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Team PSI: Making the Frederik Meijer Honors College Experience More Distinctive

Selena Brown  
*Grand Valley State University,* brownsel@mail.gvsu.edu

Kendra Smith  
*Grand Valley State University*

Sara Harman  
*Grand Valley State University,* harmans@mail.gvsu.edu

Michael Guscar  
*Grand Valley State University,* guscarm@mail.gvsu.edu

Josh Schneider  
*Grand Valley State University,* schneij1@mail.gvsu.edu

*See next page for additional authors*

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TEAM
MAKING THE FREDERIK MEIJER HONORS COLLEGE EXPERIENCE MORE DISTINCTIVE

SELENA BROWN
KENDRA SMITH
SARA HARMAN
MICHAEL GUSCAR
JOSH SCHNEIDER
CASSONDRA ANDERSON

HNR313 Design Thinking to Meet Real World Needs
Fall 2017
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Dear Reader,

We are grateful for your interest in our proposed solution to increase the distinction of the Frederik Meijer Honors College. This journey spanned four months, and included countless hours of research, interviews, ideating, and prototyping. Our portfolio will walk you through this process, to help you understand our insights, and how we used Design Thinking to create our final innovation.

We would also like to express our gratitude for the teaching and guidance of professor Linda Chamberlain of the Frederik Meijer Honors College, and all the ways in which she helped us navigate the Design Thinking process. Without her, this whole project would never have been possible. If you are interested in learning about the Design Thinking process, we highly recommend you enroll in one of her classes.

Sincerely,

Team PSI

Selena Brown
Kendra Smith
Sara Harman
Michael Guscar
Josh Schneider
Cassondra Anderson
BACKGROUND

The Frederik Meijer Honors College (FMHC) is a program within Grand Valley that seeks to offer a community of students a way to explore their education in an intentional environment. Their mission statement is as follows, “To bridge the gaps between traditional academic disciplines and allow students a chance to see the impact each discipline has on the others”. FMHC also utilizes a “Live. Learn. Lead.” motto, as their students strive to be global citizens and strong leaders within the Grand Valley and local Grand Rapids community. For each offered major at Grand Valley, there is a path that aligns with the requirements of a disciplinary degree, but also the requirements for the Honors College. The FMHC boasts of a selection of year-long, specialized general education classes, called a foundational interdisciplinary sequence, for freshmen Honors students. These courses introduce students to an interdisciplinary approach to education, embracing the liberal arts philosophy, as well as offers a way for students to strongly connect with the Honors Community. Other additional credits are required throughout the Honors program such as life sciences and social sciences courses as well as the arts. Furthermore, students are required to engage in a junior seminar and senior project. The typical junior seminar is a semester long Supplemental Writing Skills course that fulfills a required Issues, World Perspectives, or Diversity credit or combination of all of the credits. However, students are also given the option to fulfill this requirement with a Study Abroad experience. The typical senior project is an individually based project in which the student will engage in a creative project or pursue research, fieldwork or collaborate with an establishment in their career field or area of expertise.

The mission of the Honors program also includes integrating the student living experience with their learning experience to promote strong community leaders. The FMHC has experienced an increase in enrollment each year since its establishment, and the student retention level has also increased over the years (as shown in Figures 1 and 2; FMHC annual reports from 2013-2017).

A review of the FMHC was conducted in March of 2017 by the National Collegiate Honors Council.
(NCHC). The review was conducted in order to better understand what the FMHC is executing well and what present opportunities there are to make improvements. Among some of the positive aspects of the Honors program were, committed faculty members, strong sense of community among Honors students, and solid first-year foundational interdisciplinary sequence experience. Some of the aspects that the NCHC observed that could use improvement were a more inclusive curriculum for both students and faculty, and more visibility and knowledge of the FMHC within GVSU’s campus, as well as surrounding communities that house prospective students. These things were noted and reflected upon in order to find ways in which the Honors program at Grand Valley could be enhanced. Currently, it appears that incoming freshmen or transfer students who have heard about the FMHC either through a letter or some other form, lack incentive to join if they are entering with Advanced Placement credits which count toward general education requirements. In addition, there are some shortcomings with enrollment efforts and visibility of the FMHC. Thus, opportunities are missed for many prospective students who might be eligible to join the College, but are not aware of its existence.

**Problem Statement**

While the FMHC is rich in culture, community, and academic excellence that sets it apart from the non-Honors experiences, there is an opportunity to implement change to the program so that the Honors College experience becomes even more rewarding and fulfilling. Our team will innovate to build a flexible and purposeful curriculum into the current vision of FMHC in order to promote the stature of the College. We will do so by beginning to implement change at the heart of the issue, the curriculum, as we are confident that the changes that are created will radiate outwards due to positivity from within. Pursuing ways to modify and adjust the current curricula stemmed from our knowledge that the present Honors curriculum is rigid and often dissuades prospective students from joining the program. Through an empathetic approach, we will find a way so that students, both traditional and nontraditional, are no longer faced with the ‘either or’ situation’ of either giving up something to become a part of the Honors College (such as transfer credits) or choosing not to join the program due to curricular complications. Our goal is to make the Honors College experience even more distinctive than it already is.

![Figure 2. FMHC Graduation Rates](image-url)
**ECOSYSTEM**

The FMHC acts as a complex web of stakeholders who all have different definitions of success. A flexible curriculum must be derived through collaboration between all groups so everyone feels included and to avoid unintended consequences. One such group is the student population of Grand Valley. Honors students have different ideas about how challenging the program should be, which needs to strike a balance between being manageable for students with involved majors while still having contrast from regular general education classes to illustrate the expectation of Honors level thinking. Another perspective we must take into consideration is that of the community. The community needs members who have marketable skills for employment, but it also needs members who can think out-of-the-box to solve problems and be social innovators to compliment the thriving Grand Rapids community. This new curriculum must address this equilibrium. Public perception of all Honors Colleges is a hurdle to modernization, as the traditionally accepted Honors College emphasizes the difficulty of the curriculum and the academic prowess of its students. Although our changes will maintain the rigor of an Honors program, it will be important to demonstrate to the traditionalists that the new plan is better at developing critical and creative thinkers who will be community leaders.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

As a team, we will be employing design thinking methodology. For guidance through the design thinking process, we will be using the Kelley brothers’ book Creative Confidence as a reference tool. Additionally, we have access to a handful of year-end reports and evaluations of the FMHC to assess and analyze. Furthermore, we have faculty members to assist with problem assessment and feasibility, as well as several guest speakers from the innovation field to provide valuable insight on the inner workings of the innovation process. With one clear task, our team can take advantage of the opportunity of innovation incubation to generate out-of-the-box solutions to a complex problem, benefiting Honors students, faculty, and the university as a whole.

Our efforts and attention will be focused on empathizing with Honors students, faculty, and administrative leaders to understand what already makes the Honors College special. For our primary research, the development team will utilize qualitative means, such as interviews (ex: Honors students, non-Honors students, faculty and administrators, etc.) and observational analysis to get a more well-rounded understanding of the concerns, obstacles, and constraints experienced by users. Interview insights will be consolidated to create a comprehensive, clear, team innovation platform for the Honors College. Each individual stakeholder group will bring forth their own unique outlook and perspective on how to implement change in the most beneficial way without derogating what is already in place.
Additionally, we will be conducting secondary research on other Honors Colleges, journal articles on Honors College practices, and FMHC year-end reports to better understand what could work at Grand Valley. Our analysis and interpretation of secondary sources will help us back up observations in interviews. Integrating observation and quantitative analysis will be essential in the development of strategy to make the Honors College an even more rewarding experience.

CONSTRAINTS

In order to better the FMHC experience in a way that benefits all stakeholders, Team PSI must take several constraints into consideration when innovating. First, we will not be able to implement any innovations that would require new buildings, housing, or floor plan changes. Second, we have a limited number of faculty, so our innovations cannot require large numbers of faculty to be hired. Finally, we will be constrained by what defines an Honors student. As we work towards accessibility for new student groups, we will need to work with the Honors administration’s GPA and ACT/SAT requirements so we know which students will be able to access the experience. Another constraint we will take into consideration is the current curriculum of the Honors College, trying to not change the interdisciplinary approach to classes that is built into the FMHC vision. We also want to respect the curriculum for the current student body so no one would be burdened with additional classes to complete their Honors requirements. A constraint for our team is the short, 15-week time frame of the project to complete the design thinking process.

OUTCOMES

Our vision for the Frederik Meijer Honors College is to implement a curriculum that is deliberate in aiding students with the knowledge and experiences that will be applicable to their future careers and lives within and outside of academia. We will see Honors students that are passionate about and engaged with the Honors College for the entirety of their undergraduate degree. Honors students will not view their Honors College courses as just another requirement in order to graduate with prestigious honor. But instead, students will greet each course with enthusiasm and see them as an extraordinary opportunity to enhance their undergraduate degrees, and also themselves. We will make the Honors College accessible to all eligible students, who are intentional in their studies and want to be challenged throughout their time at Grand Valley. The FMHC will be an acknowledged and recognized vital piece of the thriving Allendale campus by all students and faculty. All individuals at Grand Valley will be acquainted with the FMHC buildings and living facilities and will recognize the honor that comes with being a FMHC student. Those interested in attending GVSU will be aware of the exceptional opportunity that is offered by the FMHC and will want to become a member of the distinctive community within the FMHC!
A stakeholder map is visual representation that includes a collection of all individuals and/or groups that are affected by innovations. In a stakeholder map, the client is represented as the focus or who we are designing for. Our team chose the Frederik Meijer Honors College as our client. When first creating our map, we compiled a list of affected parties. As we examined our list, we began to make connections and relate stakeholders to each other. We started to group the stakeholders into four categories: students, community, university, and individual. With this foundation, we were able to place all of our listed stakeholders into a category and then think of even more stakeholders. Our Team Stakeholder Map is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Team Stakeholder Map
Affinity Map

The Affinity map is an essential and necessary tool for developing innovations throughout the design thinking process. Our team used the Affinity Map to develop a visual representation of insights gained from interviews and research. Each week we added insights from our research to our affinity map, and would spend time grouping and organizing the insights, searching for any patterns in our findings. We found that many of our insights were helpful in shaping our innovations, and some did not end up being helpful in the end. The Affinity map was an essential and necessary tool for developing innovations throughout the Design Thinking process. Our Team Affinity Map for weeks 8 and 9 are shown in Figures 4a and 4b respectively.

Figure 4a: Week 8

Figure 4b: Week 9
Collaborator Debrief #1

WHY A DEBRIEF?
The purpose of the Collaborator Debrief was to compile insights and questions generated through our team process work into a small presentation for stakeholders. After our problem statement, insights, and questions were shared in the presentation, stakeholders were then asked to provide feedback. This process was for the purpose of gaining valuable information that we may not have had before, as well as enlightening stakeholders of insights gained during interviews and research. This was a necessary component of design thinking because it allowed for provoking dialogue that led to more insights and innovations.

COLLABORATOR DEBRIEF #1: TELLING THE STORY
Team Problem Statement: This semester, our team will innovate to build a flexible and purposeful curriculum into the current vision of FMHC in order to promote the stature of the college.
Insights:
• Honors students feel like there is no standard for academic rigor and course load within Honors courses and with faculty members.
• Students not affiliated with the Honors College feel that it is not worth the extra effort to take a three credit Honors course, when they can take a three credit general education course because the credits are equivalent in the end and keep them on the track for graduation.
• Honors students are questioning the value of the extra work that the Honors curriculum requires. Honors students are generally happy that they took their Honors sequence, but felt that the workload was too much and took too much time that should have been dedicated to classes that aligned with their major.
• The Honors sequence curriculum is inflexible for students with heavy major course loads their freshman year and any students who are unsure of their major. Although it brings in the interdisciplinary sequence with the general education replacement, it does not allow students to take those general education classes that expose students to different career options or exploration of different disciplines.

Questions for the Collaborators:
1. In your opinion, what makes the FMHC experience distinctive?
2. What struggles have you faced with the Honors program or curriculum?
3. How would you recruit a student who is debating joining the FMHC?

**DEBRIEF FEEDBACK**

**Instructor:** Every team uncovered the lack of consistency in academic rigor across Honors classes. Students should be the best you that you can be: this is a lens to market for.

**Class:** “I decided not to live in Niemeyer. I wanted to live in Freshmenland. You can still go out on Friday and go to football games on Saturday." “You’re not going to be this super student cut off from the rest of the university.”

**Collaborators:**
What makes the GVSU Honors Program distinctive?
A team of dedicated faculty design a curriculum to go deeper, create a richer experience, and create more of a community. This can be attributed to the live/learn ability and out-of-class experiences (like going to dinner/events with faculty). Student have more success because of close friends and faculty member relationships. The surrounding Honors community is invested in the student’s success. Faculty craft a topic they are passionate about and the course is about solving specific problems not just an “introduction,” like in the General Education program. This provides the ability to go deeper beyond the surface level with the education.

What do Honors students struggle with?
The current Honors student did not have much of a struggle; the Honors College has been flexible because of his IB credits (he didn’t take a sequence and the Director told him what to take in place of that). The Alumni felt that there was a long period between her Freshmen Sequence and Junior Seminar, when she could have been building more relationships with faculty in that time. The work didn’t seem like a burden to her because in her opinion, you put into Honors what you want to get out of it. She wishes she would have taken advantage of the Undergraduate Research and Scholarship Office.

Student recruitment:
It’s great to be surrounded by people with lots of smarts and ambitions individuals and you’re missing an opportunity if you choose to not surround yourself with other like-minded students. The parent saw a lot of good in the faculty/student relationships (formed in Honors), but some students just want to be “a freshman” and not in a small experience like you would have at Hope/Calvin, etc. Honors kids are possibly separated from rest of university, and it seems difficult (to prospective students) to be a pre-med student with an Honors sequence and have a social life. Current Honors Student: Maybe the stigma is just in the messaging? Hmmm... maybe the freshman experience is “over-rated”, maybe Honors is a better experience. What is going to help you as a
professional/adult in the coming years? You have to know how to market this experience to incoming freshmen. Parent: A lot of the decisions are made because you can choose to disregard certain factors and the tours could influence a lot (what one person says affects what prospective students think). Faculty think we should recruit those with “intellectual passion” or students who want the intellectual debate and exchange that happens in Honors. Some transfer students don’t even know the Honors College exists.

What are some qualities an Honors College should have?:
Honors students should be global citizens. Many Honors students go to conferences, study abroad, etc. Sufficient opportunities and resources should be available so every student can be enriched and stretched (experiences like study abroad, and undergraduate research). Should everyone have to study abroad? All Honors students should be engaged in a high impact learning experiences, like volunteering/community service, studying abroad, and undergraduate research. Students shouldn’t wait until junior year to get engaged and students should be driven and excelling. This experience, plus close relations with Honors faculty, sets FMHC students apart. Honors College should be 100% active learning, meaning discussion and engagement with the topics and looking at issues with the interdisciplinary lens, which is good for learning collaboration skills.

Regarding discrepancies in class rigor:
Classes can be easy in rigor and course load, but make you learn and still shape your experience a lot. A class can be hard and give you that same experience, which is a disadvantage to students who are not challenged in the same way. However, not all students feel this way. There is difference between rigor in depth and rigor in the amount of work. Current students put a heavy emphasis on “you get out what you put in” and attribute a lot of their personal experiences to intrinsic motivation.

POST-DEBRIEF REFLECTIONS
Diverge:
1. The Alumni present responded that they did not face any problems with the current Honors College curriculum.
2. The Honors College curriculum can be flexible for students with special cases if the student puts forth the effort to seek an alternate route.
3. The Administration believe students should have “high impact learning experiences” for the curriculum.
4. The Administrators present claimed that the Honors College program provides faculty from all major programs, yet many of our stakeholders see a lack of STEM professors, and an abundance of literature professors.
5. Administrators stressed that there is a difference between academic rigor and course load.
**Converge:**
1. We learned that Honors professors do not undergo evaluations within the classroom setting, which aligns with our current insight regarding fluctuations in standards for academic rigor.
2. The lack of consistency in academic rigor and course load between Honors courses is recognized by Professors and Faculty as well.
3. Honors students are engaged outside of class in activities that further their knowledge and “intellectual passion”.
4. Both faculty and students feel that academic performance is enhanced when students have a close relationship with at least one professor. The Honors College program makes that connection easier.
5. Non-Honors students looking at FMHC from the outside think it might be too much work and that they would lose the “freshman experience”.

**Apply:**
1. We can use the feedback to begin narrowing down the scope of our design problem, which is currently very broad.
2. The feedback can help us look into the flexibility of the general education credit replacement program, and how it appears to prospective students who are considering joining Honors.
3. Having a set standard for how Honors classes should run/what students can expect to get out of an Honors class allows students to hold professors more accountable, and gives students a sense of control over the education that they receive.
4. It seems as though “You get out what you put in” is a major determinant for what students gain from the program. This means that our innovations, whatever they may be, need to present options for students to engage both with their peers and with faculty.

**Act:**
1. Conduct interviews with faculty and professors affiliated with Honors.
2. Pursue the direction of how professors are evaluated and how each course is evaluated after a semester and year completion.
3. Research what ways professor and faculty are currently being held accountable in the Honors College.
4. Continue looking into ways the Honors College curriculum can be flexible with credits and students’ majors.
Collaborator Debrief #2

TELLING THE STORY

Team Problem Statement: This semester, our team will innovate to build a flexible and purposeful curriculum into the current vision of FMHC in order to promote the stature of the college.

“Need” Statements:
- The Honors College faculty needs to follow consistent levels of course-load within sequences and junior seminars.
- The Honors College needs to provide an opportunity for students to apply the skills learned in the program to a real world setting.
- The Honors College needs to provide a curriculum that is accessible to students of all majors and backgrounds.

Top 5 Innovations:
- Providing prospective and entering students with a brochure and video that gives a description of each foundational interdisciplinary sequence. It will provide a past student’s perspective and professor’s perspective as well as general outline of the class.
- Offer a sequence to students who have already fulfilled their writing requirement that is not writing and literature-based. This will meet the credit needs of students who come in with Advanced Placements or Dual Enrollment credits that overlap with existing sequences.
- Offer an independent or small group study sequence that helps first year students who are declared in an intense, year by year, course plan.
- Offer a sequence that is designed for students who are undeclared or students who are interested in career exploration.
- Implementing a method for professors to be held accountable to students by offering evaluations throughout the semester not just at the end. This will also offer students the opportunity to voice any changes or modifications they would like to see and let the professor know what is working well.

Questions for the Collaborators
1. How are Honors students set apart in job interviews, or even on a resume?
2. What is the current evaluation process for faculty and courses in the Honors College?
3. What sets Honors faculty apart from non-Honors, with regards to teaching style?
DEBRIEF FEEDBACK

Instructor: We should address that students feel Honors isn’t teaching the skills they need and show students how to advertise their Honors experience on their resumes. She feels that students lose connections within the Honors College as they go through the curriculum. “Why isn’t there a benefit to students who recruit other students (scholarship, grant, etc)?”

Class: A student received an internship with the help of adding an Advanced Placement course from high school to his resume. Maybe students can add Honors courses or seminars to the education or experience section on their resume.

Collaborators:

Other Team Presentations:
Housing and Residence Life is trying to set up intentional service learning opportunities (RSI: Resident Service Initiative) for all Honors students in which students engage with the Grand Rapids community. Administration suggested a sophomore level service learning class to further build the Honors community and close the gap of time between freshmen sequence and the junior seminar. Collaborators liked the idea of required service learning trips and implementing it along with a course (making it mandatory as opposed to optional). However, the cost factor can be restrictive, but ideally an Honors faculty member would add it to their sequence. Alumni doesn’t feel like networking as a freshman would have gone well in a setting like a professor meet and greet.

How are Honors students set apart in job interviews, or even on a resume? The Administrator feels the Freshman sequences and interdisciplinarity aspect is highly valuable. The Alumni feel that some Honors students feel about not being able to apply their skills learned in Honors maybe a mindset, not necessarily a fault in the curriculum. The Faculty feel if the sequence is not specifically applicable to your major program, you can make your argument stronger during interviews through what you learned and discussing the interdisciplinary approach to the world you are familiar with. Administrator: “I’m not sure what Honors means on a resume, so it should be individually defined skills so employers know what it means.” Faculty suggested encouraging students to ask “How can I be what you’re looking for?” to potential employers at settings like the Career Fair. Administrator said look for the fact that you were in the Honors College, and embrace the interdisciplinary of the first year sequence. Another Administrator suggested adding how does the first year sequence apply to this job and to you as an individual. You need to make sure that it is personalized to you. Faculty said they expect Honors Students to have such a large and filled resume, that the Honors part is just a tiny part of it and not expected to be the highlight. An Administrator feels that students should stress the interdisciplinary sequence on their resume. In
these sequences, students develop flexible thinking and an ability to integrate and synthesize. Employers want an excellent writer and Supplemental Writing Skills integrated into the sequences does that. An employer wants someone who is innovative and always presses further and the rigor of sequences develops those types of skills. Honors College students often write “Honors College” on their resume, and employers do not know what this means. Students and Alumni should try to sell skills that they have learned from the classroom. Also, Honors students should be able to show that they have utilized all the golden opportunities that have been given to them, inside and outside of Honors curriculum. Administrators feel that it is on the student to take the initiative. Students should be actively seeking Professional Development and should include it on their resume.

What is the current evaluation process for faculty and courses in the Frederik Meijer Honors College?
An administrator explained the Honors College only evaluates full time faculty. Part-time faculty teach some courses in Honors and in the general education as well. Eighty-five percent of the Honors faculty are part-time. However, the Honors College does not evaluate these professors because their home department is responsible for that. Therefore, there is currently no process in place to evaluate part-time faculty, only full time Honors College faculty. Faculty explained they care about what students have to say. Faculty have to ask the Dean to teach in the Honors College, so they really want to be there. An administrator suggested that the Honors curriculum should teach soft skills like fierce conversations or networking. They said we need to do a better job university wide at teaching students soft skills. Faculty expressed that the LIFT evaluations are polarizing. Sometimes you can’t gather good feedback from students because they either rate them as really good or really bad. They would rather have students email about something wrong during the semester than wait until the end. They admitted that changes don’t really happen between semesters when feedback is given at the end of a class.

POST-DEBRIEF REFLECTIONS
Diverge:
1. Stakeholders feel that students should take advantage of the many opportunities that they have access to through the Honors College, instead of focusing on what the Honors College can offer them.
2. Stakeholders feel that the issue is not the curriculum in place, but students need more instruction in utilizing what they have learned and implementing additional supports such as soft-skills and networking.
3. Administration and faculty want students to use more competitive and aggressive tactics when speaking with employers, at events like the Career Fair.
4. Stakeholders feel students should take more initiative when it comes to evaluation and approaching the professor or faculty.
5. Younger students may lack the confidence to confront professors about
any issues they may have, while professors expect students to voice their opinions in person.

**Converge:**
1. When employers see the “Honors College” on a resume, they don’t know how to interpret it.
2. The only faculty that the Honors College is responsible for evaluating is full-time faculty. The part-time faculty are evaluated in their home department. However, there is no formal process in place to evaluate full-time faculty aside from the evaluations.
3. The LIFTs at the end of the semester aren’t the most effective way for students to evaluate and provide constructive feedback to actually change the class for the future.
4. The biggest value from the Honors College is not the literature itself, but in the application of the ways of thinking in an interdisciplinary sense.
5. Administration agree that soft skills should be taught, so skills outside of just academics and ways of thinking are developed.

**Apply:**
1. We can look into the informal processes of faculty evaluation that are currently in place in the Honors College.
2. Students may already have the skills employers want, but don’t know how to express them. We need to look into ways to provide students with instruction on how to implement their knowledge in the workplace and present that to employers.
3. Seeing that the Frederik Meijer Honors College name does not have the same name recognition as other schools or their Honors Colleges, students are expected to do their own advertising. Students may need more instruction on how to talk about the highlights of the Honors College experience.
4. Exploring what are the most effective ways for students to reach out to professors about what is not working in their class and what would make professors make those changes.

**Act:**
1. Interview with the director of the Honors College.
2. Research alternative methods of professor evaluations employed by other universities.
3. Interview with the Chair of the Honors College Faculty.
4. Interview with the General Education Chair and the Honors Curriculum committee.
TELLING THE STORY

Team Problem Statement: This semester, our team will innovate to build a flexible and purposeful curriculum into the current vision of FMHC in order to promote the stature of the college.

