How many resources did "Discovering Campus Resources" discuss?
5. What Learning Community is Abby Larson the LCC for? Hint: the major.
6. In "Friendships Created Through a Learning Community", what has been one of the writer's favorite learning community events she has attended?
7. What country did Corinne Koffi study abroad in?
8. The name of the Honors Seminar that Dr. Stark is teaching is HONR401: Critical Thinking and _____.
9. This on-campus resource is where students can go to learn more about studying abroad. What is its acronym?
10. What state was the National Collegiate Honors Conference (NCHC) held in this year?



Answers to last issue's puzzle:

1. Chicago, 2. Literature, 3. MUN, 4. England, 5. Volleyball, 6. Grim Reaper, 7. Involved, 8. Day Trading, 9. Business, 10. Photography

Big ideas. Real-world thinking.

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