Top Two Prototype Concepts:

Skills Workshop:
In each foundational interdisciplinary sequence, the Honors College will implement one skill workshop a semester to equip students with the skills to express how the Honors College has benefited them.

Student-Professor Discourse:
Students will be given the opportunity to speak up about issues (at different points throughout the semester) in the class.

SUMMARY ILLUSTRATIONS

The Frederik Meijer Honors College helps students develop skills for use in their education and careers, yet many students feel they do not know how to use these skills. In Figure 5, this gentleman has the right tools for the job, but is not sure of how to use them.
The dialogue between students and their professor will be much like the drafting of the United States constitution (Figure 6): A structured conversation with an end goal of reaching an agreeable solution to problems with and/or in the class.

**Questions for the Collaborators:**
1. Of these three methods: real-time interactive survey, dialogue, and an anonymous question/answer worksheet, which do you think would be most beneficial? If you feel none of the above would be effective, what do you think would be?
2. With what methods do you think professors would be willing to implement a skills workshop? Do you see this as being valuable to the Honors College?
3. How might we implement our innovations into the freshman sequences?

**DEBRIEF FEEDBACK**

**Instructor:** Knows of a program where employers would come in, outside of faculty, to help tailor the emphasis of soft skills and what they are looking for in a candidate. At the start of every year, imagine if students started out by articulating and communicating between peers and professor.

**Class:** Not applicable

**Collaborators:**

With what methods do you think professors would be willing to implement a skills workshop? Do you see this as being valuable to the Honors College?

The idea of a skills workshop is fairly common in some institutions already, where students pull out key components of what they learned and add it into a career portfolio.

Question from the collaborator: Would the workshop be more soft skills focused or academic? More focused on the soft skills. The soft skills could focus on helping students articulate the value of their interdisciplinary skills, along with how Honors enhances such skills and how communication ties in. Discussions based around the skills workshop would be fascinating to have a dialogue about because such reflections are never really a part of a classroom dynamic. There are many people on campus who can help students have such discussions— for example, the Director of Integrated Learning and Advising at Brooks College. There are changes in today’s society as to what employers
are looking for in a leader, which is vastly different from what it entailed in the past - for example, what does global citizenship really mean?

Build the ideas of soft skills back into the brand of Honors to make it more distinctive. Currently, we articulate our brand of ‘Live. Learn. Lead.’ and the ‘Laker Effect. ‘Live. Learn. Lead.’ is on every slide for admissions, serving as a way to describe what Honors is about. The capstone or senior project that Honors students complete their senior year is a very one-on-one feeling, often between the student and a professor. However, such a project is supposed to help bridge connections with the outside world. Perhaps there could be a way to change the senior project so it is not so individualized.

How might we implement our innovations into the sequences?
On campus, there is the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, in which somebody from the center will come and moderates a discussion. However, such services are only by request. Collaborators liked the idea for finding spaces for negotiation between students and professor. Collaborators question whether there is a way to “co-create” a sequence, in which the professors are not laying out a plan for the whole year. Instead, they would work with the students and adapt their plan after feedback. With such student-faculty dialogues, when they have been done, students feel liberated. However, it requires a lot of vulnerability on part of the staff members. Honors is all about students being involved in their destiny and having their own strategic plan.

Other Stakeholders: Will the workshop be in individual to a sequence or FM-HC-wide? Live-Learn-Lead... is it the Honors College brand?? Workshops are a good way to articulate Live-Learn-Lead.

POST-DEBRIEF REFLECTIONS
Diverge:
1. As an educator, incorporating a student-led dialogue into a course may be difficult because it relies on the vulnerability of the faculty, not necessarily the student’s willingness to be upfront.
2. Collaborators pointed out that there are many people on campus who are equipped to help facilitate student-professor dialogue.
3. Collaborators said “global citizenship” and what it means should be included in the skills workshop.
4. Collaborators brought up the potential of a “portfolio” as helping students summarize the skills they learned in Honors.
5. Collaborators believe that the senior project might be too independent because of the one-on-one setting.
6. Many people feel the best way to learn these soft skills is not through a lecture, or worksheet, but through group dialogue.

Converge:
1. Collaborators liked the idea of professors asking students what they want to learn, and then co-create classes with what the students are interested in
learning about.
2. Collaborators feel that enhancing student’s soft skills and giving them the tools to express how Honors has enhanced their growth is important and needed.
3. The collaborators believed that including a skills workshop would be a good way to articulate the Live. Learn. Lead. motto.
4. Employers are constantly changing what they are looking for in potential employees and it is the responsibility of the Honors College to cultivate an environment that will prepare Honors students.
5. Collaborators feel that students’ voices should be acknowledged because that is part of the FMHC and the belief that students are involved in their own destiny.
6. Some professors are open to change, but need help being placed in a position of vulnerability.

Apply:
1. We will explore the different types of workshops that we can incorporate into the curriculum, such as soft skills and the Honors College distinction.
2. We will build narratives to figure out how a student would go through a skills workshop or professor/student discourse.
3. We will take the collaborators advice into account as we develop our innovations, using their feedback like a “Yes, and” statement.
4. We will explore the Integrated Learning and Advising that Brooks College offers.

Act:
1. We will further clarify our innovations to reach a decision on our final innovation.
2. Using what we have learned, we will continue working on our storyboards.
3. We will reach out to more stakeholders and discuss our final innovations and reflect on their thoughts and comments.
INNOVATION 1

To increase communication within the Honors College community, a new requirement for all sequence offerings will provide potential students with a detailed overview of the necessary classes. These overviews will include the perspective of both past students and the professor, which will create a better understanding of the content and responsibilities assumed when joining the class. This would increase awareness of the classes offered, and showcase the student-faculty connection that the Honors College is known for.

These small communications will help to alleviate some of the concerns of prospective students. This in turn will increase dialogue about the Honors College, helping to spread the word about its approach to learning and leadership. Moreover, this initial presentation will illustrate the communication skills of those in the Honors College. When this communication skill is demonstrated early on, it sets a precedent and model for all students and professors in the program. Academic interactions will improve, leading to a better experience for all.

Armed with the knowledge of what each sequence will be about and the course expectations, students can make more informed decisions of which sequence best fits their needs, and which may have a greater application to their major. The results of this will be increased involvement from students, increasing their academic performance and the prestige of the Frederick Meijer Honors College program. This not only helps the students, it also advances the idea of the Honors College as a stepping stone for greater things.
**INNOVATION 2**

As many students enter Grand Valley State University as freshmen, they bring with them Advanced Placement test scores and dual enrollment credits from High School. This satisfies many of the general education requirements, and students see this as a way to reduce the amount of time and money they need to invest in their post-secondary education. Since the sequences currently offered by the Frederick Meijer Honors College are primarily literature based, many students feel that they will be re-learning what they have already learned in High School. To entice these students and increase perception of the Honors College as more than literature courses, we will create a sequence that is not based on literature.

The current image of the Frederick Meijer Honors College is, to many students, a small collection of classes taken a few times that study the social sciences through literature. Almost all classes have several required texts regarding history and social interaction. To these students, the Honors College doesn’t provide valuable skills or a new way of thinking, but instead is a place where hard work is the differentiating factor between it and a non-Honors degree.

Although hard work and academic diligence is necessary in the Honors College, that’s not the purpose. By including a sequence not based on literature, these students will see that the Honors College indeed teaches a new way of thinking and a different outlook on problem solving, as opposed to another history class. Through the use of other fields of study, the Frederick Meijer Honors College will convey the emphasis on interdisciplinarity.

**INNOVATION 3**

It has been noted that many prospective Honors Students choose not to join the Honors College over concerns they can not fulfill the necessary credits for both Honors and their majors. Most of these students
are enrolled in intensive programs, such as STEM and medical fields. The students in question often satisfy several general education requirements through their Advanced Placement test scores, or their High School’s dual enrollment program. To encourage these concerned students to join the Frederick Meijer Honors College, we will create a small-group or independent study sequence to balance their schedules and provide them with an Honors Education that will weave into their majors. This sequence will teach students effective problem solving that integrates an interdisciplinary approach that has become associated with the Frederick Meijer Honors College, but will have a different angle in its delivery.

This sequence would have flexible meeting hours to allow students with significant class times or classes on separate campuses to easily attend by allowing part of the class to be taken online. Furthermore, the sequence will permit students to work primarily on their own time, not under the pressure of excessive deadlines. The absence of deadlines will allow students to take pressure off of themselves and get quality work done as they see fit. The online page will display a meter indicating how much of the class they have completed, along with emails reminding them of how much they have yet to finish. The curriculum of this course will follow the general outline of other sequences, but the grading and workload will be based on a cumulative project. The project model gives students a more flexible timeline to do their best work when they have the opportunity, and will maintain the academic rigor of a traditional sequence.

**INNOVATION 4**

As many students go through college without a sense of direction in terms of their career, we believe it would be beneficial to provide a sequence for those students with undeclared majors. Upon completion of the Honors College program, alumni feel that their sequences did an excellent job of preparing them for the interdisciplinary nature of the workplace. For students with a declared major, it can be easy to find how the knowledge and learning processes from their sequences will benefit them in their career. Students without this direction may not directly see the application of their learning. The sequence we are proposing will not only teach the skills that make Fred-
erick Meijer sequences great, but also emphasize their application.

To complement the use of these skills, the sequence will also help students explore their career options. This would include the use of personality tests similar to the Myer Briggs test. Following that, students can explore their strengths through a wide range of tasks and assessments to find where they shine. The purpose of this is to help students focus their energy into a discipline that they will most likely find fulfilling.

Completing this sequence should give students enough guidance to choose a career path that they will find satisfying. They will also be equipped with the skills and knowledge to pursue a job, as they will understand the relevance of their training and can capitalize on opportunity. Finally, students will have the confidence to make decisions based not solely on knowledge and facts, but with a dynamic mentality that reflects an Honors College student.

**INNOVATION 5**

One of our biggest insights was the discrepancy in both course load and academic rigor between different freshman sequences. This presents an imbalance that is not only unfair to students, but the lack of uniformity dilutes the image of the Honors program as students get varying degrees of Honors level instruction. To correct this problem, we wish to implement a professor evaluation system, which would be used repeatedly throughout the semester. This contrasts with the current system, in which students rate their experience in the class and with the professor one single time at the end of the semester. This approach does not allow for changes to occur during the semester, and hence can negatively impact the experience in the current class.

Many times it has been shown that end-of-term evaluations are polarizing, only showcasing the positives and negatives of the class and the professor in an exaggerated fashion. These extremes are not conducive to the
professor making improvements, and there is no feedback to make improvements to benefit the current class. Additionally, the professor may not want to implement the changes proposed by the previous class into the following class, especially between Fall and Winter semesters (the time is short!). These insights illustrate the need for continuous adaptation from both the students and the professor to negotiate acceptable workload, academic rigor, content delivery, and classroom policies.

The results of these evaluations will be primarily used by the class and professor to frame a dialogue on the direction of the class. However, these results will also be passed on to Honors College administration. This will serve as a benchmark for the assessment of the professor. With input from all students in the class, the administration can form a better judgment of the professor’s teaching effectiveness, and whether or not they live up to Honors College standards and expectations.

Figure 11. New Professor Evaluation System visualization
Top 2 Prototypes

**PROTOTYPE CONCEPT INNOVATION #1**

**Skills Workshop**
- Our first prototype concept seeks to address the deficit between the skills the Honors College is equipping students with, and the skills students feel they are gaining from the Honors College. Through our primary research, many students expressed that they were not confident in articulating the skills an FMHC experience is giving them, which then caused them to question the value of their Honors learning experience. When interviewing for a job, it is important to be able to recognize and verbalize the value of a unique and distinctive education. This prototype concept will teach students how to articulate the skills they have exercised through an FMHC experience. The Skills Workshop will be implemented by Honors faculty at least once per semester. This will be required of all faculty, and they will have the option of running the workshop themselves, or utilizing other resources either from campus or outside of campus. The Skills Workshops will focus on articulating soft and hard skills that the Honors College is teaching their students, and how to successfully market those skills to employers. Skills Workshops will also include discussions what interdisciplinary courses entail, as well as the importance of a liberal education. Students will also be able to express how their Honors experience distinguishes them from other candidates.

Figure 11. Skills Workshop visualization
PROTOTYPE CONCEPT INNOVATION #2

Course Progress Discourse
- Our second prototype concept seeks to address the lack of communication between students and professors about concerns in the courses, during the courses. Our research shows this is especially important for freshmen sequences because they are year-long courses, and therefore provide the most opportunity to address concerns and improve the Honors educational experience. In this prototype concept, faculty will select a course check-in point, such as week 4, and will give the opportunity for students to have an appropriate conversation and voice their concerns about course content, structure, etc. Faculty will be responsible for explaining the reasoning behind their assignments or the readings etc. This will be structured and there will be clear expectations for the dialogue as students will be expected to be professional and respectful. Students will have the understanding that there are things that cannot be changed, such as textbooks. Faculty will attempt to immediately address these concerns and try to mediate and incorporate changes to the course. These conversations will be facilitated by a professional who is confident in supporting professor-student dialogue. From the beginning, it should be clear that there are small changes will be incorporated over the semester.
Final Prototype

FINAL PROTOTYPE CONCEPT

Enhanced Course Curriculum

- Our final prototype concept will address the stakeholder insights that there is no standard for rigor and course workload within Honors courses and the lack of opportunity for understanding how to articulate the skills learned in Honors toward future endeavors. We have innovated a system of accountability and opportunities for students to learn how to articulate the value of an Honors experience, i.e. their learned skills, that will be integrated into the existing freshmen sequence curriculum. To address the lack of opportunity for articulation, the Honors College will be responsible for holding workshops once a semester in each freshmen sequence. These workshops can include topics such as “What is Interdisciplinary and Why Does it Matter?” or “The Do’s and Don’t’s of an Honors Resume.” The workshops will be run by Honors faculty or can be presented by other faculty or staff on campus such as the Career Center. To address accountability, Honors faculty will be responsible for holding a mid-semester dialogue during a designated class. This dialogue will be a safe space for students to voice their concerns about the freshmen experience, express what they feel is working well or not working well, and other thoughts concerning their experience. There will be a “mediator” such as the Honors College Director or another full time Honors faculty member that participates in the session to maintain the experience as positive, informative, and meaningful for change. Freshmen sequence faculty will be expected to reflect on the feedback and make changes to the syllabus or structure of the class to improve the experience. Faculty will be required to express and elaborate on the changes that will be made to the students in the class, supporting the idea of building improvements to curriculum together.

Figure 14. Enhanced Course Curriculum visualization
Video Link

VIEW OUR VIDEO HERE:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dQJ5bf04QHTa-CSxLL39YKD91tPP2BID/view?usp=sharing
Sam is a freshman who is sitting in on her very first FMHC sequence. It is the first day of the semester, and she doesn’t quite know what to expect. Professor Greene asks the students to tell her what they are looking forward to in class and what they are concerned about in an interactive activity.

Sam reads over her syllabus from her honors course, and notices a couple of things that were not mentioned in the other syllabi that she received from her classes that week. She is intrigued by these course differences and doesn’t quite know what to expect from them.
Professor Greene now takes the desires and concerns of the students and implements them into the foundation she has already developed.

- more collaborative discussion
- less frequent writing assignments
- less textbook reading and more current articles

Shortly after, the students will engage in a career skills workshop, which will be hosted by a qualified GVSU Faculty member.
Sam talks with her friend about her sequence and she gets frustrated with the workload in her class.

Sam and her classmates participate in a mid-semester collaborative debrief to discuss course content.
Following the student-professor discourse, Professor Greene takes the students’ suggestions into account and makes the necessary changes. The students are more engaged in a learning environment they helped create and Sam is able to thrive in a cultivated learning environment set up for her to succeed.

Fast forward three years later and Sam is applying for jobs after graduation. Sam feels confident in speaking about all the employable skills she acquired during her Honors education.
CALL TO ACTION: ENVISIONING THE FUTURE
Brief Description of How Your Presentation was Received: Overall, we believe our presentation was received well. The attendees shared a lot of excitement over the career workshop aspect. They believe that this could bring a high impact to Honors students. However, there was some hesitation about the student-professor discourse. Attendees were concerned that this would not be as effective because of the structure of some courses and because it may violate the “contract” that the syllabus represents.

What was the Team’s Specific Call-to-Action: We asked collaborators to support us in our movement to provide more consistency across Honors courses and assist students by creating opportunities to develop students and their ability to articulate how the Honors College has benefited them.

Attendee Questions and Concerns:
• One collaborator inquired about how do you go about changing a course mid-semester that is not “flexible enough” for those changes? They expressed that some classes cannot change a whole lot mid-semester.
• There was concern expressed that the student-professor discourse would not be following through with what is on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester (breaching “the contract”).
• One collaborator suggested if we could invite successful Honors Alumni to host some of the workshops.

INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM FEEDBACK
Verbal Feedback:
• Collaborators are worried about how many courses are flexible enough to inject course feedback mid-semester and that not all classes are flexible enough to make ‘on-the-fly’ changes. In addition, when these changes are made it may not be applicable to the next group of students coming in because it not be the right learning style for that cohort of students.
• Increasingly, professors are facing more rigid protocol on having to report back on showing they have done exactly what was on the syllabus of record and that they have accomplished what was in the syllabus. Unfortunately, this method is working the opposite of having more flexibility within a classroom.
• Collaborators really liked the idea of having a moderator and a midterm student-professor discussion.
• One collaborator asked about ways in which we could engage students to make it feel like it is their responsibility to add their input to the class syllabus or content, because rarely does a student offer input upon viewing a syllabus for the first time.

• There is a lot of opportunity to help people articulate what skills they are learning. A badge method is one way that could help articulate this, where people earn badges when they have attained a skill level. This is something they could then display on their resume; however, the challenge is that no one would know what the badge means, so vernacular would have to be developed for that.

• Universities would be much more dynamic if faculty switched up their courses every couple of years or had their offices with faculty from different professions. This change would result in a big leap forward, because the faculty would be teaching with current subject matter and not from notes from previous years. This would force faculty to be innovative and introduce more interdisciplinarity. One example of this could be the sunset clause, where every classroom structure and curriculum is redone or reexamined every five years.

• Making changes to the course is not as hard as some people believe it is. Changes can be tailored so that content is not diminished, but instead focusing on how time is used so that it is more effective.

• From a marketing standpoint, it is great for students to be able to say that they had an input in the way their class was taught. Not only is it very unique, but it would also stand out.

• Collaborators wondered if there could be some networking opportunities involved for the skills workshop innovation, perhaps bringing in some Alumni to help give some tips to students on how best to articulate their skills to future employers.

Written Feedback:

• Is focusing on a resume or soft skills too much for a first year freshman? Might be a lot for that first college “September”.

• What are the best things students can get from Honors? Reinforce in your idea: leadership, networks, integrity, creativity, confidence.

• It could be useful to have faculty members and career counselors do the workshop together.

• Career prep should be more of a coaching experience than a one-time thing.

• Look into Blue Engine Consulting for career or resume interview prep.

• Perhaps focusing on the methods as opposed to the course content would be better suited for quick change.

• Crafting statements around how Honors has enhanced a skill for your major and pre-drafting a few statements would be helpful to give students a starting point.

• Often students are afraid to give faculty feedback in person, how might we make that more comfortable for both people?
• A workshop is a good idea, but it is already available through Career Services.
• My course is great and a lot of work. Why should its workload change to match others? Maybe worry about student attitude.
• Networking and job interview practice could be done with GVSU Alumni.
• Implement a sunset clause on a course syllabus.
• It is possible to learn, experience, and create while avoiding the dreaded term-paper.
• Always happy to work with faculty to revise curriculum!
• Undeclared options are spectacular.
• I like that you suggested consistency in workload. Do students face this with different attitudes?
• Internships are so important, and the skills learned from the workshop would be used all the time.
• Staff members know a lot of things, don’t forget about staff.
• Utilize the Career Center as a resource.
• AP credit course variability: What (other than courses) tie students together?
• I would welcome informal discussion with my students. I rarely get any students who initiate this.
• I love the idea to bring Alumni into classes to talk about their careers and how the Honors College contributed to this.
• Is there a way for professors to compare their classes separately from students in addition to the student-faculty discourse?

POST-SYMPOSIUM REFLECTIONS

Diverge:
1. A collaborator did not think the curriculum and structure of some courses would be flexible enough to add the student-professor discourse.
2. Professors expressed that some syllabi are created far in advance of the start of a course and some professors treat them as an inflexible contract.
3. One collaborator suggested that the skills workshop could be more of a coaching experience rather than a one-time event.
4. One collaborator suggested that the professor and career counselor host the workshop together.
5. One collaborator suggested reinforcing leadership, networking, integrity, creativity and confidence as values/skills taught by the Honors College.
6. One collaborator expressed concerns of making the student-professor discourse more “comfortable” for both parties.

Converge:
1. Collaborators mentioned adding networking workshops through the use of successful Alumni coming in to talk to students.
2. Collaborators loved the idea of helping undeclared students through our innovation.
3. Collaborators really liked that our team addressed the inconsistency of workload between Honors courses.
4. Collaborators suggested a sunset clause in which professors would be required to reinvent their class every five years.
5. Collaborators expressed that internships and skill development are really important and would benefit Honors students immensely.

**Synthesize:**
1. Honors faculty/career counselors should craft statements about skills gained in the Honors College for students to have a starting point to talking about their Honors experience.
2. The Honors College and faculty need to evaluate protocols surrounding syllabus creation and implementation and how flexibility can be introduced into courses.
3. The Honors College could explore different methods to the discourse to make the student and professor more comfortable and make the feedback the most effective for the course.
4. Other student and/or faculty groups could take our findings and continue exploring our innovation.

**Recommend:**
1. Implement a midterm review session.
2. Look into implementing a way for professors to be evaluated/reviewed by peers and fellow professors.
3. Professors should reach out to successful Alumni and ask them to come and share how their experience in Honors has benefited them.
4. The Honors College and faculty should explore alternate ways for students to express and apply the knowledge learned in a course in more “out-of-the-box” ways than just a final term paper or exam.
Appendices

Written dialogue summaries

Research bibliographies
Non-Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:  <20   20-25 ___  25-40 ___  40-50 ___  50+ ___  Gender: Male

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Begin to understand how people who are not a part of the Honors College view the program.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
We are investigating the way the curriculum influences how non-Honors students view the Honors College and if they actually know of FMHC’s existence.

Summary of Research:
This student did not like his sequence, and that affected his perception of the Honors College and his choice to leave. He also brought up the fact that the general education credit replacement did not work out great for him. He also did not see the value in taking an Honors class over a regular class (citing Honors Statistics as an example) when it’s the same material, but harder. He was also not aware that the Honors College cost more money than non-Honors classes.

Important Insights:
- Some sequences are not worth the work in some people’s opinions
- The gen ed replacement is a good idea, but not good in practice
- Honors housing and “just to be in Honors” are influencing factors in joining

Dialogue Question: When you hear the words Honors College, what do you think of?
Niemeyer. Community-ish: Honors kids stick together, they all live in Niemeyer and Hills, I got a lot of friends in the Honors College.

Dialogue Question: What is your perception of the Honors College at GVSU?
Every school has an Honors College, in my opinion, I don’t know if that’s a fact. So they (GVSU) probably have one, and then I applied. Maybe they sent me an email, like you applied and they sent you an email if they thought you were cool. Or do you have to apply specifically for it? It’s not the competition, right? It’s the (That’s for the) scholarship? I mean, I probably applied, I made it! ...I applied to a lot of other colleges (no other Honors programs). I wanted to go to Grand Valley, and I was like, there’s an Honors College, I’ll put in the extra work, I guess, if there was extra work, still arbitrary on that one.

Dialogue Question: How many people do you know in the Honors College?
You know everyone I know, all of our friends.
Dialogue Question: Why did you choose to not be a part of the Honors College?

I was in, what’s it called, The Making of Europe and it was just horrible and it was a ton of work and reading and I hated it. The only benefit I saw to the Making of Europe was that it would cover all my gen eds, but then I came into school with like a million gen eds from AP classes so it was kind of bogus and it was like just as much work, I think, as the rest of them and I was going to have it for 4 semesters and I had like other classes I needed to take and you know, I didn’t need the gen eds to be covered and I hated the class. So I was like screw this.

Dialogue Question: What differences, if any, do you notice in Honors students vs. non Honors students?

I’m sure there’s Honors students in my other classes, but I don’t notice a difference. Our Honors College isn’t that hard to get into right? It’s whether you want to or not? Should there be a stigma against Honors kids? No I don’t see a difference, it’s bogus.

Dialogue Question: What about the Honors experience interests you?

Events? What do you be in an Honors College for? Just to be in Honors?

“What makes an Honors program worth paying more money to be in it?”

YOU HAVE TO PAY MORE MONEY TO BE IN IT? That’s garbage. I wouldn’t find it worth it for extra money. I didn’t know it had extra money.

Dialogue Question: How could an Honors program benefit you?

The only benefit I saw was you get the scholarship from the competition and then it’s less classes for gen eds and issues courses. It just shortens up your classes.

Dialogue Question: How could an Honors program be a disadvantage to you?

They make the classes way harder and they are still few credits and they cover not as much sometimes, still. Like I could take a 3-credit whatever in non-Honors and the 3-credit in Honors classes is 10x harder and it’s going to be the same credit in the end. Don’t they have an Honors Statistics? Isn’t that just like Statistics, but harder? Why would you want to take a harder Statistics?

Dialogue Question: What should an Honors program have to make it worth joining?

If the Making of Europe didn’t suck. They don’t even have that class anymore right? ‘Cause it sucked? Maybe if they didn’t force engineering students into the Making of Europe or the other one, ‘cause they’re like, oh yeah, I mean you can sign up for the other classes but you have to sign up for these ones, ‘cause you’re in engineering. And that’s crap. No one even wants to go into that class. No one wants to learn the history of Europe. The European Civilization that (Honors Student) had sounded way more fun and they talked about sidewalks for a couple of weeks. It’s better than the history of Europe. I would have stayed 1000% (if I didn’t take Making of Europe). Making of Europe was horrible. They said I have to take a history class and I hate history. There are ones without history, right? I just hated the Making of Europe. Maybe if they had better sequences. I heard Big History was awesome! That was like a science class, but you can’t take that if you’re in engineering, because they tell you to take the Making of Europe, because of the credits.
**What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?**

I also wanted to live in Niemeyer, that influenced me, A LOT. But now they jacked up Niemeyer, right, aren't there two people in every room? I liked Honors 'cause of the housing, I would never live in Hills. Another Honors Student lived in Hills and she regretted it 'cause it was horrible. All the doors were always open and people were like social. There are Honors kids who are stuck on their classes and then there are Honors kids who are stuck on their classes and super outgoing and the super outgoing ones that were like, I need to get the freshmen experience, ya know? If you’re in Honors, you’re going to be a try-hard at anything, 'cause you’re in Honors, and they try hard at socializing.

**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes, via text

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Former Honors Student who Dropped Honors
- Honors Student
- Another Honors Student

**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Interview Honor Student Stakeholder Group
- Research methods of interdisciplinary approaches without gen ed replacement
- Interview Honors Administration
Non-Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:  <20_x   20-25___   25-40___   40-50___   50+___    Gender: Female

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Begin to understand how people who are not a part of the Honors College view the program.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are investigating the way the curriculum influences how non-Honors kids view the Honors College and if they actually know of FMHC’s existence.

Summary of Research:

This student transferred from Ferris’s Honors Program after one year. She was a valuable source of insight into Ferris’s program; she mentioned that Ferris made students take an additional class of Honors on top of major and general education classes. She did not like that. She did mention the perk of Honors students being able to register for classes before non-Honors students, which is something to consider when innovating. She also liked that Honors students have higher expectations for themselves.

Important Insights:

- Students prefer to not take an additional class specifically for Honors
- Registering for classes first might be an additional Honors perk to incorporate
- People like that Honors kids have higher expectations

Dialogue Question: When you hear the words Honors College, what do you think of?

I kind of think of a program to help make your resume look better, and also an advantage over other classmates that are non-Honors.

Dialogue Question: What is your perception of the Honors College at GVSU?

I heard about the Honors program through my advisor at Ferris. I was in the Honors program there and she was like, hey you can do it at Grand Valley.

Dialogue Question: How many people do you know in the Honors College?

You’re the only person I know.
Dialogue Question: Why did you choose to not be a part of the Honors College?

I really didn’t have time to fill out the application, to be honest. It requires a lot of essays and stuff, and I was working full time over the summer and coaching, so that wasn’t ideal. I want to join eventually, I think it will be worth it.

Dialogue Question: What differences, if any, do you notice in Honors students vs. non Honors students?

I don’t think I’ve taken any here with an Honors student. But at Ferris, it was pretty much the same. The people were the same but the expectations were higher. I feel like Honors kids are more willing to get things done, when other kids are like, hey we’ll get it done next week.

Dialogue Question: How could an Honors program benefit you?

I feel like it could benefit me as far as I don’t know, I feel like Honors kids have higher expectations so it makes you work harder, so like you’re pushed to reach your potential. I think it also benefits in the long run when you do graduate and you are looking for a job or when you’re applying to grad school and they see that you didn’t just float through the motions, that you are an Honors student who actually cares.

Dialogue Question: How could an Honors program be a disadvantage to you?

I don’t know exactly how it is here, but at Ferris, Honors kids had to take extra classes, like we had to take an Honors seminar and I feel like that kind of sets you back a little bit. It was on top of gen eds. Ferris’s program needs help, it really does. Getting rid of the random classes you had to take would help. I feel like that was just a waste of my time. “Any other disadvantages?” I don’t think so, there’s not a ton that is bad about Honors.

Dialogue Question: What should an Honors program have to make it worth joining?

The choice of picking classes first, that was a big thing at Ferris. You didn’t have to wait or go by grade or first-come, first-serve. It opened specifically for Honors two days before anyone else. It was pretty sweet. I feel like not having as many gen eds required. Honors kids come in with so many credits and stuff.

What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

At Grand Valley, do you have to stay in Honors housing? ‘Cause you had to at Ferris and it sucked because they secluded you from everything. There was a lot of stuff I missed out on. They basically told you to stick with Honors people ‘cause they’re the only ones who understand what you’re going through and you’re taking the same classes. There were a lot of public events where there would be an Honors program and a regular program so they’d make you go to the Honors one instead of going to the regular population one. They didn’t encourage you to meet new people. I liked Ferris’s Honors classes. There was less homework, and it was more discussion based, it was a lot more interactive compared to regular classes. I had to add one Honors class per semester. It should just make a normal class Honors. I think here, Holton Hooker would have been fun, I probably would have lived there.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, via text
Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

I don't know a ton of people here yet

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Interview Honor Student Stakeholder Group
- Research Ferris and other Honors programs
- Interview Honors Administration
**Honors Student Dialogue Script**

**Estimated Age:** <20  20-25  25-40  40-50  50+  
**Gender:** Female

### Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

### Summary of Research:

We are conducting research in order to gain valuable insights from current Honors student. These insights are crucial to the future of our design thinking challenge to make the GVSU Honors College experience more distinctive than it already is. We decided that we would first conduct research with our primary stakeholders. First, we chose to talk with students at Grand Valley. We want to understand the perspective of the Honors College from both Honors and non-Honors students. Honors students provide great insight of what aspects provided a positive experience, but also what changes and modifications they believe would enable the Honors College to further thrive.

### Important Insights:

- There is no baseline of academic rigor within the Honors College faculty.
- The main draw to the program was the housing and general education replacements.
- There is great appreciation for the Honors College support system.

### Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?

I heard through my high school counselor. I am sure I received a letter or email, but can’t exactly remember. After hearing about it, we talked with a family friend who was currently attending the Honors College. I applied to Grand Valley because I heard about the Honors College.

### Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?

I did not apply to any other Honors programs. I applied to Michigan and was accepted, but I ultimately decided to go to the Honors College at Grand Valley because of the general education replacement and the options for housing.
Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?

The general education replacement, Dr. J’s response to my application, and the fact that I could live in a nice dorm. I was drawn to the general education replacement because I could get those classes out of the way and focus on my major requirements and the classes I wanted to take. I was taken back when Dr. J responded to my application because he obviously read my whole application and essay and it made me feel like the people in the Honors College cared more than people at any other colleges. I liked the housing option because I really liked having my own room, bathroom, and access to laundry on my floor.

Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?

Mainly, my mother she kept telling me it would be really helpful to graduate with Honors. I am a Biomedical Sciences Major so I plan to go to Med School and I knew being apart of the Honors College would help me get closer to that.

Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?

That all of the professors were very different. Some of them really cared about your involvement in the Honors College and bringing everyone together and some of them did not. There was just a wide range. My overall experience with my freshmen sequence was not good. It was not very organized because our professor went on maternity leave after the first semester and we got two new professors who were random and did not follow what we were supposed to learning at all. It was like we were just there to sit there. However, it was nice that I got to use my study abroad for Junior Seminar.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?

I would like all of the Honors faculty to be on the same page and not so sporadic. They all need to promote the same things and follow the curriculum. I know it is a big curriculum and you can kind of talk about whatever you want, but still some uniformity would be nice. Probably promoting more interaction between Honors students and non Honors students. It is nice that the Honors College is its own community, but the relationship needs to be improved.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?

I like that it is its own community. I like that the class sizes are small and you get to know your classmates and professor really well. It is nice that your freshmen year, you have a professor that you know really well and someone that you can ask for a letter of recommendation and just talk to about other classes. I also really like that you have advisors that you can go and talk to about your classes and schedule.

Dialogue Question: How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?

It definitely made my major a lot faster. It is actually allowed me room in my schedule so I can take a couple classes that I wanted to take, that I would not have been able to if I did not join the Honors College. It is also helped because a lot of students in the Honors College are in the same major as me, so we kind of formed our own community too.

Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?

Being able to connect with my classmates and Dr. J in my Live Learn Lead was huge for me. He kind of became my advisor and I was able to talk to him about anything I needed.
Dialogue Question: What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?

I would tell them to join it, because of the faculty. Not necessarily because of the general education replacement but because of the advisors and faculty and all of the supports that they offer.

What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

I think what sequence you had. I think a lot of your experience comes from what sequence you took. A lot of people have negative experiences, but remain in the Honors College because they want to graduate with Honors and that distinction.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry?  How do they want to contacted?

Yes, via face to face conversation or text.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Current Honors student: Junior Status
- Current Honors student: Junior Status
- Former Honors student (transferred to another college): Junior Status

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Interview “non-traditional” Honors Student
- Research faculty at GVSU Honors College and their approaches to education
- Interview Honors Faculty members
Non-Honors Student Dialogue Script

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Begin to understand how people who are not a part of the Honors College view the program.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are investigating the way the curriculum influences how non-Honors kids view the Honors College and if they actually know of FMHC’s existence.

Summary of Research:

This non-Honors student at first thought about doing Honors before becoming a student at GV, but she was dissuaded when she learned that her ACT score was one point below the requirement. Looking back on her decision, she says that she is happy that she did not join the Honors program because she believes that with the gen eds that she had to take, she had a wider array of options to choose from and that helped her to decide on what she was passionate about, which is something that she does not think Honors students have. She also spoke about how the biggest draw for her on joining the Honors College would have been based primarily on the better housing.

Important Insights:

- Those who are not in FMHC may feel inadequate, and “less than average”
- Housing is a big draw for people considering the Honors Program at Grand Valley.
- On the resume, ‘Honors College’ is just one of many bullet points under someone’s education—there needs to be a way for employers to see that and go “wow.”

Dialogue Question: When you hear the words Honors College, what do you think of?

Thought about trying to get into the Honors College, because the GPA for GVSU was very low. Her GPA was excellent but the ACT score was one point below that, so by the time she had tried to apply, she did not want to anymore because of the ACT score. One reason that stuck out to her to do Honors would only be because of the nicer housing and air conditioning. Heard that if you have the correct AP credits and major, heard that you won’t have to take so many credits. Also heard that all the gen eds that other people take are about the same difficulty of the Honors College.

Associated words with “Honors College”?
- Smart, cap n’ gown, not necessary, gold, degree
- Thinks that only reason it would benefit people is to put on resume that one is in the Honors College, but does not see the point to extra schooling just for the bullet point. Employers look at education last on a resume because it is expected that someone already has four years of schooling for a job in which a College degree is required.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: What is your perception of the Honors College at GVSU?</th>
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<tr>
<td>First time, in high school in her library. A representative from Grand Valley came to talk to whoever who wanted to listen about general information of GV, and she touched on the Honors College. Did not base decision on GV because it had an Honors College. Wanted to be close to home. Friend from her class got into Grand Valley’s Honors program, but she did not. They completed the same classes and had similar grades. This made her feel inadequate and as if she was not smart, because she believed she could not get in based on being one point below the minimum ACT score. Felt less than average.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: How many people do you know in the Honors College?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: Why did you choose to not be a part of the Honors College?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initially ACT score was one below the requirement, but she would have applied if it was high enough. Was told score she needed, and she just said to herself “why bother” she wasn’t about to try. Bigger concern was just picking a college.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What differences, if any, do you notice in Honors students vs. non Honors students?</th>
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<td>No. Knows one person in Honors College in her class, in Spanish. Studied the day of for an exam, so doesn’t see a difference in work ethic or anything else that would distinguish Honors from non-Honors. Regular students-wider range of people who do not care. Non-Honors does not dictate how much work they put into assignments. Some people do not want to do Honors because the experience is so different because you are not taking gen eds. Came in as undecided, and thinks that her gen eds helped her discover what she was truly passionate about, which is not something she would have gotten the opportunity to do if she was in Honors. So many more options to choose from not taking Honors, she can mix and match and more personalize what she desires. With the sequence, it is more of a “this is what you do.” Feels like she had a broader experience in college outside of Honors, because she has more options for her gen eds and could “double dip” with major and gen eds.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: Is the Honors experience something that you would be interested in?</th>
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<td>Not now, does not offer the wide range of classes.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What do you see as a big advantage of the Honors College?</th>
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<td>Housing-number one thing. Thinks it is funny that both her roommates are in Honors but not taking advantage of housing. Niemeyer is not really that great as compared to South Apartments.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What do you see as a big disadvantage to the Honors College?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Not as broad of an experience.</td>
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### Dialogue Question: What changes to the HC would have changed your decision?

It’s not worth sacrificing the personalized gen eds for slightly harder classes. It needs more personalization. It will make it look better on resumes.

### What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

How is one way we could get more people into the Honors College?
More publicity—when she went to the events about GV, they only touched on the Honors College.

### Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, over phone.

### Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors student
- Honors Alumni
- Non-Honors student

### Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Reach out to an Honors student
- Explore what makes Honors housing so appealing
- Conduct an interview with an alumni
Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age: <20_ x_ 25-40___ 40-50____ 50+____ Gender: Male

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

Summary of Research:
Students look to the Honors College as a way to differentiate themselves from their peers. Unfortunately, the course load of different sequences is not the same for all students.

Important Insights:
- One of the biggest draws of the Honors College is that it is a distinguishing indicator of work ethic on resumes.
- Students appreciate the personal nature of the application process, especially the letter from Dr. J.
- The intensity of the Honors Program is not what students expect. Also, when talking to this student, and comparing my own experiences, it seems to vary significantly based on sequence and professor.

Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?
Yeah, a couple small colleges. I wasn’t about to go there though, really only looking at bigger colleges. I got mailed a bunch of letters offering me spots at the small colleges, but wasn’t feeling it. I applied to some bigger schools like U of M, but it was too expensive, and a lot further away from home, so I went here. They sent me a letter saying I could apply for Honors, so I did, and I got in. But yeah, GV was the game winning option.

Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?
It was an easy way to look like you are doing more than you actually are. Like, you take the same number of credits but it looks like you did more than the regular students. That’s gonna help when I graduate and apply for a job. Plus, I got out of some gen eds, which saved me some time.
Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?
Not really, I picked what I wanted to do. My parents weren’t making me do it, because this isn’t high school, but I think they wanted me to.

Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?
Definitely easier than I thought it would be. Yeah, it was a ton of work, but not as intense as I thought. Especially since it didn’t affect my major, so there wasn’t a ton of pressure. Really, just a lot of writing. Plus, it’s only like 3 or 4 classes, not every year... Well, the letter from Doc J actually surprised me since he actually read all me essays and applications and stuff. Thought they would just say I was in or I wasn’t.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?
Maybe picked a different sequence, I don’t know, mine wasn’t that bad. Anything else, maybe something the Honors College could change? Some more relevant classes would be nice. Other than that, it’s been pretty straightforward.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?
I like that it’s not all lectures. As much as it can feel like a waste of time, I did learn some interesting stuff, and I got to do some research, which is actually pretty important.

Dialogue Question: What are your thoughts on the Honors College curriculum?
I think people make it out to be harder than it is. Other than that, it’s all history based. There should be some more science and math in it. Not bad though, it’s got some good professors.

Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?
The faculty were really nice when I joined, but now I don’t interact with them very often. I haven’t had an Honors class since Freshman year, so I haven’t really been doing anything with them, and I have no reason to go to Niemeyer. Next semester I will though.

Dialogue Question: What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?
I would tell them to do it. It’s less busy work, you get out of gen eds, and it looks better on resumes. If you look into your sequence before you sign up, it can be easy, if that’s what you want. Either way, it’s a good choice.
What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

How is one way we could get more people into the Honors College?
More publicity—when she went to the events about GV, they only touched on the Honors College.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- His roommate

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Determine next stakeholders to contact and interview.
- Compare insights with those of the team
Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age: 20-25
Gender: Female

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

Summary of Research:
The interviewee provided much insight on the Honors student perspective. She gave positive feedback on the connections she has built through being an Honors student. She also recognized that her sequence has changed the way she thinks about the world. She provided constructive feedback on how she felt about the sequences’ workload. She felt that there was no consistency between the academic rigor of the sequences and how much work one might experience differs greatly based on the sequence they chose. She also mentioned that the sequences detracted from her ability to learn and retain information in other classes important to her major.

Important Insights:
- The workload students experience in Honors classes can detract from the time they need to prepare for other classes within their major.
- The personal connections formed during small class sizes, class discussions, and office hours are priceless for students.
- Students feel there is have no consistency in academic rigor/workload between sequences.

Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?
I do not remember for sure, but I’m pretty sure it was on one of the scholarship experience days that they told me about it. If it wasn’t that, then it was probably through a letter or something they sent, but I’m pretty sure it was the scholarship day. I don’t remember very much (about the scholarship day) but I know that they, originally when I was first learning about the Honors College, they said that it was kind of a way to save credits, you could get things done faster. So they said it was good for grad school, in that sense because you can get in more classes actually related to your major and preparation and stuff, and they said it was just really good for graduate school, like it looks good on the application, and kinda gives you good connection with professors and stuff, since you have them a couple of times in a row.

Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?
Yeah, a lot of the things from the first question, primarily that I thought it would help me get some good connections for PA school, and look good an application for PA school. And I also liked that they said I was gonna be able to save some credit hours.
Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?

I don’t know that I applied to any other Honors programs because I think I had chosen Grand Valley by the time the decision for Honors vs. non-Honors came up. I applied to Saginaw Valley, Oakland, and Albion, Hope, that’s I think all.

Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?

Definitely the fact that I had done Honors and AP in high school, and I felt like they were really good classes, they taught me more for sure than normal level classes would have. So I had the opportunity and it felt like it was kinda natural to go into it (Honors). I’m sure the expectation of my parents had a part in it, like if they saw that I was accepted to the Honors College and didn’t take it, they would probably nag me about it. And then again, PA school and wanting to have a strong application for that.

Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?

One thing that surprised me was the make up of the sequences, I guess, so I took Latin American Civilization and I was kinda surprised by the gen eds that they covered, and I don’t know how to really explain this, but it was like all built into one, so Latin American Civ covered whatever, like 5 of my gen eds or something, but it left other ones that weren’t covered so I guess I was a little bit disappointed by that because I had brought in a lot of APs that kinda got redone through the Honors College, because they were covered in my sequence, whereas there were other classes that I needed that didn’t get covered in my sequence. Like for ones that I did over again like WRT150 I did over again in the sequence, and there were a couple others. But it didn’t cover any issues in the sequence I think. I could be wrong on the exact classes though. I think that I did take like one or two classes outside of Honors for gen eds, but I don’t remember what they are, but I’m pretty positive that I did. I was surprised, like pleasantly surprised as I went through, by the connections that I made in the Honors College with professors, and other students, as opposed to the connections I made in other classes because I feel like with the smaller class size was definitely better as far as getting to know the professors and I had same professor two semesters in a row, with that small class size, it was really discussion-based, so at the end of that semester, I knew my professor really well and I actually ended up using my professor as a reference for a job that I later got, which was very cool and I don’t feel like until this, until my junior year, so last year, I haven’t had another professor that I felt like I could really do that with, even though I have gone to like office hours and stuff, just ‘cause my classes have been a lot bigger and not as discussion-based, so it was really nice to have that set up in there. I’m currently taking my Honors Senior Project, and I took Medical Controversy, that’s all I took for Honors. I could have taken the Honors version of Sociology, I know I took the normal version because it was offered online and Honors didn’t offer it online so it was just more convenient for me that semester to do it.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?

I think probably the biggest thing that bothered me about it that I would change was that the sequences were pretty uneven, so like my sequence Latin American Civ I feel like I learned a ton and the professors were very knowledgeable, but at the same time, it was tons and tons of work. I was in some pretty hard classes aside from that but like Organic Chemistry and stuff, and I worked twice as hard in my sequence, as I ever worked in even that class. Whereas there were people in other sequences like never had to do anything, so I feel like some of those super hard sequences like Latin American Civ and then I know Social Product Innovation, was another one that was just like killer, I can’t really speak for Social Product Innovation but I feel like at least in mine we could have learned a really good amount of material like we did with but with a little bit less work put in, but maybe just like tone down the workload a little bit in those super hard ones.
Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?

I liked that it was really discussion-based, and like I said earlier, that you have the same professor two times in a row for the initial sequence, and that really helps to get to know the professor. I actually really like the Honors Senior Project too, because I have to have an advisor for it. It gave me that opportunity to like talk to them outside of class and show him what I was interested in and work on something with him. So actually the professor that I ended up being closest with last year that I used as a reference for PA School and stuff, I ended up forming a connection that was stronger than just being in class, I asked him to be my advisor for the Senior Project and then it was like he knew me better than he would have from just being in class with me. So I guess to summarize, I like the connections you build with professors through the Honors College. And I liked Latin American Civ, or the sequence part, it did really got me thinking about different perspectives for sure. I feel like I think differently about the world and how the US relates to other countries and stuff, much differently than I did before I took that class. It was actually pretty cool the stuff that we learned.

Dialogue Question: How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?

I’ll give you some specific examples, so the issues class that I took was Medical Controversy and that supported my major for sure because I’m an Exercise Science major and I want to go to PA School, so it helped me look at some ethical challenges that I might face in my career. So that’s definitely helpful. Latin American Civ helped me see different perspectives and learn about different cultures that I think will help me a lot when I’m a health care practitioner to kind of understand people who are coming from those different cultures. My Honors Senior Project is kind of giving me an opportunity to look into something deeper in health care, like a specific issue that I was interested in. So in that way, it definitely supported my major. The only way it’s really taken away was that the sequence freshman year was so time intensive. So that year I didn’t feel like I was able to learn the information in my science classes as in depth as I would have liked to. Usually I’m pretty good at retaining information after I take a class, but in my science classes from freshman year, I feel that information is just kinda lost and it was pretty quickly after the classes because I did a lot more cramming instead of preparing ahead of time because I was spending so much time on my sequence.

Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?

The people that I had Honors classes with, I feel like I know them better like as a total than I do students that I have other classes with because we had a lot of discussion and group projects and stuff. So like when I see them in other classes, it kinda gives me someone to sit by on the first day of class.

Dialogue Question: What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?

I would tell them that they should definitely look into it, definitely consider it. And I would tell them that the connections you make from it are really strong, but I would tell them to consider how their AP credits and other stuff will even out in the end. For me, I think it ended up being equal for the credits I would have taken if I just done AP and normal classes versus the Honors College, so it ended up working out for me. But I know other people, both people who stayed in the Honors College and some people who dropped out didn’t like it because they actually ended up taking more classes in the Honors College than they would have taken with all the AP credits they would have brought in, because of the double dipping within the sequences. So I would tell them to look at that and see if makes sense in terms of credits, and what they’re going to be able to fit in, but if it works out, I would tell them that they should definitely do it and I would probably tell them to talk to people about the sequences and kind of see what kind of a time commitment they’re going to be before they choose if they think they’re going to take a heavy load freshman year.
### What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

I guess the only thing I would really say is I feel like for the Honors College, you get out of it what you put in sometimes, like I went to office hours a lot ’cause I wanted to build that connection. I saw my professor at Meijer one time and I talked to him and he asked me if I wanted to talk to his class ’cause this was after I was in the sequence and I said that I would and it kind of strengthened the connection whereas if I hadn’t done those things we wouldn’t have had as strong of a connection. Those going into the Honors College, I would definitely suggest to them to really make the best of those connections and really put time into it.

I enjoyed living in Hills. It was cool that the people I had in my Honors sequence, a lot of them lived with me in Hills, so it helped with making friends freshmen year because it wasn’t like I just saw these people in my classes and then didn’t really see them outside of it. It was nice, I like the Honors housing.

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### Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes

### Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student
- Honors Student
- Honors Student

### Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Interview Honors Faculty
- Interview Administration who set the curriculum
- Interview Gen Ed/Intro class Faculty
How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

Summary of Research:

This week I interviewed a current Honors student, whose mother and older sister had also been a part of the Honors program here at Grand Valley. Deciding to join Honors was a decision she made due to her family’s previous association with Honors, and because it would look good on her resume. In addition, it was something that her future employers had recommended she join. She knew very little of the program itself, and said that she was surprised when she learned she would have to take a freshmen sequence and additionally that the ‘weight’ of the association with the Honors program did nothing to help her get into higher level classes. However, she loved the housing options and the ‘comfortable’ chairs, saying that it helped to facilitate the community feeling. Unfortunately, she has not had the best professors, and said that in Honors people have less variety and flexibility with classes as well as professors.

Important Insights:

- Not everyone in the Honors College is involved at the same degree. Some get deeper experience by knowing other people and having many Honors courses.
- Family can be a powerful force in decision making, especially when it comes to education.
- Student seem to value a community feel in education/classes

Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?

I got a brochure in the mail that told me all about the Honors program after I applied to GVSU. I also had siblings who attended the Honors College before me. I am the youngest in my family, so I had two other siblings in the FMHC before I started.

Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?

I did not apply to any other Honors programs before GVSU. I had basically already decided to attend GVSU during my senior year of high school. I had visited a couple of times with my brother and sister, and it seemed like the right fit for me as well.
Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?

I really liked the idea of living in a community of people who took their studies seriously, as well as some smaller class sizes within the Honors community. I knew that the staff could be extremely helpful as I had seen my siblings create good relationships in their Honors courses with faculty.

Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?

I was in a lot of AP and Honors classes all throughout high school, as well as some challenging extra-curriculars. I was in Odyssey of the Mind, and I was drawn to a program that would challenge me academically and creatively. I have always been good at studying hard, and the Honors College seemed like the perfect place to encourage me in good study habits that would benefit my future. I think that my parents also expected me to join it since both of my siblings were Honors students, so they definitely encouraged me to take advantage of the opportunity.

Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?

I was surprised about the fact the classes can actually be a little bit removed from Niemeyer. I am a junior this year, and I still have not had a single class in the Niemeyer building. I lived there during my first year, but the atmosphere of the floor I lived on was not especially welcoming, so I ended up not spending a lot of time around the living center. So far I have only taken one class that has been an Honors offered course, which was my sequence. I think it’s because of the program that I am in, but I was expecting to have more Honors courses.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?

I would change the way the living center floors are. I did not know a single one of my neighbors, and my roommate was never around, so I didn’t build a strong relationship with many Honors students outside of the ones in my sequence. I guess I would change the way the interactions between the students work.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?

The Honors College has allowed me to connect with some great faculty members that have inspired me and pushed me to follow my passions. Knowing that they are in my corner and are willing to help whenever I have questions is a great feeling.

Dialogue Question: How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?

I took the Latin American Civilization sequence my freshman year, and it gave me a chance to explore a culture that I love so much. My professors for that class greatly encouraged me to study abroad, as well as open my eyes to possibility of having a Latin American studies minor. I have a junior seminar next semester, but other than my sequence I have had no other Honors courses.

Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?

As I said before, I made connections mostly in my sequence. I don’t know that I would have studied abroad, at least not in Chile, if it had not been my sequence professors. This has enriched my experience in college as whole as well as my Honors experience.
Dialogue Question: What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?

I think that I would encourage them to get involved in the FMHC. For those who take many Honors courses, or decide to do research with faculty, the Honors program works very hard for the benefits of the students. It can be tough to manage your different major/majors with the Honors College, but faculty at FMHC does a great job of working with the students. If your looking for a smaller community, and a more personable college experience, the FMHC is a great choice.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Phone number/face to face.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Other Honors students
- Honors College Alumni

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Talk to someone who has finished their Honors experience (Alumni).
- How can we ensure that all Honors students get similar degrees of involvement with classes?
- Definitely talk to Honors advisors about difficulties in helping students structure class and Honors schedules.
**Primary Goal of This Opportunity:**

Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.

**How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**

This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

**Summary of Research:**

This week I interviewed a current Honors student, whose mother and older sister had also been a part of the Honors program here at Grand Valley. Deciding to join Honors was a decision she made due to her family’s previous association with Honors, and because it would look good on her resume. In addition, it was something that her future employers had recommended she join. She knew very little of the program itself, and said that she was surprised when she learned she would have to take a freshmen sequence and additionally that the ‘weight’ of the association with the Honors program did nothing to help her get into higher level classes. However, she loved the housing options and the ‘comfortable’ chairs, saying that it helped to facilitate the community feeling. Unfortunately, she has not had the best professors, and said that in Honors people have less variety and flexibility with classes as well as professors.

**Important Insights:**

- Being in Honors decreases the diversity of professors compared to GV—for example, if someone does not feel like they will learn the best with a professor they have, there is little they can do about it. Options are limited.

- People who are applying to the Honors program are not fully realizing what it entails (freshmen sequence, junior seminar, senior project).

- The layout of the Honors living spaces, from the cozy study rooms to the fireplaces, helps to enrich the community feeling and draw students together, also serving as a big incentive for students to become a part of the Honors program.

**Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?**

Both parents and family have gone to GV, most of whom were in the Honors College. Future employment opportunities have recommended the GV Honors College. Recommended going to GV because it is close to home and a good school, and that the Honors College looked good on applications.

**Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?**

Did not choose to apply to any other Honors programs, but had heard a bit about other Honors programs. ...What had you heard about other college’s Honors programs?

U of M-crappy campus, difficult Honors program. MSU- sketchy deal over there. Honors College doesn’t require you to do a lot, just lets you get overrides.
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Qualified for admittance, looks good on a resume, great dorms, Niemeyer is great. Dorm situation was a big incentive, and it doesn't require a meal plan.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Always been an Honors student, in an accelerated program in her high school. Good opportunities and close to home. Good opportunities=good on a resume and being in classes with similarly like-minded people.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?</th>
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<td>That they had sequences and that they have programs to help the Honors students get ahead, however, it did not help her because they still denied her entrance into a 300-level course. Came into college with so many credits already completed that she thought that being in Honors would help her to get into a higher-level course. Additionally, she did not really know anything intrinsic about the Honors College after applying, only wanted to get in primarily based off the title 'Honors'. Allows her to be a part of a community where people are of similar aptitudes. Again, applied based on the title Honors, not knowing what it really entailed.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?</th>
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<td>Overrides-could not get into a couple higher classes because she was a few credits short. Wants the Honors title to have more influence on overrides.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Really nice buildings and comfy chairs, the reading room and fireplaces. Really feels like a community. Like being in a place with like-minded people.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?</th>
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<td>Less options to change out of a class that does not suit you, so getting stuck with a bad professor in Honors is something you cannot get out of. She has had two bad professors from the Honors College, and she could not switch. Less options. Has not supported her major-none of the classes she had to take were requirements for her major. Her seminar related to her field but she knew more about the subject than her professor did.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Might as well, because it looks good on a resume. You get to know students on a deeper intellectual level, and the housing is superb.</td>
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**Dialogue Question:** What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?

You get to interact with people who truly care about their grades, so you can find people to study with. Better connect with people of like minds. Improved her experience, by building connects with goal-oriented students. Makes her feel part of a smaller more personalized community within Grand Valley and even the Honors College.

**What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?**

Could ask about online vs hybrid vs in-class courses and student’s opinion on that

**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes, by phone

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Alumni of the Honors College
- Honors student
- Honors Professor

**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Do some research into the override request forms and how they are decided
- Interview a professor on their outlook on the Honors program
- Investigate ways in which to clearly define what a student will undertake if they decide to join the Honors program
Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:  <20  20-25  25-40  40-50  50+  Gender: Female

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

Summary of Research:
We are conducting research in order to gain valuable insights from current Honors student. These insights are crucial to the future of our Design Thinking challenge to make the GVSU Honors College experience more distinctive than it already is. We decided that we would first conduct research with our primary stakeholders. First, we chose to talk with students at Grand Valley. We want to understand the perspective of the Honors College from both Honors and non-Honors students. Honors students provide great insight of what aspects provided a positive experience, but also what changes and modifications they believe would enable the Honors College to further thrive.

Important Insights:
- The small class sizes and discussion based classes are similar to high school which lends to an easier transition to college.
- The access to faculty makes it easier for students to reach out for help.
- Parents are a strong external influence when it comes to college decisions.

Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?
I heard about it when I was applying for the school. I did some research and it was something I was interested in because I had applied to some more prestigious schools and I really wanted to challenge myself. I saw that there was the Honors application in like a link by the actual Grand Valley application so I decided to apply for it. I went to the orientation and that kinda confirmed my decision that I wanted to do it. My decision for the Honors College was all pretty immediate. I knew as soon as I applied to Grand Valley that I wanted to do the Honors College. And I have not had any reason to drop it, like I know a lot of people want to drop it after their first or second year, but I haven’t really thought about doing that. I don’t know I have really liked all of the classes that I have taken through the Honors College.

Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?
Getting in was one of them. Also just the living situation. I really liked the dorms which sounds bad, but once I got in I knew where I wanted to live and I knew I was in this. Also I am not saying Grand Valley isn’t a difficult school, but I really wanted to challenge myself because I knew I would have been doing that if I was at Notre Dame I would have been challenged. So I really wanted to give myself that opportunity no matter where I went to college.
**Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?**

I didn't apply to any another Honors programs because the schools I applied to didn't have an Honors College. Those schools were the University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College. When you were apply to Saint Mary's and Notre Dame, what enticed you to apply? They were in the area and I had just grown up around those schools. I had really set a goal for myself in high school like to keep my grades up to get into Notre Dame and Saint Mary's was kind of a backup. But I learned about Grand Valley and I decided to apply there too, because I really liked it. But yeah, just because they were in the area and these were great schools.

**Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?**

My parents definitely. There were very encouraging once they learned about it. Also external things would be friends that were in it too, and them pushing me and all of us being in it together. Also internally, knowing that I wanted to give myself a challenge. I didn't really want to take the easy way and do everything half, that type of thing.

**Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?**

I was really surprised at how much it reminded me of high school. It was very discussion based and had small class sizes, which I really really liked because it made it an easy transition for me from high school to the Honors College. Also that the professors were very easy to talk to. They were more personable than I thought they would be and definitely more personable than other professors I had in bigger lecture halls or classes that were not in Honors. I guess a negative thing was that there are some like-minded people, but I guess there a lot of introverts who really stayed to themselves and were not interested in socializing and social interaction and did not discuss as much in classes. Something else that surprised me that you can take an Honors class even if you are not in Honors.

**Dialogue Question: How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?**

They have definitely supported my major because a lot of my classes were required and I could take the Honors sections and fulfill it through that way. I often find in the Honors classes, they do a really great job of relating it back to your life so you can apply it to your other classes too and your life. It is not just that you are hearing this lecture and reading this book about general topics that are way out there, they are actually concepts you can apply to your life. Challenges, the classes themselves were really challenging. I mean right now in my law class I am really struggling and I am struggling to keep my grade up so knowing that you have to put in 110% of work or just more work than you would in a regular class.

**Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?**

I think maybe just having more class options that are more broad in their subject. So I know there are like the science classes and junior seminars which are often literature based, but I would like to see broader and more options for classes if that is even possible because of the size of the Honors College and faculty that we have. Just maybe like different classes? Can you elaborate on what types of classes? Often times, there is only one section so in that sense more than one section offered. But also I think it would be cool to have a Honors studio class where you like do the art, read about it, and discuss it too. Just like more class options. Now that I am thinking about it, I have taken a lot of classes for my major that have been in the Honors College that are required for me to take. I am taking a law class for my business part of the major and I took an Honors psychology class. If there has been an Honors section, I have also taken it because I have had good experiences with it and wanting to challenge myself. Like an Honors photography class would be cool.
**Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?**

I really liked the options to take the Honors sections, the small class sizes, the faculty and professors and how accessible they are to students. I really liked the living options and the location of the Honors College because I am an art student so it is super close to the Calder Center. I like how it is challenges me and allows me to grow along with my friends.

**Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?**

Students, I mean all of my roommates from years past are my closest friends at Grand Valley, like all of them. It is really nice to have that. I have two classes next semester with STUDENT and I am really excited about that. Faculty wise, they were always really personable and willing to go above and beyond for you and making sure that you are feeling good about your work and stuff. And they also just really care about you and your grade and needs. I have had nothing but good experiences here at Grand Valley. Overall, it has made it a positive experience. It has made me willing to work harder and also it made me not afraid to reach out for help. I was never afraid to email my professor or afraid that they would not email me back because they have 100 other students. It just made it easier to reach out and take that extra step for help.

**Dialogue Question: What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?**

I would say that if you want to challenge yourself in your studies and are willing to be apart of something that is harder than normal classes and requires more work, but also the thing about the Honors College classes is that they encompass a bunch of subjects in one class so you aren’t just learning about one thing in your class. You are learning about a variety of things and so many different topics, if you like that type of learning and discussion based learning and small class sizes, then I would recommend applying. If you are planning to just skate by and not put in any extra work, then I would definitely not recommend applying because you will definitely struggle.

**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes, via text and in person.

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- current Honors student: junior status
- current Honors student: freshmen status
- non-Honors student: junior status

**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Honors faculty
- Honors professors
- Honors faculty in charge of curriculum
### Honors Student Dialogue Script

**Estimated Age:** <20  20-25  25-40  40-50  50+  Gender: Female

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Primary Goal of This Opportunity:</th>
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<td>Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.</td>
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<th>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Summary of Research:</th>
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<td>The Honors College is a welcoming place that sets students up for success, but lacks a sense of direction and coherent class schedule.</td>
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<th>Important Insights:</th>
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<td>Professor involvement is critical in students learning, especially in advanced classes.</td>
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<td>Students wish the program was spread out over the entire duration of their enrollment, not every other year.</td>
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<td>Students wish their sequences aligned more with their majors, but they still appreciate skills that prepare them for life, even those that aren't directly in their major.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?</th>
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<td>I didn't apply to other Honors Colleges. I was considering going to Michigan State, but I toured GVSU and decided right then that it was the college for me. ... I was considering Honors programs at the smaller, mostly D2 schools I was going to in order to put some more recognition on my resume. Since smaller colleges have less name recognition, I wanted something to make me stand out.</td>
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<th>Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?</th>
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<td>I liked the compound learning of the sequences. They seemed like a good way to get away from the large lecture style classes. My sequence taught me a lot, but also helped me with writing, presenting, and research. I wouldn't have gotten that from a traditional class, I talked to several people in those classes. I also liked the boost to my resume when applying to grad school, and later, a job. The scholarship wasn't a deciding factor, but it was a nice perk.</td>
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Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?

My parents encouraged me to do it, but they weren’t a deciding factor. I would have done it without their encouragement. One of my friends went to State, and she recommended joining the Honors College because you get better professors. From what I learned with talking with a few other people, this is accurate.

Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?

My advisor walked me through my schedule, and I was surprised at how little the Honors College really entailed. I thought we would have Honors classes every year, and core classes for my major would all have to be Honors versions. ... The students in the Honors College were much more laid back than I expected. On the first day I arrived, and all through the first year, I made the majority of my friends from the Honors College, which was a nice surprise. Other than that, it was pretty close to what I expected.

Dialogue Question: What are your thoughts on the Honors College curriculum?

Like I said, I wish it was more spread out and had a theme the whole time. That’s really about it, we learn some good information, and the sequences really do prepare you with other skills.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?

I wish you could pick a pathway as a freshman and follow it. My sequence had no relation to my junior seminar, and didn't have much overlap with my major, so I feel like I didn’t get as much out of it as I could. If we took one related Honors class every year, we would have a much better knowledge base for our senior projects, and for our careers. I also feel like it should be easier to get financial aid as an Honors Student. A lot of us don’t have time to get a job, and are forced to rely on student loans.

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?

I like the small class sizes and the professors level of engagement. They are usually more energetic, and encourage students to be more active in the classroom. I really think this helps keep me motivated, even in classes that I wasn’t planning on liking. I also like the student base. Most of my friends that I made up here happened to be in the Honors College, we just connect and have similar work ethics.

Dialogue Question: In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?

I think it’s easier to connect with a professor in a smaller class size, because you feel more accountable for your studies. You can usually tell the professor wants you to be successful too. The students are easy to be friends with, I feel like.
**Dialogue Question: What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?**

I would tell them to go for it, even if they don’t think they can handle it. They really set you up for success, and there’s no risk in trying. I was slightly concerned about not having a social life, but that quickly went away when I met new people and joined the running club.

**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Honors Student
- Honors Student
- Honors Student

**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Begin interviewing a different stakeholder group.
- Compare insights with teammates
Administration Dialogue Script

Estimated Age: <20__ 20-25__ 25-40__ 40-50_ x_ 50+__ Gender: Female

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Discover how administration working in the Honors College or GVSU feel about the Honors College experience.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
We are investigating the way the Administration view and influence the FMHC program.

Summary of Research:
The interviewee provided much insight on how Administration feels about the program. She made no mention of a problem within the general education replacement program and discussed how the Administration work with students on an individual basis for their credits. This might show a disconnect with how students feel. She talked about the admissions requirements being flexible too. She also stressed the importance of the relationship of growth and budget. She mentioned that they are open to trying things that might help the students (like the two year sequences). Finally, she expressed frustration with trying to make sure students get important info.

Important Insights:
- Current budget doesn’t support the growth Honors has experienced
- Administration feel they are having trouble disseminating important information to students
- Honors admission requirements are flexible and addressed on an individual student basis if student is outside of the base Honors parameter

Dialogue Question: What do you consider most distinctive about the FMHC experience?
I think it’s the format of the classes, like the sequence is unique to Honors, in that the way the students are fulfilling their requirements, not only, yes it fulfills the general education, the community within the classes, the two professors involved, the smaller class size, all of those kinds of things make the Honors College a unique experience for students and a way to fulfill that interdisciplinary gen ed requirement.

Dialogue Question: What is the best part about working with Honors students and faculty?
Well, the faculty are amazing and I think its really kind of an interesting dynamic with all the different disciplines, their personalities and everything. Everybody gets along and it’s really kind of a cool thing. As far as the students, it’s also amazing the things that they do and accomplish, and so just hearing about those things either as they’re heading out after graduation or things that they’re doing while they’re here, it’s kind of really cool to track.
Dialogue Question: What is the biggest challenge to improving the FMHC?

Well we talk about a couple different things: growth, at what point do you not continue to grow without having the appropriate resources to adequately service the students and give them what is a great experience, so growth is an issue I think that we’re dealing with. Diversity, is an issue that we’re dealing with, but I think that’s just a campus-wide thing, too, not only just the Honors College, but it is in the Honors College too, the fact that the students who qualify for Honors, finding that diversity sometimes is difficult.

Dialogue Question: What role does funding play in improving the FMHC?

Well there’s a couple of different layers to it, I guess. As far as we are given a general budget to use in supplies and class trips and supporting students in different things, just kind of your general, all expenses that you need. But then we also, it kind of goes an upper layer too, because we borrow faculty from other departments on campus and they get paid a certain amount because of that so that next layer is kind of the faculty salaries and things like that play a role is some of that. But the biggest part is that budget just run the college on everyday basis and the money needed to support what the faculty want to do in their classes.

Dialogue Question: How does the size of FMHC student body impact the FMHC?

The more students you have, the more sections you need of classes, then the more faculty you need, the more money you need to support those faculty, the more budget money you need to be able to have the resources for to be able to go on class trips, and participate in co-curricular activities and things like that. So it kind of all leads into it where sometimes it ultimately comes down to money at some point, too, but we have been growing but the budget we have has not, so that makes us ask students to contribute for their class trips, ask students to contribute towards their stole and medallion at graduation, things like that we’ve had to do because of the growth of the Honors College and not having the resources to go along with that.

Dialogue Question: How do you feel about the FMHC admission requirements and process?

I think that it’s fine, I just like the fact that we do kind of set a parameter, but it’s not a set in stone parameter, so we have accepted students who may not have that high test score, but have a high GPA and have other things that back up the fact that they would be a great Honors student. I think that you kind of have to have some sort of basic parameter, but be able to have a leeway which is kind of nice for that. A lot of times it’s their (the student’s) writing sample is good, because you know it is kind of a writing-based program too, we do quite a bit of writing and all your writing requirements are done in Honors, but I think that that has sometimes set students apart, as well as some of their experiences they’ve had in high school and where they might have traveled and those kinds of things. I think too, that looking at the test scores and looking at the breakout of the test scores, so not just looking at the cumulative score, because a student may have score high in everything, but maybe math, well this isn’t a math-based program, so let’s allow these students to participate as well. So I think that’s a good part of it.

Dialogue Question: How does having two separate buildings impact the FMHC community?

I think with having two new advisors one of the focuses they’ve had is trying to connect ‘cause I know there have been issues with housing and I feel like Honors has always had a pretty strong relationship with Housing as far as the Living Center Directors to be able to make sure students are feeling connected and not separated. It is an issue. We’re across campus from each other so it’s not always easy, so I think that’s something we’re constantly working on to figure out programming-wise, how can we make sure that both students feel connected to the Honors College. It is something that they’re working on. But I think it’s also a great experience for students to be able to live where other first year students are living and have those experiences and then be able to move into Niemeyer maybe their second year, third year, whatever beyond that. So I think there’s been a lot of good stuff on that too, good experiences for students to be able to start their move on, not that students start here and have great experiences as well. But, having that traditional experience I think is pretty key.
**Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?**

I can’t think of anything off the bat. It’s hard, I’ve been here a while and you get used to the same-old, same-old routine. I think we meet the requirements which is kind of the underlying general education requirements, but we want it to be much more than that, so I feel like that’s kind of evolving. So when I started talking to students years ago it was “fulfill your gen ed requirements” and now it’s kind of more the experiences as well. Students talk about things that they learned in their first classes in Honors where you know, they might not have realized it when they were doing it, but they gained those soft skills, talking, presentation, discussion, relationships with professors, things like that were all benefiting them in other areas in their major, things like that on campus where they are experiencing, “oh yeah, well I guess I kind of get all that stuff from that sequence and I didn’t realize it when I was going through it”. Yes, we fulfill the general education, but it’s also what makes it different than just fulfilling general education courses. A majority of students end up graduating in Honors for sure. I do see sometimes they will get all the way through and either GPA or wanting to graduate and not complete the senior project might prevent them from finishing in Honors per say. But I feel like our retention is really good, we don’t have a lot of instances where I do look at GPAs at the end of each semester and students have to be put on probation or dropped. Those numbers are very small. Students do well, so that’s kind of a neat thing to see too. There are students that really, they’ll end up with a sequence, and a junior seminar, and their senior project. Their major is going to play a factor with the social sciences, maybe, or they bring in the AP Psych and things like that, so there are students who, when you say how many credits of that is Honors, it’s hard to say, because everyone is a little bit different in that they don’t have an Honors class in every semester for sure. There aren’t a lot of students that I think do that. They’re still great students. I don’t think it’s impacting their education.

**Dialogue Question: What other factors play a role in improving the FMHC experience for students?**

I think experiences, maybe. What kinds of things students can do outside of the classroom to enhance their classroom experience. The faculty might be able to put in their two cents worth as far as this is concerned since this is their classes and what they would need to run the ideal class and the things they would want to do. You know, outside of the curriculum, it’s hard to say, we don’t really require other things such as services or volunteer hours or things like that. I don’t know if that would enhance the experience or not, it’s not really been discussed a whole lot because it is primarily an academic program, so I think the senior project does a lot for students, it gives them an opportunity to showcase their work.

**Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College experience do you like for the students?**

I think the sequence is huge. I know we talked with an alum, and started working with an alumni group and the first time we met, the biggest thing we talked about was the sequences, the people that they met that they’re still in contact with, their friends were formed and came out of that course, the sequence course. So I just really think that’s kind of a really cool experience for students to kind of have that smaller community feel at the university. And the opportunity to learn from really great faculty members, too. I think all of our faculty members are super dedicated to what they’re good at and wanting to pass that onto students and work with students so the students are successful.

**Dialogue Question: What happened to the two-year sequences?**

No, they don’t really exist anymore. We are trying to kind of stick to the same format a little bit, the two year did give students an opportunity, who might be in a major that is a little bit more demanding, but there has been over the years some issues with that where they can’t finish the full two years, so that sometimes was an advising issue, but I think we are trying to keep those kinds of classes to that one year format. I think it was just a matter of these professors were wanting to try this and see if it works and that’s the biggest thing that we’ve been able to do, too, is to be able to try different things and see how things work because these professors are so passionate about what they do and you know, try to work it with what students’ needs are. So at the time, it seemed like, well I feel like we have some students that need to have the opportunity to still be part of Honors but can’t take 6 credits that first semester and second semester their first year. But we’re finding that it is working out okay, I think that it’s just indicative of we’ve got change of director and things like that are going to impact those changes and getting ready to have a strong program so when we do hire a permanent Director that we have things in place and this is what we do. So I think it’s okay to try things, for sure. I think it just comes down to enrollments on some of that stuff and just “I really can’t fit this in like I thought we could” type thing. This was to give students an opportunity to still be in Honors.
### What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

I can’t think of anything. It will be really interesting to see what comes out of it. ...I feel like it’s hard sometimes, ‘cause we tell, we talk, this is the way it’s supposed to be, but yet it’s not getting out there, like senior project. I don’t know how to do that, it’s on the website, we talk about it. But now we have advisors who are going to do some programming and things like that. It is always good to hear the student side of thing. I think Admissions does a pretty good job, they have a plan, the intentional emails and letters they send to students who qualify. The Admission counselors know they can call and send them over here. It’s small, little-by-little, but that is another thing, as a prospective student, what kind of things did you hear, and it’s hard because you have students who give tours, they say one wrong thing to a group, there’s a perception there sometimes that comes across the wrong way or whatever. Overall, I think the Honors College and other departments across campus kind of all work together to try to get the message out there to students.

### Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, email.

### Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Faculty Member
- Honors Director
- Admissions Representative

### Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Interview faculty, director, and/or admissions
- Possibly look into funding process at GVSU
- Research other Honors Colleges with service learning curriculum
Faculty Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:   <20   20-25   25-40   40-50   50+   Gender: Female

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Begin to understand how the faculty of Honors College view the program.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
Works towards better our understanding of why there is such a wide display of inconsistencies across the Honors classes in terms of academic rigor and course amount. This helps to address our statement of innovating the Honors experience from a more academic and curricular standpoint.

Summary of Research:
Professors love the enhanced level of engagement that comes with Honors students, both within the classroom and outside of the classroom. The professor I interviewed saw the Honors College as giving students a competitive advantage on resumes, and hopes that she is successful in challenging her students and challenging their per-conceived beliefs while ensuring she fosters a comfortable environment for her students. She spoke of how Honors professors are encouraged to try new and different ways of teaching their students, which they then reflect upon after and make changes moving forward. However, Honors professors are not evaluated as closely as non-Honors professors based on evaluations filled out by the students, because those on the committee see it as a work in progress.

Important Insights:
- Professors in Honors have greater leniency and more incentive to try different methodologies of teaching.
- Receiving bad reviews have less impact on an Honors professor than a non-Honors professor.
- Professors are never evaluated in a classroom setting during their beginning stages of going through the process of creating an Honors class, everything is on paper.

Dialogue Question: What do you want your students to leave your classroom with at the end of the semester (skills/values)?
Learn to question things that they always believe to be true, because they often come in with per-conceived beliefs. Also to be okay with learning to be uncomfortable. Wants students to begin thinking more complexly, and be able to discuss the topics and be able to apply it to other things, to whatever their interests are.

Dialogue Question: What value do you see in a university offering an Honors College?
Opportunity to set themselves apart from average college student. There are a lot of graduates of college, so they need a competitive advantage in the Honors College, it teaches students how to market skills in Honors, such as critical thinking, writing and communication skills to make them more distinctive on their resume. Also allows students to better articulate how they benefited.
Dialogue Question: What are some of the challenges that you face as faculty in the Honors College?

Opportunity to set themselves apart from average college student. There are a lot of graduates of college, so they need a competitive advantage in the Honors College, it teaches students how to market skills in Honors, such as critical thinking, writing and communication skills to make them more distinctive on their resume. Also allows students to better articulate how they benefited.

Dialogue Question: In what ways do Honors students challenge you in the classroom?

Feel more freedom to question what the teacher is saying, benefit but it can be difficult and challenging to the teacher. Learning ways in which to respond in the best way possible, so that it affirms the student in their curiosity and criticisms, while showing that material is accurate and also leads us down the next path of critical thinking. Responding so that the student still feels respected. Had a student who was questioning things they were talking about- he was making good points, and she made counter-points to engage his thinking and so he would still feel comfortable and safe speaking out in the future.

Dialogue Question: Who are you accountable to when you create a curriculum for the Honors College?

First a proposal for the class needs to be created, and they need your credentials, topics, and skills students would be learning. Submitted to Honors Curriculum Committee which reviews and asks for changes before accepting it. Can run 1-2 years with the Honors approval. After this it must go into larger curriculum activities-Brook’s College reviews it. Approve/send back for revision. After, all Honors have some gen ed program to it, so they approve it to make sure the skills are being taught. Honors are almost always double dipping gen ed courses. Some have 6 gen ed categories. Must focus on the skills, and they learn skills by focusing on content. Look at what types of assignments are done. Then goes to University Curriculum Committee, who reviews and sees what you are teaching. After, gets approved and is on the books. Schedule processes-(Administrator) needs to know what courses are being taught, to make sure all there are enough courses being taught for number of students. Initial part-quick. Can get it done in a month. Process depends on how long it takes you to respond to the comments-takes longer for the teachers to do their revisions. Usually committees takes 2-3 weeks to respond. Overall about 2 years to teach, to learn, to tweak learning before actually going through the system. Since she has been here (start of 4th year) she has never had anyone put regulations/ requirements for workload (for example, no guidelines on the amount of papers a student in an SWS course must complete). Courses do get assessed by gen eds and SWS to make sure you are doing what you are saying you are doing. There are standards to say what they are supposed to do, but there is no grading across the board- not for the entire university as well. Academic freedom-professors are able to teach whatever they want with the methodology they want to teach, no guidelines about that at all. Distinguishing things of Honors courses-emailed to me. Teaching ways is also very flexible. Each thrive in their own ways, that can communicate the ideas of the course in ways that best connect with the students. Matching up, it can be easier, and other times it is not. Course evaluations-looks at patterns. Some student say really easy, some say really hard. Not much consistency in Honors courses.

Dialogue Question: How do you measure your success as a professor?

Personally, very self-critical. Course evaluations received back after grades assigned, reads and is really harsh on herself, tries to figure out how to improve to connect with as many students as possible. Must battle the problem of trying to address what students say in the feedback but also retaining the learning outcomes she has to have in the class. Tried to change ways in which the writing happens so it is better for students. Always trying to improve and learn. Every summer she tries to read a book on teaching methods and implement based on that. Faculty Learning and Teaching Center on campus-have faculty mentoring groups. Classroom only one part of job-also have research and committees to serve on. Usually people sitting on 2-3 committees. Success measured by a lot of things. Faculty activity reports filled out each year, and get an annual review. More like an external measure of success.
Dialogue Question: What sets Honors students apart from other students on campus?

Honors students are almost always willing to talk in the classroom and actively participate in discussions, whereas non-Honors are not as inclined. First year teaching she taught both an Honors and a non-Honors course, and while there was a lot of participation in Honors only one person in her non-Honors class would contribute to discussions. Honors students almost always do well on assignments, and typically turn assignments in on time - if not, they will talk with the professor. Flexible with her due dates because she knows students are busy. In other courses students will not talk as often with the professor if they need to turn something in late. Honors worry more about their grades, which is something professors try to not support / enable students with. Grades are not measure of learning that occurs within the classroom.

Dialogue Question: What sets Honors faculty apart from other faculty? In what ways is it different than teaching a General Education class?

First, all sequences are gen ed courses. Honors faculty are in a department that supports alternative teaching processes, and they are protected to do so. If they try something new, lower reviews will not hurt a review at the end of the year so long as you can talk about it and show you are trying to adjust and fix. Bad reviews don’t hurt the professor as much as in other programs. Faculty much more negatively critical with non-Honors professors if they have issues with students/bad reviews than with Honors professors. As long as you can show you are making adjustments and trying to improve. So Honors professors are willing to engage in alternative teaching styles, despite the fact that it can be extremely risky to learning processes. Faculty is looking at ways in which to change the main marketing statement, which Dr. J had geared towards the Honors College being a replacement for gen ed requirements resulting in a faster process. Thinks it would be good to look at and market other aspects of the Honors College, such as greater faculty interactions with students.

What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

How Honors faculty are trying to connect with students, and the ways in which they do so. Defining features, that faculty are more open and willing to connect to students, many try to invite to offices. One professor even invited his students to his home. Honors faculty are engaged with students on a deeper level than most faculty are. Honors experience goes beyond classes.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, faculty email.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- FTLC Director
- Assistant at FTLC
- Honors advising

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Learn more about the alternative teaching styles within Honors
- Conduct an interview with someone from the Faculty Learning and Teaching Center
- Talk with some people on the committees who are engaged in the revision processes of Honors classes
Faculty Dialogue Script

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Begin to understand how the faculty of Honors College view the program.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are investigating the way the Honors Faculty view the program and curriculum. This provides us with insights outside of the student community.

Summary of Research:

This interviewee provided insights about the Honors College from a faculty perspective. This individual shared more about the process of curriculum approval with the Honors College and with the General Education Committee. Additionally, I learned more about the difficulties faculty faces with curriculum along with the students.

Important Insights:

- One of the difficult parts about the Honors College is working with the General Education Committee to meet the necessary standards to replace the General Education courses.
- Faculty feel that Honors Student tend to be more diligent, but often are more grade-focused than interested in the learning.
- There is a Honors College Committee that faculty work with to approve the curriculum for the course.

Dialogue Question: What do you want your students to leave your classroom with at the end of the semester (skills/values)?

All of the skills that the course teaches...collaboration, close reading, all that kind of stuff. Some content knowledge and values such as of this time such as tolerance, equality, civility, and freedom of expression. I hope they become better readers and writers. You want to challenge students and push them to work really hard and there has to be some discomfort, but you don’t want to kill them. So I am trying to find the balance to where they work hard and get smarter, but I hope they love the subject and they will always want to read books and think about them and think about meaning, I hope students will have acquired a love of literature and learning and will be geeked out about the subject. I hope they will always make connections years from now about things we talked about in the course.

Why are the skills important?

We are just trying to make them more competitive. Being better writers will help them in college and in their careers. Even in their personal life, to be a better communicator, to use precise language and find the right word. The empathy that the gain in the games is more important than ever.
**Dialogue Question: What value do you see in a university offering an Honors College?**

It seems to me that you all were high-achievers in your respective high schools, but maybe sometimes you felt as though you were into learning kind of geeked out about school, but maybe you were the only one in your class and you were kind of embarrassed and felt like you had to keep a low profile. In the Honors College, everyone can be geeked out about learning and it is cool. So you can have a whole community where it is ok to be nerdy and smart and talk about books and ideas.

**Dialogue Question: What are some of the challenges that you face as faculty in the Honors College?**

The student’s anxiety level. Honors students are conscientious students so they make each other nervous and then you get this collective, which does not benefit anyone, least of all the Honors students. And the negative perception of the Honors College. These things get out and everyone believes them to be true.

**Dialogue Question: In what ways do Honors students challenge you in the classroom?**

Along with the student’s anxiety levels and negative perceptions, the worst thing that I have seen is sometimes the grade obsession. Where students are crying about getting an A-, and that was probably pretty generous of us to give it an A-, and not necessarily interested in the learning. So the hyper-grade obsession and complaining about a B+ or something. We have to grade it with some rigor, we can’t just give out A’s like candy. So it becomes a pain with people wanting to come to your office and not coming for learning, but just to argue about a grade. So it just a couple aspects of the culture like the anxiety and grade obsession. Those two are the only negatives I would say, 99.9% of the time, it is a joy to work with Honors students and I do it because I love it. And Honors students show up, you show up on time, and you do the work. That’s half the battle. We do take roll, but we almost don’t want too.

**Dialogue Question: Who are you accountable to when you create a curriculum for the Honors College?**

The General Education thing is a nightmare. You have to have a syllabus of record and conform to all these things that they say. So our sequence is completely different than the other section of the sequence and trying to get them to conform to the syllabus of record, constantly going back and forth and them saying “no, you are doing it wrong” and it is just a colossal waste of our time. It makes sense to have standards, but it is not something I am good at. It wastes time that we could be spending with you all or working on our research and it discourages innovation.

Do you have to have your curriculum approved by anyone other than the General Education Committee? There is a Honors College Committee that has to ok it. But my colleague and I try to be innovative every single year and no one has ever said you can’t do that.

So if you want to make changes in your course, do you just make them at your discretion?

Yes. With Dr. J, I always felt supported.

**Dialogue Question: How do you measure your success as a professor?**

It’s kind of subjective like did the students write an amazing paper? Did they give an amazing speech? Did they go on to do amazing things after the semester? Totally subjective, not very scientific. I need to be more scientific about it.

Do you use your evaluations?

Oh yeah, when students say my lectures weren’t clear, I work on slowing those down. But they are kind of painful. You have to get mentally prepared for evaluations.
Dialogue Question: What sets Honors students apart from other students on campus?

First of all, just showing up and showing up on time. Let’s say I am teaching the same text in upper level major course and Honors. The upper level students may miss the first two weeks of class, they say “oh I decided to stay in Spain a little longer, I was traveling and I just didn’t come home on time”. But when you teach the book, they will have a big, wide, global perspective. Where Honors students will show up and do the reading, but the Honors students might have a much smaller focus “I am doing biomedical sciences and that’s it. And I can’t think about what it all means and the bigger world.” And it is too much to ask them to challenge/push them. These are terrible, gross exaggerated stereotypes, but my way of illustration. Honors students may be more diligent, but the other majors maybe more slackers, but with a broader outlook.

Dialogue Question: What sets Honors faculty apart from other faculty? In what ways is it different than teaching a General Education class?

I can’t speak for all of them, but I focus on building a connection. We know that students do well when they have a connection so I try to focus on that.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, via person or e-mail.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors College Curriculum Committee
- General Education Curriculum Committee
- Honors Professor

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Local Employers
- Honors College Curriculum Committee
- Honors College Faculty members
**Primary Goal of This Opportunity:**
Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.

**How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**
Getting insight from an Honors student and exploring each of the different experiences.

**Summary of Research:**
This student did not have a lot of qualms about the Honors College, and talked a lot about their intrinsic motivation to join. I found this to be unique because a lot of students talk about family being major encouragers for joining Honors. He also put a lot of his positive views of Honors on the people he met while being there. He is really there for himself overall, and was not super concerned with making strong connections with the faculty.

**Important Insights:**
- Intrinsic motivators/social reputation.
- The peer connections made really created a positive view of Honors.
- Frustrations with art credits and how they align (or did not align) with his major.

**Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?**
The GVSU website. The mail? doesn’t quite remember.

**Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?**
I didn’t apply other Honors Colleges. I was not aware that other schools offered Honors Colleges because I didn’t give it much thought.

**Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?**
Condensing gen eds, living and learning center, resume, being in class with students who are there to learn.
**Dialogue Question:** What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?

Not so much my family, but the idea of being in an Honors College and the benefits of being there. It was more of an internal influence and being able to say I was in the Honors College.

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**Dialogue Question:** What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?

I thought it was going to be harder to get into. I didn’t think there were going to be as many classic “lazy college” kids. I thought that people would have higher standards for themselves. ...I was surprised that my classes were not harder. My freshman sequence was pretty easy, even though I heard other people talking about how hard theirs were. I thought I had to take less classes but I have to take more because there were credits my sequence did not cover (War and Tech in the West).

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**Dialogue Question:** How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?

It hasn’t challenged my major really. The thing about taking an arts credit in addition to all the other arts classes I am taking is a hindrance because it’s in addition to all the classes I am already taking. It has only really supported me in the GenEd area. There’s concepts in my sequence that were helpful, like why liberal education is important.

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**Dialogue Question:** What aspects of the Honors College experience would you change?

I like how it’s set up...especially open advising. The professors are very intelligent and kind, and they are especially invested in their students.

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**Dialogue Question:** What aspects of the Honors College do you like?

I think if you are an arts major, your classes should count as an arts credit. As a dance major my intro counted as arts but not my other major dance classes. It has been annoying fulfilling the Honors requirements for arts when I am an arts major.

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**Dialogue Question:** In what ways have you been able to connect with Honors students and faculty? In what ways has this impacted your experience in FMHC?

Living in Niems was nice, all of my best friends came from living there. It’s nice to have an academic center where you also make connections. Going to open office hours has helped me connect with faculty but nothing outside of that really. Connecting with students made me glad to be living in the building, and it made me excited about the Honors classes because I knew that professors had to care a lot to be teaching students.

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**Dialogue Question:** What would you tell someone who is debating on whether or not they want to join the FMHC?

I would say do it for the sequence class. Even though it can be hard it can get a lot of credits out of the way. And I would say to live in the Honors building. Do it because it’s not much more work than doing gen eds, so you might as well do it to put it on your resume, and to connect with professors. You get a deeper connection with people who are working hard in their fields and the smaller classes builds a better relationship which enhances your learning.
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<th>What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?</th>
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<td>Maybe something about the advising like how much did we take</td>
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<td>advantage of the open advising and the fact that we have a</td>
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<td>separate advisor. They are super helpful for setting you up</td>
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<td>apart from your major.</td>
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<th>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry?</th>
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<td>How do they want to contacted?</td>
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<td>Yes, a phone call.</td>
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<th>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</th>
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<td>• Honors Faculty 1</td>
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<td>• Honors Faculty 2</td>
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<p>| Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out;     |
| revisions to problem statement; resources to research;     |</p>
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<th>other locations to visit, etc.):</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Contact sequence professors and ask about their</td>
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<td>experience.</td>
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<td>• Talk to advisors about reasons for the way arts credits</td>
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<td>are set up.</td>
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<td>• Get a hold of advisors to talk about how their</td>
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<td>experience differs from that of other advisors on campus.</td>
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Faculty Dialogue Script

Estimated Age: <20____ 20-25____ 25-40____ 40-50____ 50+____  Gender: Male

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Get a faculty member’s viewpoint on student workload, and empathize with a point-of-view coming from outside the FMHC.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
If the team hopes to build a flexible and purposeful curriculum, we need to understand what goes into preparing a class and how professors assign work.

Summary of Research:
The GVSU Honors College lacks a universal system for evaluating professor performance, which can negatively affect how feedback is utilized by professors.

Important Insights:
- Students are expected to confront professors one on one to suggest changes to the course. This responsibility currently rests on the student alone.
- LIFT evaluations can be effective tools, but unless they are made into a more official review, professors can choose to ignore them.
- Coursework and academic rigor are designed to police themselves in the engineering program. This may also apply to the Honors College.

Dialogue Question: What standards do you set for the amount of coursework you assign to students in your classes? Please explain.
I try to follow the general principle of between 1 to 2 times the number of credit hours a class is, I assign work that should take that long. My assignments are designed so that students shouldn’t really have to study outside of completing homework assignments, provided they work through them and understand the material.

Dialogue Question: Are other professors obligated to follow that principle, or are professors the final say in how much coursework is assigned?
Obviously professors know not to be unreasonable, but there is no official guideline of how much work can be assigned due to the differences in class material and in how long individual students need, and what resources are available to help students.
Dialogue Question: What prevents uneven workload for students, and has uneven workload been a problem within the department?

Professors are aware of what the difficulty in their classes is, and try to adjust accordingly, knowing that students are busy. Many professors collaborate with other professors teaching other sections of the course to standardize the work and use each other's techniques for the best possible lessons and exams. There, hasn’t really been a problem, no, students are given a workload that is manageable, but does serve to make sure all graduates are qualified.

Dialogue Question: What standards do you set for the intensity of course material from an academic standpoint?

“I am quite involved in the engineering department, and I oversee a large portion of the curriculum. Plus, I have taught higher level classes before. With that in mind, I always design my classes to prepare students for the next level of courses, and to develop their work ethic to help them through the completion of their program. The entry level engineering courses are designed to only allow serious students to continue with the program, which helps bolster GVSU’s reputation of having high standards for engineering.

Dialogue Question: How do you feel about the evaluation process of professors within the engineering department? What would you change about the process, if anything? major?

The engineering department really serves to police itself in terms of the standards professors are held to. If a professor cannot pass the skills onto their students, the results will be evident when the students need to apply that skillset to other courses. When professors are given positions within the department, they are made aware of the expectations, and after their initial trial period, it is expected they will continue to teach in a similar manner and maintain the level of academics that they displayed before. There have been instances in the past where students brought it to the administrations attention that they were not being taught at a level consistent with that of the rest of the college, and those professors were dealt with on an individual basis. The combination of these things keeps order, and we have not had a significant problem with faculty meeting their expectations.

Dialogue Question: So do you believe there needs to be changes to the evaluation process?

No, I believe it is functioning as it should.

Dialogue Question: What is the best way for students to suggest changes to the professor with regards to the class and the teaching style used?

Concerned students should make an appointment and talk with their professors one on one in their office hours. Students should have an idea of what changes they want to see, and not just prepare a list of grievances. Usually, if a student is consistently putting in the work necessary and are grasping the foundations of the course, I am able to work with them to make an arrangement. Sometimes this means weighting parts of their grades more heavily than others, a deadline extension due to other class work, or an alternative type of testing. This way, students are tested more on their ability to learn than the circumstances of their education.

Dialogue Question: How useful do you find the LIFT evaluations, and what do professors do with that information?

Each professor can view the results, but they aren’t really a pivotal part of their lesson plans. I prefer to give students a worksheet of my own to really find what parts of the class helped them the most, and try to incorporate that into my next section. The LIFT evaluations are more just to check up on professors, with very poor results raising suspicions from the administration. I have spoken with professors who rely solely on the LIFT evaluations to change their class though, so their use depends of the professor using them.
**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Other universities may have different approaches to evaluating professors.
- An administrator within the Engineering College

**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Follow up with the administrator
- Draw connections with our previous insights, try to find a pattern or area of concern
### Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

To investigate the standards in place for course difficulty and workload within the Engineering College, and the results of such standards.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

If the team hopes to build a flexible and purposeful curriculum, we need to understand what goes into preparing a class and how professors assign work.

### Summary of Research:

Professors have great freedom in their decisions regarding course load.

### Important Insights:

- Students are the best way to spread the word; even if a school name is unknown, a smart student will still make themselves known.
- The Honors College is not well established in Grand Rapids on the downtown campuses.
- Many students are primarily seeking employment. The Honors College could do more to increase a student’s employability.

### Dialogue Question: What is the perception of the Honors College within your department, and is that a positive or negative outlook.

The Engineering College doesn’t have an official relationship with the Honors College, at least to my knowledge. They are completely separate. I know that the majority of my engineering students are not in the Honors College, as both programs require a significant amount of work outside of class time, and managing them both is a challenge. As far as perception, there’s nothing wrong with the program, it just doesn’t align with the engineering program. Honestly, I don’t see a need for an Engineering Honors College. The program itself is pretty intense, and the co-op program helps students find employment right out school.

### Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College would you change, if any?

I’m not familiar enough with the Honors College to really say. The program is so isolated over in Allendale, they seem very secretive. If you’re going to college in a field where there’s a good chance you will struggle finding a job, or you want to go to grad school, then the Honors College might be a good option. Otherwise, I don’t see any reason to enroll. Is that a downside? I guess I don’t know enough to change.
Dialogue Question: What aspects of the GVSU Engineering program make it prestigious, and how could those be applied to the Honors College?

Honestly, there are several things working together to make our program stand out. One of the biggest factors for students is the co-op program. Students are primarily getting degrees for employability, so getting work experience while still in school is a huge draw. Plus, it is one of the most difficult curriculums in the state. That means people respect the students, even if they don’t recognize the GVSU name. We also have nice facilities, so students can get a real hands on experience. Even though technology is always changing, students are learning how to use what is available and how to think, if that makes sense.

Dialogue Question: How would you apply that to the Honors College?

Since it has students from all majors, a co-op program would be hard to include. I would maybe just make it harder to get into, and include really in-depth stuff. Other than that, maybe increase its presence on the university, especially on the downtown campuses.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Another administrator within the Engineering College

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Compile insights with teammates
Faculty Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:  <20____  20-25____  25-40____  40-50____  50+____  Gender: Female

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
To ask the advisor about student and faculty relationships.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
Gaining a better understanding of the process that a student goes through when encountering issues with their course or faculty members can give us innovative ideas.

Summary of Research:
The Honors Advisor was very helpful in enlightening me with what is set in place at the Honors College as far as when a student is having difficulties within their class or even within their personal life. She gave insight on some of the advice students often get and some of the main issues that she notices that students face within the Honors College. She also mentioned some changes that the Honors College is looking to make in the near future, which could be a point of innovation for us as well.

Important Insights:
- Students often don’t know how to handle conflict in person.
- Professors can reach out to other faculty if they are concerned about students.
- If multiple people voice concern about a certain class or professor, the director takes steps to address that.

Dialogue Question: What situation is the most common when dealing with Honors students in your office?
Students wanting to get reassured on where they are credit-wise. Questions of senior project. Where they’re going in future semesters.

Dialogue Question: How are situations dealt with by Honors students different from the general student population?
Honors students tend to think ahead rather than wait until registration comes around. They like knowing what to do ahead of time, which actually makes our job easier in the long run.
### Dialogue Question: What steps can Honors students take to have a successful and fulfilling experience in the Honors College?

Keeping an open mind. Sequences are a different approach which can be challenging at first. I give advice to trust the process. Students should go out of their way to engage with faculty--can lead to other opportunities. Speaking up and asking for help when things are not going the way they want. Knowing when to ask for help and that it is okay to ask for help. Many of them have never had to do that in their academic careers, but it is necessary to know when to get help if you are struggling.

### Dialogue Question: When a student approaches you with a problem they are having with a professor, what is your advice to them?

Have you talked to the professor? If not how do you do that? How do you approach the situations. Students can appeal to the department chair and if that is not good they can appeal to the Dean. Advisors do not take steps themselves but reports to director. “hey I’ve had multiple students in with the same problem”. Director takes next step, and probably starts with a conversation.

### Dialogue Question: How do you describe the purpose of a freshman sequence to an incoming student?

Talk about it differently with someone who is struggling than someone who is inquiring: This is what the sequence is doing for you. What do your choices result in (dropping the class, dropping Honors, staying in the class, etc.)? For incoming students I tell them that Honors packages Gen-Eds differently--interdisciplinary. You develop in depth relationships, multiple perspectives builds critical thinking. Professors more likely to reach out to students.

### Dialogue Question: How often have you had situations where a professor reached out to you about a student?

On average 1 or 2 students per sequence comes from professors to advisors. Advisors will then email the student to ask if they want to come in to talk about how things are going, and will alert them that their professor has reached out to their office. A lot of times it’s not just the school work that is bothering the student, but it could be anxiety or depression, or external factors.

### Dialogue Question: What policies are in place that you follow if a student is struggling with anxiety or depression?

Advisors will then email the student to ask if they want to come in. Advisors work a lot with departments all over campus. Dean of student does a holistic outreach. Encourage to talk with professor--time management, counseling center, student success center. Students need to speak up and communicate what is going on. We also offer an option to come in frequently to talk about what’s going on. Whether or not the student takes us up on that offer is up to them.

### Dialogue Question: How are students made aware that this option is available to them?

It is mentioned at orientation--the fact that students can come into office and talk about struggles. I do not know if students actually know that those kinds of services are available in the Honors building.

### What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

Maybe asking about how we keep up the connection between all Honors students through each year. We have had problems with students feeling like they are not involved in Honors during their sophomore year. The hard part of solving that is that the Honors Program appeal is that it is a more efficient way to complete Gen Eds, so adding something could take from that efficiency.
**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes, through Email.

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Director of Honors

**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Inquire to students about if they know about what the Advisors office offers.
- Chat with the Director of the FMHC.
- Look into how we can better prepare students to seek help when they need it in order for their classes to be more meaningful to them.
How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

This research relates directly to our work regarding curriculum. We want to create a curriculum that is accessible and appealing to everyone. This research has allowed us to identify possible challenges/constraints we have in the direction we are heading with our design thinking challenge.

Summary of Research:

This interview allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the evaluation processes within the Honors College. This included both faculty members and courses. Additionally, this interview allowed us to hear about the Honors College from the perspective of an administrator.

Important Insights:

- If a teacher is not full-time faculty, then the Honors College is not responsible for evaluating them.
- Much of the Honors College curriculum has to be designed for the small percentage that leave/withdraw from the Honors College.
- Offering sequences without the SWS requirement would limit the amount of options students have when choosing a sequence based on what they need/already fulfilled.

Dialogue Question: What is the biggest challenge you see in improving the FMHC curriculum?

Anytime you are changing a curriculum that has been around for a while, it is difficult because people like the way things are often. It is also a challenge in that it is a university program and yet there are 10 or 15 people who are most involved in it and you can even say 50 or 60 people if you count all the people who teach in the program. But then you have all the people here, full-time faculty members and staff people and we talk about it all the time. It is our job to really focus on the Honors College. But it is not just a matter of those 15 people agreeing on a change. We have to involve all of those other 50 or 60 faculty members, of course there are students and then everyone on campus. So through the system, everyone has to agree on what major decisions we might make. So that’s a challenge, it is not a matter of just waving a wand and making a decision. Also, maybe the main challenge is the fact that all Honors students have majors that themselves have lots of requirements. All Honors students want to graduate in a timely way so there is not a lot of leeway in terms of credits. We have to be very attentive to the General Education program because if you don’t satisfy the general education requirements in an efficient and timely way, it can create challenges or problems for you down the road. So there are all these constraints.
Dialogue Question: What do you consider most distinctive about the FMHC experience?

“I like the interdisciplinary number one. I think those first year sequences are the heart of the program. If anything, I would like to extend that model more into the curriculum. And then I keep coming back to intellectual passion. I think we get that from all faculty on campus so it is not specific to the Honors College. I think that curriculum because it is interdisciplinary and because it allows faculty to teach what they are most passionate about, we have a better opportunity to see faculty who are really engaged in the material. I think that it just good for people, good for students to see that passion. It doesn’t even matter if they are interested in that topic, if you see an anthropology teach being passionate about anthropology and a history teacher passionate about history, you’ll be passionate about the things you are interested in and it catches on. Then this idea of global citizenship. I think that the fact that 40% of Honors students study abroad is a really good indication that is a direction we should go and think of those interdisciplinary courses and our intellectual passions as extending to the whole world. And we are people that see ourselves belonging to the whole world and not just West Michigan. If there is anything about Grand Valley, it is that it is a little bit on the parochial side and I have had many students in my time here that have never been to Chicago or think of Grand Rapids as the big city. So we should be as eager to go and familiar with places like Barcelona or Tel Aviv or somewhere in Africa as we are here in West Michigan. Those are the three things I focus on.”

Dialogue Question: What is the current process of how Honors courses are evaluated?

“So I think one of things that we are realizing in this transitional period is that there have not been a lot of those processes in place. It has been a very informal system. We have course evaluations and people look at those course evaluations. And there are reviews of faculty members as they teach in the program and there is also program assessment where you are looking at student outcomes and student work. But I don’t think there has been and we have to work on developing a system of course evaluation. So I guess I would just say we really don’t have that. I guess I would say a system of curriculum and course evaluation. Because it is one thing to evaluate the courses but also how is it all fitting.”

Dialogue Question: What is the current process of how Honors professors are evaluated?

“There has not been a formal evaluation system of non-full time Honors faculty. Professor X was what we call faculty-in-residence where for three years he was a full-time Honors faculty member, but now he is back in department which is his home department. So now he still teaches in Honors, but we are not primarily responsible for evaluating him as a faculty member, department is. It makes some sense if he is going to be teaching regularly in Honors College that we do evaluate him as a Honors faculty member, not as a department faculty member, but as an Honors faculty member. Making sure the evaluations are ok.

Dialogue Question: Does the Honors College look at the end of year evaluations for professors?

“The director does and the chair of the Honors faculty. Student evaluations are an indication, not a final say. But I value them very much as a possible indication of problems and a pretty good indication of things that are going really well. It is pretty easy to see when a course is going well you can see it and when there are significant issues you can really see that and then there is a big range in the middle. I have learned to look for those two extremes. Students are really good at noticing those two extremes and I very much value it when they identify problems and we can look into that. So we have two people look at them and we talk about what we saw. “We definitely follow up. The course evaluations are an indication of potential problems. So then you kick into visiting classes and looking again at the syllabus and asking what is your assignment, let me see that assignment. So just engaging it. So nothing conclusive just on the look of the evaluations, it is like an invitation. On the other side, if 4 semesters in a row it looks like someone is doing a fantastic job, hey let’s get someone in there to write that up and nominate that person for an award or something.
Dialogue Question: Who are faculty/professors accountable to when creating the curriculum for their course for the Honors College?

So that is undergoing change right now. It has been very director heavy up until now. He had largely the responsibility to review course evaluations and to look at course proposals and even recruit faculty on campus to propose courses. We have reconstituted the Honors Curriculum and Development Committee with representatives from all around campus. So we have about 18 people including a couple students. 18 people that represent all the Colleges on campus. We have established, kind of in progress still, a process where faculty can propose an idea to the committee and if the committee thinks that is a good idea, then they would work with 3 members of the full-time Honors faculty to develop it. We are hoping that more formalized process will invite more people to participate and also working with those three full-time Honors faculty members will make sure that the proposal all adhere to a common set of expectations.”

Dialogue Question: To your knowledge, do you know why there are not midterm evaluations for year-long sequences?

I don’t. It’s funny because I think university wide they are a teacher prerogative, not really a requirement. Now a program like Honors could say that is our practice and we want everyone to do that. They are a good idea and all the research that I know about indicates that they can often help right a course that is going wrong because it not only gives feedback to the teacher, but the students feel better about being able to say something.

Dialogue Question: What are your thoughts about a sequence that does not fulfill the SWS?

So I have that same reaction. When I looked at the curriculum as a whole because I started to learn about all of the AP credits people were bringing in. We just got 5 years worth of data about AP credits that Honors students are bringing in so we could ask ourselves seriously what do the sequences do need to cover. About half the Honors students bring in Writing 150 credit, so there is no reason for primarily fulfilling gen ed if a lot those people have gen ed credits. The challenge is that it would change the choices people make. If we have 3 sequences that had Writing 150 because we knew we could easily fill 3 sequences with students who don’t need Writing 150. But now the people who need Writing 150 cannot choose those sequences so we are immediately segregating students into sequences by something other than their academic interest. So it is just a wrinkle in what might seem like a simple solution. I don’t know what the answer is exactly, but this appears to be the national conversation around Honors College because many have the gen ed replacement so that gen ed emphasis is going away all around the country, so I think it’s great because we can think about global citizenship, intellectual passions, and interdisciplinary. I guess my goal is that we can come up with a way to make the gen ed invisible so students don’t have to think primarily about that. Just choose the courses you want and we will make sure that you have covered it. But the Gen Ed chair freaks out when I say that, because if people leave they have to know what gen ed credits they covered. It is a pretty rare thing, but it is amazing how much that dictates how much we do. For the very small percentage of students that leave the Honors College, in some ways the whole Honors curriculum has to suit. It is kind of frustrating because that is a heck of a way to build a curriculum, but it makes perfect sense.

Is there anything I didn’t ask you that you think it important?

“I was left with two things from our last conversation. One was definitely about the relative rigor of the classes. I did look back at all of the course evaluations in the challenge and engagement index and those are the questions that get at how challenging and engaged the students were. We did look at the courses for that and we saw quite a range which kind of confirmed the general sense. So we thought let’s look at the practices of those who were ranked high and spread the word. The other was the idea of a long time between the sequence and junior seminar. I went to a retention workshop at the university. In the retention literature, it is a common observation that the sophomore year is the most difficult year for students in terms of whether they stay for graduation. So the fact that there is a gap in the Honors College in the convinces me that we need to work on some type of experience in the sophomore year.
## Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, via email.

## Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- General Education chair
- Chair of Honors College faculty
- Honors Curriculum and Development Committee

## Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Chair of Honors faculty
- General Education Chair
- Local employers
Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Discover how administration working in the Honors College or GVSU feel about the Honors College experience

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
This research relates directly to our work regarding curriculum. We want to create a curriculum that is accessible and appealing to everyone. This research has allowed us to identify possible challenges/constraints we have in the direction we are heading with our Design Thinking Challenge.

Summary of Research:
During the interview with a Honors administrator, the top two prototype concepts were received very well. The stakeholder was very excited about the impact that the prototype concepts would make on students and the positive distinction this would allow the FMHC to stand by. It was expressed that these prototype concepts were definitely something that could be implemented in the Honors curriculum. I did find that the faculty evaluation process is being reviewed and the Honors college is already working to put a formal process in place.

Important Insights:
- Honors faculty would be interested in implementing the skills workshop and feel that the year-long structure would allow this.
- Faculty and professors are willing to make the changes for their students because in the end the class is for the students.
- The Honors College is in the process of making changes to the Honors faculty evaluations.

Dialogue Question: After interviews with professors and administration of the Honors College, we have identified that there are no formal processes for evaluating part time faculty. What are some ways would be most effective to do this?
One is there needs to be communication across all Honors faculty about what is expected in a Honors class and you need to explain how you are doing those when you propose a course, but there also needs to be “let’s go back to that course that has been offered for 20 years and look again” because when you proposed that course 20 years ago we didn’t have those standards in place so can we get to a place where we are making sure you are doing that. A formal system of surveying people asking them to be accountable is one way and making them aware of things that might have changed since they proposed the course. This is one way to allow faculty to “police” themselves if you will. Another way to do it to have peer reviews of all Honors courses and what that means so either the chair, director, full-time faculty, or those who have been teaching in Honors for a long time who know the curriculum really well, that we can go in to classes like the way professors are reviewed in their own department and asking what is going on in here not in a hostile way, but in a formative way. We are also brainstorming ways in our meetings.
Dialogue Question: One of our 2 innovations is to implement a mid-semester accountability check. Such as having a collaborative dialogue within each semester to have a constructive conversation about what issues students and/or professors are having? This dialogue would ideally be mediated by an administrator such as director, faculty chair, or a full-time faculty member. What are your thoughts on this innovation?

“Regarding the rigor, we are looking at as the Honors faculty in our meetings. That is a conversation that might take place in single departments. It is a harder conversation here because of the part-time/full-time thing. But it is being addressed in the full-time meetings, but also the larger committee. But yeah, I think that is a really good idea. We would have to think really hard about how to make that a productive discussion because of two reasons. One, when you are given a syllabus one the first day, in a way that is a type of contract so you can’t really go mid-semester and say we don’t want as many quizzes. So it may not have an immediate effect on that class, but if an instructor is told to take this dialogue very seriously he/she could implement it in the future. I think a lot of professors would take that dialogue very seriously. The FTLC offers mid-term evaluations of the professor so it sounds like you are doing something similar, but having it as more of a conversation rather than someone else coming in. We could probably do both, but it might also be a good idea to have all Honors faculty who teach so all the sequence people get together and not to point anyone out, but to say you are showing 5 movies in class, but flip it and say I love movies, but have them watch it outside of class and discuss it when they come. So I think it is good idea to have those conversations. The change might not be able to take place immediately in the semester, but it could change for the following semester if it if a sequence.

“In our last collaborator debrief, we had a professor respond that there is a small chance that the LIFT evaluations at the end of the semester will impact his next semester because everything is already in place by that time. So my question is, when you get information at the end of the semester are you more likely to change the next semester, is that doable or feasible?”

Well that professor is very organized, because I am fiddling with my syllabus up until the morning I teach on the first day. A lot of my fiddling had to do with readings because I am always like I am not happy with that reading, what do I replace it and that takes a lot of time. I think that might go to personal preference. I have changed courses over Winter break. About 10 years ago, I had a bunch of my students in the sequence said I am unorganized. Now if I get 20 evaluations and one person says I am unorganized my tendency is to almost brush it off. But if I get 6 students saying I am unorganized, I am unorganized. Not everyone is going to be willing to admit that. So I sat down and changed my syllabus. It paid off because the second set said it was much better and that I was organized. So the thing about evaluations is tricky, if we have 5 people out of 20, that is not statistically relevant so it is really important to get all of the evaluation in. A good professor is seeing a pattern, they will respond even if it over Winter break. I just personally don’t see that as an excuse to not change a course. It kind of depends the nature of the comment because if they say they hate a book, it is too late to change a book because we do order the books in October for the winter. We get them after finals, so there is still time to make changes. You can’t change textbooks or trips, but you can change a lot.

“Is there anything can be changed mid-semester?”

If I get feedback in October that says everyday you put us into groups and it is boring and a waste of time and it’s busy work. Who wants that, no one wants to feel like their time is being wasted, you are paying so much per credit. So you can change things like the amount of group work. You can flip things, like if they are watching movies in class, you can put it online for them to watch it before class. I don’t think you can add more work because you are going to have 20 students and not all of them are not going to be on board with that. You can subtract work, I have said I am not going to give this quiz because I don’t feel like we are ready and I am just going to take it off the syllabus and students are generally happy about that. It really depends on the nature of what is being asked.”

Dialogue Question: Our second innovation is related to applying the skills in Honors. Many students felt that sequences took too much time and they were not able to apply anything directly to their career. (This is different than applying it to daily life). In order to address, this we have come up with an innovation that implements this into the established curriculum. Such as 2 classes of the semester, you are attending a workshop of some sort such as what is interdisciplinary and how to use that to your advantage. (This was a huge insight because if students are not aware of the benefits of this and do not know how to verbalize it, this is what is causing this dissatisfaction.) What are your thoughts on this innovation?

I think that if you go outside of Honors into the general population, people would say “Why do I have to take gen ed? Why do I have to take a philosophy class when I am an engineer?” So it is really a problem in higher ed. I think it is a combination of things. I think some of it comes from this political environment that attacks education and has boiled education down to becoming something seen as just if it doesn’t directly apply to my career, it is a waste of my time and money. I say that is partly political because I think there is a political strain that doesn’t want people to be exposed to critical thinking. But it also has very real economic reasons from students like their economic concerns are very real. 50 years ago you could get a college degree and not end up with 30 years of debt and now you can’t. So I think that is a very real problem. I like the way you choose to address it. My response is
always that it is unfortunate that we feel like we have to sell our curriculum whether in Honors or gen ed by chalking up the value of it, but that is the reality of what we face. I like the way you are doing it, you said “It’s not selling yourself, but in a way it is.” It is going out to a potential employer or even your parents and saying look I know I took this philosophy class and studying the 13th century, but the critical thinking skills and the oral presentation skills are going to help me as a nurse or help me as an educator of K-12 or help me as an engineer in a marketing pitch. We do need to give our students a way to express that and sells themselves and articulate the value of that so I am really happy to hear that it is part of that.

Dialogue Question: How are full-time faculty in the Honors College evaluated?

“There is no formal evaluation system yet in place. In the past, I believe the director would time to time visit classes, but it is possible he only visited classes he heard could be problematic. However, we are in the process of putting a formal process in place. When people hear about problems, they are immediately addressed. But there is not a formal process for making sure that problems do not come up and that is what we are putting in place and we should have that put in place by the end of the academic year.”

Dialogue Question: Can you explain your interaction with the LIFT evaluations?

“Not yet, I have only been in this admin position for a few months so I have not seen any yet.”

What is one thing/things I should have asked you, but didn’t or if there is something you think I should know?

One thing I think you should know in the Honors full-time faculty meetings, we are taking all of our documents online that say this is what we are, which were created in a hodpodge way, and we are taking those and saying is this who we are? Do you affirm this? If not, do you want to change it? So we are all on the same page so we can agree with it. One step is to make sure everyone knows and then we take that document and take it to the part-time faculty and we implement some kind of self-evaluation and peer-evaluation. So those are some ideas we have, but none of it has been put in place yet because the first step is to affirm the documents about who we are, what we want in our courses, what kind of teaching pedagogy we value and that kind of thing.”

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, through email and in person.

Two more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Senior Honors student
- Junior Honors student
- Honors faculty member

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Look into what changes the Honors college is making
- Meet with more Honors faculty who teach courses
- Explore what skills Honors students are most interested in developing
Honors Student Dialogue Script

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
To get insight on our innovation prototypes from students who would potentially utilize them.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
We are seeking to understand what other students believe is purposeful to the Honors Education.

Summary of Research:
For this particular interview I had a group of Honors students give their feedback at the same time. Their ideas bounced off of each other, and they gave valuable insight into our prototypes. They expressed some frustrations with their experience in the Honors Program, and then let that lead into a discussion of what they thought would add to the value of their education. Their insights confirmed other insights that we have gained from previous interviews in that they feel that they are unable to articulate the skills they have gained from the interdisciplinary Honors Program. They also shared some ideas on how to expand our prototypes to bridge this gap.

Important Insights:
- Students have no real answer when asked what skills they have gained
- They feel as though some of their Honors courses were busy-work
- They believe that some training on how to articulate their skills would be beneficial

Estimated Age:  <20  20-25  25-40  40-50  50+  Gender: Female

Dialogue Question: How would you add to or change the two prototypes we mentioned?
The Honors College is advertised as discussion based, but I have only found that to be true in one of the Honors classes I have taken. For the first time ever I am in an Honors course that is exactly as it was advertised and is what I would expect from an Honors College. Most of my other classes have been zero discussion and all lecture, and the best learning comes from talking. For sequences make it more discussion based and less busy-work. We’re in the Honors College, so you already know that we know how to turn work in and do it well. We should not get punished for being more motivated.

Dialogue Question: How is this valuable to an interdisciplinary education?
It’s interesting to think about how valuable interdisciplinary education is to the Honors College, but then you have classes where students do not interact with each other hardly at all, and there is no discussion happening. How is that teaching me to work with others in the work force if you are not creating space for me to do that in the classroom? I didn’t know what the other majors were in my classes, and they did not impact my learning at all, but I am in a class right now where we do a lot of discussion and I get to hear new perspectives on things every day, which has made my education richer.
Dialogue Question: If I were interviewing you for a job, how would you explain how your Honors Education sets you apart?

I think that I would just say that I worked harder. I put forth the effort when there were a lot of people who could’ve been in the Honors College and just didn’t take the initiative. Honors College shouldn’t mean that you are taking more classes, I thought I would take less but really I have just created more work for myself.

Estimated Age:  <20  20-25  25-40  40-50  50+  Gender: Male

Dialogue Question: Of the two prototypes mentioned, which do you think would be more beneficial?

As a freshman, I think that the skills workshop would be more beneficial, but as a junior or senior the student to professor dialogue would maybe be better. As a freshman you are still trying to figure out what college is and probably will not speak up against how a class is run.

Dialogue Question: In a job interview, how would you describe how your Honors Education sets you apart?

I could bull crap an answer, but I don’t think I would say anything very meaningful. Looking at it from a curriculum standpoint, it’s not even that my classes are more challenging. I guess I don’t know how to articulate an actual skill set that I am gaining from the Honors College.

Estimated Age:  <20  20-25  25-40  40-50  50+  Gender: Male

Dialogue Question: In what ways would you expand upon our prototypes?

I think that it needs to be set up in an orientation type of way. I remember going to the Honors orientation and they explained all of the resources and connections we would make through the Honors College, and I have no idea what those are and couldn’t explain to you what is available to me. When I came for orientation, I was still looking at other colleges and going through the decision process, so by the time I actually got to GV I had forgotten what resources were at my disposal. Like I don’t know anything about senior project or what I can do about it, or what the point of it is. If professors aren’t talking about it and I don’t remember, then I have no idea what sets me apart from General Education. Maybe at the beginning of each year have the class have an “intro to the year orientation” where they explain what the purpose of that year is, what you should be looking ahead to, reminding students of Honors resources, and maybe talking about study abroad or senior project, etc. Remind us of opportunities and resources that we have.

Dialogue Question: In a job interview, how would you describe how your Honors Education sets you apart?

People are not telling me enough about what the Honors College is, and I feel like I don’t know how to tell someone what the Honors College does for me. There is a lack of communication between faculty and students. As a junior, I should be able to tell someone everything the FMHC offers me as a student, but I am just going through the motions at this point.

Two more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Professors
- Students
### Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:  <20____  20-25  25-40____  40-50____  50+____  Gender: Female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Goal of This Opportunity:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To understand how Honors students view the Honors Program, and begin to introduce our team's innovations for the Program.</td>
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<tr>
<th>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Allows our team to gain feedback on our innovations for the program.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Summary of Research:</th>
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<tr>
<td>This week I interviewed an Honors student who transferred to Grand Valley and into the Honors Program. She ended up taking two Junior Honors Seminars, both of which did and did not support her major. She was initially very surprised at the large population of the FMHC, but instantly loved the support and care she received from the Honors faculty. However, she did say that one shortcoming to the program was the lack of communication that transpired within Niemeyer, as she really only got to know the people who were her roommates. The student saw great benefit in having a workshop focused on ways in which to articulate the benefits of the interdisciplinary program, and said that she would be willing to give the student-professor discourse a try, although communication would be a key aspect.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Insights:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Friendly and helpful Honors faculty help ensure a seamless transfer for Honors students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Certain Honors Seminars uses each individual's specific major to incorporate it into the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A workshop would be greatly favored to help enhance skills when talking to employer about their journey in the program.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: How did you hear about the GVSU Honors College?</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have a family member who went to the GVSU Honors College.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: What other Honors programs did you apply to? What did they offer that stuck out to you?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did not apply to any other Honors Colleges.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: What were the things about FMHC that made you want to join?</th>
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<tr>
<td>I like that the faculty of the FMHC are all very welcoming, helpful, and sincerely care about each and every student. I was also attracted to the variety – GVSU’s Honors College offers a wide selection of classes covering interesting and unique subjects. It gives you a chance to try something new and gain knowledge about a topic that you may have otherwise been relatively oblivious to.</td>
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Dialogue Question: What influences in your life impacted your decision to join the Honors College?

What made me confident in my decision to join the Honors College was my previous experience in a living/learning community called Michigan Research Community (MRC) at the University of Michigan. I attended UofM – Ann Arbor my first year of college, and I believe that being a part of MRC was the best decision I made my freshman year. It was an amazing opportunity to gain valuable research experience, knowledge, and skills, but it also provided me with extremely close and genuine connections with my MRC peers. We lived together in the same hallway of the same dorm building for the entirety of the year and did basically everything together. We shared similar goals and interests. It began to feel like a second family.

Dialogue Question: What were some things about the Honors College that initially surprised you?

I would try to find a way to create more “bonding activities” or just more opportunities to somehow connect with each other. Aside from my roommates, I never really got to know the people in my building at Niemeyer, yet alone on my floor. Connecting with peers is tremendously important to personal development, in my opinion, and I feel that the Honors College could assist students a bit better with doing so. There are so many things you can learn from getting to know people who come from different backgrounds and cultures!

Dialogue Question: What aspects of the Honors College do you like?

The faculty is extremely personable. Coming in as a transfer student was confusing and nerve-wracking, but I was given plenty of guidance. The entire environment is friendly and supportive, which I believe is an imperative aspect of a successful Honors College.

Dialogue Question: How have Honors classes supported your major? How have they challenged your major?

My major is Allied Health Sciences (Pre Speech-Language Pathology Emphasis), and the two Honors classes I have taken are both SWS Junior Seminars: “Music, Culture, and Aesthetics” and “Culture & the Holocaust.” At first glance, these classes are entirely unrelated to my major – and this is true. I have never been too big on history, but both classes had quite a large history focus. Unsurprisingly, a lot of the content challenged my major; however, the classes also supported it. “Culture & The Holocaust,” in particular, had a final project in which we were to write a 20-page paper relating the Holocaust to our area of study. Because my major involves both speech and hearing sciences and disorders, I wrote about the treatment and experiences of the Deaf during this gruesome time. It was an extremely eye-opening assignment and valuable for everyone in the class as we were able to tailor it to relate to our individual majors in the way we preferred.

Dialogue Question: How would a workshop benefit you?

Skills workshops would be very beneficial. I would definitely appreciate the help and guidance, as it would be a great way to gain a better understanding of the ways in which being a part of GVSU’s Honors College has helped me develop both personally and academically. If I am asked in an interview by an employer about FMHC, for example, having the workshop would make me more confident in verbalizing what exactly the Honors College has done for me and how having the experience makes me a strong, suitable candidate.

Dialogue Question: Based on the top 2 innovations, what are your general thoughts? Pros and cons to each?

As I mentioned previously, I believe skills workshops would be extremely beneficial to future students in making the most of their Honors experience to “sell themselves” to employers, and I do not foresee many cons to this innovation. I also believe that student-professor discourse is a great idea. Communication is essential, and many professors are unaware of what changes could be made to improve their curriculum or instruction. Therefore, the faculty will appreciate it just as much. Of course, there definitely should be clear boundaries to this. Problems may arise if respect and proper etiquette isn’t maintained.
**Dialogue Question:** For the second innovation, in what ways would you be willing to offer suggestions to teachers in a one-on-one interface? Pros and cons to each?

I would be willing to offer suggestions to professors one-on-one, as I said communication is the key.

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**Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?**

Yes, by phone.

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**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Honors student
- Honors Professor
- Employer

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**Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):**

- Interview more Honors students to get their feedback on our ideas
- Interview Honors Professors to see if they would be willing to implement our innovations
- Talk to an Honors faculty member on the education board to see if our innovations are implementable
Non-Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age: <20____ 20-25__ 25-40____ 40-50____ 50+____ Gender: Male

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Begin to understand how people who are not a part of the Honors College view the program.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are investigating the way the curriculum influences how non-Honors kids view the Honors College and if they actually know of FMHC’s existence.

Summary of Research:

This student had experience in Honors and had a lot to say about his decision to leave Honors, fueled originally by credits and changing his major, but also he dug into his dislike of liberal arts education and his belief that he was not gaining anything of value from the education he received in Honors. He mentioned Honors being a great place to try out new initiatives on a small scale. He liked the idea of changing the SWS requirements in the sequence, as he already went through many SWS classes in his major. He also mentioned incentivizing the evaluation process and improving it as something students would be happy with. Also, creating a data-based website for students trying to pick a sequence would be helpful and a potential senior project for someone in the program.

Important Insights:

- Not all students see the value in liberal arts education and the Honors program.
- Students do not feel Honors is helpful towards their future career.
- Students do not feel heard by faculty in the course evaluations, but are genuinely wanting to help improve the university in a project like this.

Dialogue Question: What is your perception of the Honors College at GVSU?

Starting out, like my freshman year, I thought it was great because it allowed me to live in awesome dorms. I mean it was almost kind of a selling point for me for Grand Valley. Not necessarily the program itself, which they might not like that, but it was definitely just the different benefits of being in the Honors College, having your own room and a bunch of study spaces. I did like all the different professors that are in the Honors College, they just seem very down to earth, very cool, like FACULTY. I had FACULTY for my Live Learn Lead. So I started out in computer engineering and with that, if you’re an engineer in the Honors College, they put you in certain sequences, and not others, just because it doesn’t work out, I don’t know. So I was in an engineering Honors sequence and that was Live Learn Lead with FACULTY and then you’d move on for the next semester and do War and Technology and it was two three-credit courses instead of the twelve credit sequence, like SPI or something. When I switched out of engineering, I went to computer science and math and it would have just been a normal sequence, but since I had already started it, I ended up actually having to take extra Honors classes to complete the Honors College, plus seminar, plus senior project and all that other stuff and I just said, no, I don’t want to do that. I don’t want to have to take those extra Honors courses, I’d rather just finish up the gen eds I need because I came in with so many credits anyway, I didn’t want to take any more because if I were to do all the extra Honors stuff, I wouldn’t be able to graduate in four years. I would have had to maybe do another semester with six or nine credits or something. So I didn’t want to do that. But the perception coming into the program, I was very excited to be living in Niemeyer, to have that sequence, that at first, get all those classes out of the way. But for me personally, maybe this is just my own experience, it didn’t end...
up working out the way they want it to for students going through the program. But I'd say that's my perception coming into it. What I learned, the Live Learn Lead course was good, I think it kind of, to me, it didn’t seem to know what it was supposed to be when I was taking it, it was kind of just a hodge-podge. I’m not sure if FACULTY does all of the Live Learn Leads or not, but it seemed like “we’re going to talk about a little bit over here, a little bit over there”. The final presentation was about liberal education in general and how it affects people. I’m not personally sold on the idea of liberal education, which might have been something else that made me not want to continue in the Honors College. I think for certain trades, absolutely, liberal education is good. I think though, for more of the technical ones, it is still needed, but not as much as a four year university wants us to believe. I didn’t want to take an Honors arts class, because those to me didn’t seem interesting at all. The Honors College gives you a different perspective and provides extra courses to us for the people who were able to get into Honors to hopefully bring in another level. It'd be different if the different departments were to provide a, say, philosophy in math course and where you're looking at careers and exploring how to use philosophy and liberal education in these courses. You could take that course, you know how it's going to apply to what you're going to do with your life, because most likely, you'll be using it towards your career. I doubt the university would like that because they'd be losing out on 15-20 credits of general education and professors wouldn't be happy either because they teach those courses. But for the sake of the students and their careers, I think it's important to get them the knowledge they need for their careers, not necessarily this holistic approach.

**Dialogue Question: Why did you choose to not be a part of the Honors College?**

A lot of things in this life come down to money. It wasn’t a whole lot more money but it was enough and also time, where I would have had to take an extra class through Honors. I wanted to be able to graduate in four years with a double major, which is already going to be tough and especially since I transferred into that major not at the very beginning. I had to make sure I leave in four years and if I had gone an extra semester, it wouldn't have been a big deal, but I wanted to just be done. So time was a big deal also, but I didn’t want to pay an extra 1000-1500 bucks, I mean it’d be cool if I had that money just to spend it, but I don't think I could justify doing that if I didn’t have to. It's not a huge deal to me if I graduate with Honors or however it's given to us when we graduate, and maybe that's particular to me and my major, but if I were to go on and get my PhD, maybe I'd wanted that to put on my CV or something. But, for computer science and I'm looking more into data science now, you don't need to graduate with Honors to be seen by these companies. I read a report about a lot of these companies out in Silicon Valley. When you submit your resume to them, they run it through a filter that will remove your GPA, remove what college you went, remove all sorts of different information that people think, oh this is great on the resume, this is for tech companies specifically. They'll look at what you accomplished and then maybe not even where you went to school. Bringing this back to liberal education and the Honors College, I don't think Honors is filling that gap. Taking three courses of general education and different liberal arts type things is going to be that deciding factor of “is Google going to hire me? Is Apple going to hire me?” From what I'm reading and the data I'm looking at, the data doesn't show that that is what they're looking for. If someone wants to stay in academia, I see that argument 100 percent, absolutely. But if you're going into a career, I can't see the argument for that. (about the added Honors credits after switching majors) I remember leaving Honors advising thinking, this is ridiculous, I won't want to put up with this, there's no need for me to put up with this. Like I said before, it wasn't super necessary so I looked at how many credits I had left and said, you know what? I'm just going to take my last few gen eds that I need to cover my stuff. The Live Learn Lead did cover some stuff, the War and Tech covered some other stuff, but I decided to move on and do something else. So after a year of Honors, I said it's not going to benefit me and it will actually make things more stressful for me later on, so if I can remove that stress, I will.

**Dialogue Question: Can you speak about the workload in the Honors College?**

Live Learn Lead, and again this was with FACULTY, so I don’t know what other people’s experiences were, but talking honestly about it, I thought it was, like I said it was hard to figure out exactly what the point of the course was. It felt kind of for a while like a filler they put in there. It was almost like a survey course of covering different things. I’m not a fan of those type of courses. But the workload itself, we had to write some papers and read some books. I didn’t read all the books. If I read all the books I would’ve been reading constantly. Well maybe that was War and Tech I think we only had 2 to 3 books to read in Live learn lead. I don't want to make it sound like all we had to read and that's why I didn’t like it. But it was more I just didn't find a lot of it relevant, I didn't see the value in it. I wouldn't say the workload was crazy because it seemed relevant it was harder to be motivated to do it and I felt like I could be spending my time doing other things. It wasn’t like my entry level CS course, where I’m learning things I didn’t know how to do before...
and I know I’m going to be using it for my job. There’s a lot more tedious things but at least I know I can justify that time because I
know it’s going to be used towards something. The liberal education that I got through Live Learn Lead and War and Tech, it’s hard,
I mean I can probably point a couple times that it’s actually been used. But in my career I probably couldn’t think of one time
that I actually used that stuff. So you start weighing that, seeing what you’re paying, how much time you’re spending, and I’m a big
proponent of “don’t waste time doing things that aren’t going to be relevant to you” so I guess that’s another reason I guess I moved
away from the Honors College. That’s hard to say, I probably would have (stayed in Honors if I hadn’t switched majors), I don’t know.
I guess I can’t decide since I wouldn’t have known what I was thinking at that point. I couldn’t imagine staying in Engineering. If I did,
maybe? I think there were less things I had to do through the Honors College when I was an engineer because just how it linked in
with the Engineering program. But the amount of stress I see Engineering students going through, I don’t know if I would have opted
in to having that extra junior seminar. I can’t say, I don’t know.

Dialogue Question: What do you think of our Innovations?

Participant questioned how well Honors credits transfer to other schools and mentioned a possible theory of the relationship between
our generation and Honors: I wonder if going into Honors, people see that as you getting locked in? Like, “what if I want to transfer
from Grand Valley in a year, will my credits transfer, or would I lose my 12 sequence credits? Will all 20 of my credits of whatever they
count for transfer, because I’m pretty sure the Gen Ed program will transfer.” That would be interesting to look into, because if you
do that, you’re stuck at Grand Valley. If you were in Honors, did a year at Grand Valley, hated it, wanted to transfer, completed your
sequence, and you couldn’t transfer all your credits, you’re probably going to continue at Grand Valley, you’re going to have to. I don’t
know, I could just see it happening.

About our innovation of a brochure/email on the sequences: Yeah, that’d be great. I remember coming into Grand Valley looking at
sequences and thinking, oh this one actually sounds interesting, but it’s like wow, you can’t take this ‘cause you’re in Engineering. And
I’m like, which ones can I? And there’s like two. Well, none of these sound good, but now I have to take one because I’m in Honors.
But yeah, if after a few years, as people finish their sequences, just do a huge exit survey of “What did you think of the sequence with
your major” and run the analytics. Then you can see, are you going into this major? What did people who are similar to you say? And
then you could figure out which one to take. Everything is data-driven now, so go on this cool website and pick “I’m this major and I’m
blah, blah, blah a few questions” and give you all the results and you should probably not take this sequence. That’d be really cool. I’m
there’d be someone at Grand Valley (Honors Senior Project?) who could make one.

About the sequence without SWS: that was one thing I didn’t like I didn’t like about my sequence, but the two year ones are gone
now. I know the engineering one didn’t count for an SWS, but we wrote a bunch of papers, and I believe it was the SWS requirement,
I might be wrong, but because I ended up having to take SWS’s on top of that anyway, but I’m a double major, so things didn’t overlap
well, but I believe I’ve take 3 or 4 SWS’s at this point and I think you only need 2 to graduate. Do you know if Grand Valley is look-
ing into changing something like that? Because I think Honors is a great place to experiment with some things because it’s a smaller
subset of students and I’d like to believe they’re of a higher caliber in the Honors College, some of the people I met in Honors made
me question that sometimes, but I think most of the people are. So I’d think you’d get very good observations and feedback from
those students if you were to try something out and then apply that to the rest of the college. ...I think Grand Valley has to define,
what does it mean to be an Honors student? Does it mean you’re in a different college completely, since you take most of your gen-
eds in Honors and not with non-Honors students. Or should it be an additional class where you get a problem and you come up with a
solution type class. I don’t know. It’s almost like what Grand Valley is doing is a super all-encompassing approach, and it’s great if you
come out with value after doing it, but I don’t think from my experience that you come out with value after doing it. So if was just a
couple extra classes, I probably would have stayed in it. Like if your sequence was the only thing you had to do, I definitely would have
stayed. But then you have an extra project, that just gets tacked onto your capstone. I hope you don’t have to pay for the credits for
the Honors project. (upon hearing you do pay for those credits) Well that’s a whole other issue there, like you shouldn’t have to pay to
take your internship. Like you shouldn’t have to pay for the project, that would deter, well at least it would deter me. Like oh, you got-
ta pay more? College isn’t getting any cheaper, and it goes just every year. And I mean, I’m blessed with good scholarships, so money
isn’t the end-all-be-all and I recognize that but there’s some people who get into the Honors College, barely, and they don’t get a
lot of the scholarships to come here, it’s just not doable. I’m not on the other side of things, I don’t think college should be free, but I
think you should get value from your education and there’s a lot of professors... those in the Honors College, like FACULTY, made us
feel like we’re on top of the world, but there’s others who forget sometimes that we pay their salary and their job is to move us along in
our lives, and not necessarily us adhere to them and do what they say. I think the Honors College has done a good job of that. I think
they’re very good at promoting us, motivating us, and providing good opportunities for us to succeed, and I mean you get to do cool
things, like this project. It’s cool that you get to explore these things that you probably wouldn’t get to do if the Honors College didn’t
allow you to do it.

On the innovation of changing the way course evaluations are done: The issues you run into with that is a lot of people when they’re
done, think back to when you graduated high school and if they gave a survey on how to make this high school better, would you
have 1. filled it out or 2. cared enough to give honest feedback. The only people who would are people who are upset or super happy
with something, but most people, those in the middle, would be like ehh, I don’t care enough, whatever I say isn’t going to affect me anyway, whatever. And that’s sad, right, because you don’t want to lose all that knowledge that could be gained, but if a sequence is really hard, most people want to be done and if they’re given a survey and expected to fill it out in depth, they just want to be done. But I think the university as a whole should do this anyway, for those who fill out all their evals, you’re entered to win $100 Meijer gift card or whatever. If they did that, you’d probably see everyone filling out their evals, I would. I mean, I don’t think it would hurt the university as far as money goes, they’re putting up buildings every year. Like I said, experimentation within Honors would probably be a great place to start. These middle of the road people will then be submitting their feedback and put into perspective the other people who are really upset. Anyway, with the evals, I’m not convinced based on some of the professors in my CS program, I don’t believe that a lot of them are taken seriously. I’ve had two or 3 professors in the CS program that are appalling. I put on my evals, someone should be coming in and evaluating these professors and make sure they are teaching what they’re supposed to be teaching because I’m walking out with little knowledge and it makes me upset because I want to be competitive in my career. And I’m paying for it. And as a student whose concerned about those things, I want to know that I’m heard. Not that they should fire someone based on one person’s eval, but there’s some professors I had freshman year and I hear they’re still around and it’s the same exact story. Like how does that happen over 3, 4 years time, that nothing changes? And I think the Honors College is a great place to explore and make actionable changes. If there were no students, the university would not exist. You can get away with that in some cases, like the students want this to happen, but it’s not actually possible, ok. But when it comes to hiring and firing professors or at least making them change how they’re doing things, that should be a number one priority. And I think a lot of students agree with that but you bring it up to someone in the faculty, and it’s like oh, he has tenure, she has tenure, we know it’s a problem, we’re trying to work on it, but 4 years later, and nothing gets done. …I would advise you to come up with a system that’s better at evaluating professors than what’s currently in place.

What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

Well, I’ve had a lot to say, I’ve thought about it a lot over the past few years. I’m actually glad you asked me.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, via text.

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Look into ways of creating data-driven websites for the sequence recommendations
- Work on innovations that help students see the value of the Honors program
- Look into ways of creating and implementing effective course evaluations
## Faculty Dialogue Script

**Estimated Age:**<br> <br> Gender: Female

### Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Discover how faculty working in the Honors College or GVSU feel about the Honors College experience.

### How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

We are investigating the way the Faculty view and influence the FMHC program.

### Summary of Research:

This faculty member helped with our innovations. She mentioned that removing the SWS requirement from the sequence might be a good move. She also agreed that there is not consistency in course load between sequences and having everyone get together and figure it out might be helpful. She also stated that the budget and resource concerns stated from other administration interviews are real concerns facing the Honors College as it grows and needs to be addressed. Overall, she would love to see more support for students and that their voices are heard.

### Important Insights:

- Faculty agree that administration, faculty and students need to come together and talk.
- Some faculty feel that sequences need to be toned down and should not treated as “weeder” courses.
- Protocol and slow change negatively affects academia and can hinder students.

### Dialogue Question: What did you like about the Honors College?

It was the students, it really was. It was being a part of our future, is really what it’s all about. And to really help students learn what their passions are, how far they can go with their skills and talents, what skills and talents they want to develop more of and where they want to go and seeing them build that confidence to move forward and think big and look at things in a very broad perspective and getting them involved in global and community activities. Basically paying it forward to others. It was awesome, I loved it.

### Dialogue Question: What do you see as the benefits of the Honors College for students?

You get more one-on-one interaction. The faculty are for the most part, teaching in a different way, which I think is a very core part of Honors, the experiential learning, like what you’re doing in your junior seminar or like you may have done in your sequence as a freshman. I know Dr. J’s rule of thumb was not waiting until students are juniors to have this kind of experiential learning, but it’s started as freshmen. And that makes a big difference because when you’re doing what you’re learning, you can put it into your life. Sometimes when it’s all just theories, it can be hard to apply it to your life. I really liked that about the curriculum and loved how they used the different disciplines to bring it all together, like art, philosophy, writing. I think that helps students think in a very proactive way, problem solve and learn to think in a very broad perspective.
Dialogue Question: What would you change about the Honors College?

I would definitely have more resources. I think there is a growing and evolving population coming to college that have different challenges, more of a variety of challenges and we need to catch up with that, like students with Asperger’s and autism, we need to provide for them. To have better communication, more in-depth communication, between departments, like housing, administration, students, staff. When you come all together and collaborate, basically working as a team, with a team perspective for helping students grow personally, academically, professionally, then we’re all on the same page. Nobody is missing any information and we can connect the dots and that’s what I really loved doing in Honors. When we had issues with students, it was faculty, folks in the advising office, and the student and we came together and we worked together so everybody had the same kind of information, because sometimes students like to fudge things a little bit and say, “no, I didn’t do that” and I’d say, “hmm, well I’m really kind of puzzled here. How about we all get together and talk about this?” And then the truth comes out and we come to a realization of what the real issue is and how can we work together on it. And we have fantastic resources on campus, so it’s all bringing that together to work as a team and not work in silos. I think it’s tough, academia is know for “we have this information here and there” and it stays where it’s at instead of sharing it out there. I was just shocked at some of the idiosyncrasies of the academic world. I think we need to bring business and academia together because they are strong in teaching and developing all these lives and helping them go out and have a great future. So why not bring that together, to me that makes only good sense. Like for instance, I would help students with autism and they could not handle sharing a room, so they needed their own separate room. The protocol calls for a written doctor’s note, a doctor’s diagnosis, this and that. And some of that is needed, like when we work with DSR (Disability Support Resources), so we know how to best care for the student. However, when you’re working with a student and you see the issues that are maybe not medical, it’s the emotional, the developmental part that’s not synchronized, like with the rest of the population, so let’s give the student the very best of what he or she needs. Sometimes I felt the bureaucracy and protocols really bumped into the progress and that was frustrating. You know there has to be certain protocols, certain regulations, things to do, however I think it can go too far, but that’s just my opinion. That was my biggest frustration was protocol and bureaucracy within the system. It made things very difficult to get students the care that they needed. I think part of that is due to the growth. We haven’t caught up to the growth of the university yet. I also think that sometimes people have a really difficult time understanding the needs of Honors students and I know I would get that at times. “Well, what do you do over there anyways? These students have an advisor for their major, you don’t have much to do at all.” But what would students do without a living learning community that supports them and works together with them on an issue. Sometimes you gotta bump the system a little to get results.

Dialogue Question: What do you think is the biggest turn-off to joining/staying in Honors?

I think that we’re running into a problem that I had started to see a lot of and speaking with different faculty helping students is high schools did not really give students a fair shake as far as challenging them and holding students accountable in learning more and really pushing them in ways and so this is what I see a lot of is when students come in with 30 AP credits or whatever and of course, with that experience at the age you are and you think, look what I did! I can do this, it’s no problem! And pretty soon, you’re loaded down with homework that first week and you’re like holy crap! What’s going on, I can’t do this, I’ve never done this before and I’m an Honors kid and what’s happening? I think that the ego gets bashed around just a little bit and we need to be there when that happens with students so they don’t give up and I think that’s what happens with some students, they leave because they’ve never worked that hard before and they don’t want it enough. You have to want it, you have to have that sense of I’m going to do the very best. Now can that be a guarantee that they’re going to flourish in Honors? No, it’s not, however, you’re going to learn how much you can push yourself and the student is going to learn how to reach out when it feels really, really uncomfortable and it’s like when dealing with depression because they’re homesick or not doing what they thought they could, feeling stupid because students would room with students who are going to med school and “I’m going to be an English teacher”. I heard students compare themselves so much to each other and so that was a big deal I really pushed with students that there’s not comparing here. Are we thinking that one is better than the other? It’s about your level of expertise...it’s not about who’s better than who, it’s about developing your own talent and your own skill. Comparing doesn’t get us anywhere.
Dialogue Question: What do you see as the biggest challenge to improving the FMHC?

1. The budget. 2. Bringing administration, faculty, and students on the same plane. I think administration comes from a very different perspective and I think administration forgets sometimes what’s really making the Honors College tick, or the College of Nursing, or the College of Engineering, etc. They get caught up with the administrative part of running a university. Ok, come down and be with us for a while. And when a staff member comes into a meeting and shares some concerns and frustrations, just because we don’t have a PhD or not a dean or whatever, I think people like students and other people across the board need to be more a part of that and listened to. I don’t know how that would work. With that kind of an attitude with students, and I think there have been different think tanks that brought together students and staff on what’s going on. But academia has this awful reputation of being extremely slow in changing, and so there can be a lot of frustrating issues happening that from our perspective would be a simple problem to be solved. Why can’t we come together and talk about it and see the true issue happening and take care of it? I never understood why that couldn’t happen, but I don’t know.

Dialogue Question: What do you think of our innovations?

The unfairness of the different sequences (in the course load), I understand that. That has been addressed with different groups of students throughout the years and I’m glad to hear that is happening. I do believe that many of them, you come in from high school and when you haven’t had to study really hard and get all As and then you fulfilling WRT150, history, and SWS, all sorts of things and it’s very overwhelming and that’s when we lose freshmen. I think you that only need one SWS to fulfill for the university. The junior seminar fulfills it, some of the other courses like the gen ed curriculum fulfills SWS, so why have it in the sequence the first year for the students. WRT150, I get that, I really do, because WRT150 is the basics for the writing to continue into college, so that I agree with. So even though you have AP WRT150 when you come in, it really isn’t enough to show you what you need to learn for writing. I think that students by having WRT150 incorporated in that, I think that freshmen in the gen ed curriculum take WRT150 their first or second semester that year and otherwise if students don’t test into WRT150, they take WRT098 then WRT150. So I think that is fair for students to have that and I think it would be fair to have it in the first semester. I think the first year is critical for learning good writing. That would be the way I’d look at that. I think yes there’s going to have to be a sense of coming together with faculty and the Dean and the Director of Honors to come into seeing what truly works for a sequence for the demand, the level of reading, the demand level for students for the sequence. Let’s not drive them into the ground. This is not a weeder course, that’s how students feel. These are weeder courses, you know they’re not. I can see why students feel that way and I think a couple of our faculty have even said that term, which really ticked me off a bit because that’s not what we stand for in Honors. What we stand for is that we want to be able to sleep at night and have a life outside of Honors? I think that’s part of the reason why the sequences need to be toned down a bit, they really do. You don’t teach graduate level courses to freshmen coming out of high school. That’s my opinion though. All the students I’ve worked with throughout the years, yes they have high ACT, they’re very driven and all that, but let’s not make that an obsession. I worked with students on how to learn to back off and what that meant. I know I’ve heard (from students), I don’t know why I’m learning this, blah blah blah”, “I don’t going to study that”, “I not going to work in that”. No matter what, it’s going to make you think in a very different way. I think students could have more fun in the sequences, with more experiential learning, more teamwork, less lecture. As far as service goes, service learning, that’s a very tough one to do because different majors have different demands for service. So when we tack on service in Honors, it’s another stressor, how am I gonna fit that into my schedule? I have to work, I have to do this for major, I have to be involved in this and that. It creates a lot of anxiety and another stressor. It’s a tough one to answer, it really is. Why don’t they go to Ghana on the 6 week study abroad, service learning program? Can we consider crossing over service opportunities and service demands from majors? Is there some way to collaborate in that area instead of having it segmented so much? I don’t know, I think there’s a lot more demands on students coming into college, who are more and more responsible for the debt, for carrying the load to keep your grades up. So what can we do to make that doable without giving a student an ulcer? What is the answer to a students being very healthy and challenged without overdoing it? Let’s treat them like freshmen, let’s take this a step at a time. For 1600 students, you need at least 4 (advisors) in that office and not in that one office, they need multiple offices because of the fact there are so many students I’ve seen be pushed aside because we don’t have the resources to make it work for them. Why put up some many roadblocks? Instead of sitting down with a student and getting the full story, there’s a protocol to follow. With that protocol, there aren’t any gray areas and so a student might be shoved off. I feel there needs to be a gray area in order to not miss something. The Honors College specifically, here’s an idea for service. I know [previous Honors Director] and I talked, why can’t we have a one credit course, not an internship, but it could be service-oriented. Have students who need to do service help faculty, almost be like a TA in a way. I don’t know if freshmen would be ready to do this, but I think being in the room with faculty, whether or not faculty would like that or not I don’t know. Perhaps, sophomores who took that sequence, that student would offer office time to be available for two hours for students to come in as a group or individually to get help with, ya know, “I don’t get this prof, this is what I
turned in and this is what I get back. I met with a faculty member. That student could be a really valuable resource. I think to make it more organized and more available, you gotta have certain hours and it’s gotta be set up. That could be for sophomores perhaps, who had been through the rig-a-ma-roll of a sequence or offer one credit in ways that can be attached to service and can be a learning experience. I don’t know. It’s a tough one because of demands you guys have in your majors. It’s tough to work with all that. All of you are really so good about that (service), be an ambassador, taking parents and families around, being at orientation, you do an incredible job. Maybe there’s an opportunity there if service is in question, maybe extra credit can be offered to students who are going above and beyond, even though you do that anyway. I think there’s something about when you’re doing something for a credit or you’re being supervised by someone to hold you accountable for the hours and the kind of work you’re doing, it kind of steps you up a notch. It makes you more responsible in doing the work. We don’t have the budget to pay but maybe we can integrate it into the curriculum somehow. The beauty of that would be the student would have some valuable input for the faculty member for issues that students have been dealing with to give that faculty member inside feedback about what the struggle is with students. Does something need to be taught in a different way, is it the sequencing of information in the course, all sorts of things. I see that as a great insight for faculty. Oh yes, better descriptions of the sequences. That’s been a frustration of mine for many years, because anytime an email is sent out, students are given a link, look at the course description, and give us a first, second, and third choice. So the link is there, so is the description, and hopefully the syllabus, which I think it should be, so these students know what is happening. What if instead of spending the money on a brochure, if you could include in that email that all these freshmen receive ahead of time, you have a group of students who can be contacted by these freshmen. Maybe 2 or 3 students who respond to these students by email or talk to them on the phone if needed about what their experiences were in that sequence. Or you could record them and put them on Youtube, connect it right on the website, with students giving their perspective. That can be done. So either one of those would be great and would avoid spending money on brochures they won’t read anyway. They’re into technology so use technology to get their attention.

Dialogue Question: Is there an innovation we might have missed?

No matter how we advertise, we always miss students. Why can’t students be held accountable for checking their (GVSU) email? Is it that big of a deal. I think that students get ticked off when they can’t bring their laptop into a class because faculty don’t know if they are really using for class. What kind of guidelines can be set up?

What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?

I can’t think of anything at this time, I think that was a lot of information.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, via text

Two more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Director
- DSR Director

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Look into ways of creating data-driven websites for the sequence recommendations
- Work on innovations that help students see the value of the Honors program
- Look into ways of creating and implementing effective course evaluations
Honors Student Dialogue Script

Estimated Age:  <20_x_  25-40___  40-50___  50+___  Gender: Male

Primary Goal of This Opportunity:
Discover what students appreciate in the Honors College and what they would change and their overall experience.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

Summary of Research:
Students make the most of guided activities with involvement, not just another lesson or lecture. If presented is an interactive manner, students would be willing to make the most of our innovations.

Important Insights:

- Students are most likely to come if it is scheduled during normal class time.
- Students want an interactive workshop, not a lecture on how to write a resume.
- Many students have yet to apply their Honors College education outside of the University itself. I think this illustrates the importance of this workshop.

Dialogue Question: Our group has been working on an idea to integrate a class discussion in Honors Classes to steer the direction of the class and offer a safe space for students to critique the professor. All discussions will be moderated by an Honors College faculty member to ensure civility. What are your thoughts on this?

I guess it could help. The moderator person needs to do a follow up session though, to make sure the professor sticks with the plan. I had a professor who would ask us what he could do to improve the class, and then he just didn’t do any of our suggestions. I don’t like the word safe space, because it makes me think of people who are afraid to stand up for themselves. When I have a problem, I talk to the professor, and work it out. Plus, when you meet them one on one, they usually are more willing to cut you some slack. But if the moderator can check back up on the professor, that could work.

Dialogue Question: Do you think this would increase the distinction of the Honors College?

It might make more people join, since they know they aren’t going to be stuck with some jerk of a professor. So yeah, I suppose that’s an improvement. The bigger it gets, the more the name will spread.

Dialogue Question: Have you applied your education in getting a job, or on a job?

My summer job really just checked to make sure I was in any school, not really my education. My job during the school year, I had from High School, so I didn’t have to reapply or anything.
Dialogue Question: As of now, what is your experience in using your Honors College education?

Not much. I don’t write many papers, which is what I did a lot of in my sequence. I’m in an Honors art class, and I’m getting absolutely nothing out of it. It’s just memorizing stuff. I haven’t taken my junior seminar yet, but I’d bet I write a couple papers there too. I’m a math major, so not a whole lot of writing.

Dialogue Question: How do you feel about an Honors College lead workshop teaching students to utilize their skills, and to express them to others?

Isn’t that what the career fairs are for?
The career fairs are more for finding a job. This workshop would be about applying the skills you learned, and how to explain these skills to potential employers.
Oh, like how to use our writing skills to write better resumes? It’s a good idea, but I’m not going unless it’s during class. I have a lot going on, especially in the evenings.

Of the two options, which integration do you feel would most benefit you and why?

I would pick the first one. I can watch a video to improve my career skills, or talk to somebody in the industry. Talking to the professor might actually produce some results.

Dialogue Question: How would you feel about combining both into a workshop, where you learn how to apply your knowledge, and the professor discusses the course layout, and you have input?

Yeah, that sounds good. If the professor is going to take the discussion seriously, it might make class more engaging, which helps for students like me who are in a major that doesn’t really have Honors classes. If the career info is just resume writing, that’s not actually that helpful, but like interviews and how to sell yourself, I could work on that.

Do you have any other suggestions for this workshop?

Make it during regular class time, so everybody can make it. Other than that, maybe videotape it, to hold the professor accountable.

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes

Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):

- Polish and refine innovations with the team
Primary Goal of This Opportunity:

Empathize with a student living with autism, and assess how that impacts the Honors College learning experience.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

This interview allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that have made the Honors College exceptional and what aspects of the Honors College need to be re-evaluated.

Summary of Research:

Many students are unable to effectively communicate wants and complaints about a course to their instructors.

Important Insights:

- Students having trouble talking to professors is a bigger issue than I thought.
- Differently-abled students have their own concerns with communication, and the presence of a moderator could reduce their stress or anxiety when communicating with the professor.
- Some students may not benefit from a “soft-skills” workshop if they already struggle with communication.

Dialogue Question: You mentioned having some struggles with adjusting to the Honors College, as well as with your studies. Could you please explain your circumstances and experiences?

Certainly. As you know, I have autism, which makes it challenging to both express myself and to interpret other people's expressing. In High School, my parents would help me talk to my teachers at the beginning of the school year, and they would work out a communication plan to, sort of check up on me on a weekly basis. The purpose of that plan was to make sure I was understanding assignments and tasks for class, and to help me study the important material. Coming to GVSU, which is both several hours away from home, but even if it was closer, I would still be solely responsibility, but I didn't have my parents to help, say, facilitate that conversation, so I had to talk to all my professors alone. We still managed to work some things out, but they couldn't necessarily help me as much, in terms of keeping me on pace.
Dialogue Question: What services do you think would be more effective in helping you with your studies and the Honors College processes?

I think each student should have access to an advisor that helps students stay organized and on top. Obviously, this is tailored more towards students living with disabilities, as most students aren’t dealing with the same issues, but to be fair, they should have the same opportunities for help. Other than that, I’m not sure what would help. Much of each person’s struggle is individual, so I don’t know what their mindset is.

Dialogue Question: How do you feel the lack of these services affects the distinction of the Honors College?

The Honors College may feel more inclusive, especially to students like myself, if students are provided with more help. Now, I know College is supposed to be hard, and the Honors College is supposed to be even more challenging, but the whole College process is intimidating, and may, say, scare people away.

Dialogue Question: Our group has been working on an idea to integrate a class discussion in Honors Classes to steer the direction of the class and offer a safe space for students to critique the professor. All discussions will be moderated by an Honors College faculty member to ensure civility. What are your thoughts on this?

I could see that helping. Having a neutral party in the room is reassuring, for me, knowing that I can talk, but it won’t be taken the wrong way if I can’t get myself across.

Dialogue Question: As of now, what is your experience in using your Honors College education?

I try to use what I’ve learned in my sequence in my other class. Also, I keep a journal, and I feel my writing has improved from the skills and techniques I learned last year.

Dialogue Question: Have you applied these skills in getting a job, or on a job?

No, unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to. I actually got my job from a family friend, so I didn’t have a traditional application process.

Dialogue Question: How do you feel about an Honors College lead workshop teaching students to utilize their skills, and to express them to others?

It may be difficult for me to understand and fully appreciate the workshop since I already have trouble with interactions and expressing my thoughts. I’m not sure that would really benefit me.
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Question: Of the two options, which integration do you feel would most benefit you and why?</th>
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<tr>
<td>I think the class dialogue with a moderator would help more, because it reduces the stress of asking for help.</td>
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<th>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</th>
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<th>Possible next-steps (other stakeholders to reach out; revisions to problem statement; resources to research; other locations to visit, etc.):</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Refine prototypes to include the effective parts, while eliminating ideas that students do not feel would be effective</td>
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Citation:


Reason for including this source in your work:

This article talks about what Honors students want and expect out of an Honors Program. In addition, this journal article specifically uses Michigan High School Students (most Grand Valley students come from Michigan). The article also discusses Central Michigan's Honors Program.

Main argument:

This article attempts to understand why academically qualified students at Central Michigan University don't apply to their Honors College. Additionally, the author tries to evaluate the role of Honors students on campus. Hill concludes Michigan High School Students believe there is a lot of academic value in an Honors College.

Important Ideas:

- Student recognition of the academic value of Honors Programs beyond the procedural privileges
- Honors admissions standards should take this fact into account and not be limited to traditional GPA and standardized test measures
- Quality instructors and seminar-style classes are important student expectations of Honors Programs

Evidence:

- 7 out of 10 students want to be judged, in-part, by their high school activities. This shows Honors students are fairly well-rounded.
- Smaller class sizes and increased student-faculty interaction is expected with Honors College classes.
Connections:

- This article is a good example of how to go about examining the perception of an Honors College and can help us with research.
- This article focuses on a lot of the same questions we are focused on.
- The author also raises the same concern of academically-qualified students not applying for the Honors College.

Questions/Concerns:

- Do you think the FMHC has an elitist perception?
- Is an elitist perception good or bad for the FMHC? Is the segregation of Honors classes/students a good or bad thing?

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- "Very few of the 783 essay respondents to this question indicated that the score on one of the two standardized tests was the best college admission selection basis for incoming freshmen (4% or 33 respondents)."
- "Also of interest was how few top high school students wanted letters of recommendation to be a factor in the admission to college. Only 58 of the 783 students surveyed listed letters of recommendation as a desirable admission factor."
- "The merits of the separate classes for top academic students significantly outweigh the demerits in the eyes of these 735 students."
- Demerit: a feature or fact deserving censure.
- This article also brings up the idea of segregation vs. separation of Honors students and classes.

Strengths:

The article is about Michigan High School Students and Central Michigan’s Honors Program, which is local and relevant.

Weaknesses:

The survey in the article does not address diversity issues.
Citation:
Nancy, West. 2014. What’s the Point of an Honors College, Anyway? The Chronicle of Higher Education. n/a.
https://search.proquest.com/docview/1492314997?pq-origsite=summon

Reason for including this source in your work:
This is a really good article because it was written by an Honors College Director, and the subject matter is the purpose of an Honors Program.

Main argument:
The author discusses the importance of an Honors College and the need to meet the economic and personal demands of students. The author rebukes common misnomers about an Honors Program.

Important Ideas:
- A lot of good things happen when you put a bunch of smart people in the same room
- Because of the small classes and close relationship to faculty, Honors students tend to do better in Honors classes compared to traditional classes
- The most high-ability students need individual attention

Evidence:
- Students feel pressured to do better when they are in a room full of high achievers
**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “Honors is thus the “natural home of pure meritocracy.”
- “We need then to think about Honors Colleges in a way that deals with current anxieties and economic pressures.”
- “As more and more colleges gravitate toward larger classes and online delivery, Honors now seems like a luxury they can no longer afford.”
- “third place”: refers to environments, separate from work and home, which people visit frequently and voluntarily. Examples include coffeehouses, cafes, salons, and the Internet.

**Strengths:**

| The perspective of an Honors College director is very valuable. |

**Weaknesses:**

| Although an important angle, the author doesn’t go in-depth on how to solve the problems she presents. |

**Connections:**

- This goes with our idea of a stakeholder map (trying to take in account all of the views of the people impacted by the FMHC)
- This article reiterates the fact that our design team needs to keep in mind the overall relevancy of the FMHC (viewed by others outside the program)
- We also have to address the misinformation and misconceptions about our Honors College

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How do we get people outside of the education field to see the relevancy of an Honors Program?
- What is the point of the FMHC?
- How do we turn the FMHC into a pure meritocracy?
Reason for including this source in your work:
This source talks about the reasoning behind creating an Honors College at the University of Michigan. This has some good information on the origin of Honors Programs and what the University of Michigan’s program values.

Main argument:
There is a need to create an Honors Program for the most gifted students to have a more in-depth courses that go beyond the basic university requirements.

Important Ideas:
- The Director of the Honors Council at the University of Michigan thinks it is important to make no attempt to keep Honors students away from the general student body
- Non-Honors students that are particularly able in a certain subject area can be put in Honors courses alongside of Honors students
- There are a lot of special opportunities for Honors students

Evidence:
- Honors students have opportunities to participate in research
- Honors students have access special to departmental courses
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- "It is thought highly desirable that they [Honors students] mingle freely and exercise intellectual leadership among their fellows."
- "Enrichment and depth were the prime objectives of the faculty, not acceleration."
- "Moreover, departments are encouraged to put non-Honors students who are particularly able in their subjects into Honors sections and courses along with the Honors students. In this way the influence of the program is diffused outward to the student body as a whole."

Strengths:

- This article gives insight on the history and background of the creation of Honors Programs.

Weaknesses:

- This article is very short and mostly descriptive.

Connections:

- This article shows us how the FMHC is different than other programs
- The University of Michigan’s Honors Program has very similar values to our Honors College
- This article has several examples of opportunities offered to Honors students

Questions/Concerns:

- Should Honors students be separate from the general student body?
- Should the FMHC include able non-Honors students in Honors classes?
- How does the FMHC compete with Honors Programs that are much older than our own?
Research Bib #4

Citation:


Reason for including this source in your work:

This article is very good informal piece that highlights the basic pros and cons of any Honors College.

Main argument:

The author tries to explain what a good Honors College should have. He briefly outlines the pros and cons of choosing to be an Honors Student. When labeling the negatives, Nachbar discusses possible alternatives and solutions to the problem.

Important Ideas:

- The better programs allow students to apply for admission during or after the freshman year
- An Honors program of respectable size, up to 10 percent of the student body, paints a positive picture on the academic reputation of the greater university community
- A large university wants to overcome a perception of creating a “privileged class” within its freshman class

Evidence:

- Academics are held in a different perspective for every student and are not 100 percent of the college experience
- A public Honors College, such as St. Mary’s College of Maryland or New College of Florida, offers a quality liberal arts education much like prestigious private schools
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- "A public Honors College is also an attractive alternative to a large state university for students who are sure that they want a liberal arts education."
- "Students have no problem with classmates receiving full scholarships, per se, but they expect those people to be thankful and to earn them every day they are on campus."
- "Whenever a college or university is under pressure to make budget cuts they will start with programs that benefit few students."

Strengths:

Nice informal piece on the pros and cons of Honors Colleges in general.

Weaknesses:

The article is fairly broad and not everything applies to GVSU.

Connections:

- This article focuses on the decision making process of academically gifted students
- The author discusses turnoffs regarding a poorly-run Honors College
- It is important to note the fact that Honors Colleges aren’t for everyone

Questions/Concerns:

- Knowing academics is not 100% of the college experience, how can we improve the FMHC in a non-academic way?
- How do we avoid having a “privileged class” perception with the general GVSU population?
- Is 10% of the total student population a good class size for the FMHC?
Michigan State's Honors College has a very rigorous admission standard, and their admission process is much different than the FMHC.

Main argument:
MSU Honors provides unparalleled freedom from standard curricular requirements.

Important Ideas:
- Average ACT: 32 / Average SAT: 1410 at MSU Honors College
- Top 5% of high school graduating class
- No separate admission application for the Honors College
- Transfer students and current students can get in the Honors College by invitation only

Evidence:
- Invitation to the Honors College is carefully considered and competitive
- Ideal candidates for the MSU Honors College are leaders who use their talents to contribute to their communities
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “The Honors College at Michigan State University seeks students who have demonstrated exceptional academic performance and potential, who are intellectually curious, and who have a record of pursuing academically rigorous courses.”
- “At the beginning of each spring semester, the Honors College will target the top 10 percent of first-year students in each college.”
- “The MSU Honors College is designed as a four-year experience, and membership is not available to students who will reach junior standing (56 credits) by the end of the spring semester in which their record is reviewed.”

Strengths:
The MSU Honors College has a very different take on what an Honors College should be and we can use them as a source of ideas.

Weaknesses:
Michigan State is not Grand Valley. Admission requirements vary by University. Michigan State may have a very rigid view of an Honors College experience.

Connections:

- Michigan State is a competing Honors College in the State of Michigan
- Michigan State’s Honors College also seeks well-rounded students
- Michigan State is also trying to compete for Michigan high school students

Questions/Concerns:

- Does MSU have a rigid view of an Honors College?
- Should the FMHC try to emulate MSU’s Honors College?
- What makes an Honors College prestigious?
### Reason for including this source in your work:

Central Michigan has similar admission requirements to the FMHC.

### Main argument:

Central Michigan’s Honors College is well-known for their scholarship offerings and they do not have a lot of flexibility when it comes to meeting admissions standards.

### Important Ideas:

- CMU’s Honors College admits 150 students through a scholarship competition
- Prospective students must have 3.7 GPA and 27 ACT for consideration
- Very little leeway for students that don’t meet the stated standards
- CMU offers 150 full-ride or full-tuition scholarships

### Evidence:

- **CMU Honors awards 20 $93,000 scholarships**
- **CMU Honors awards 130 $56,000 scholarships**

### Citation:

Central Michigan University Honors College’s Admissions
https://www.cmich.edu/office_provost/AcademicAffairs/Honors/Prospective_Honors_Students/Pages/Application_Process.aspx
Connections:

- Scouting others is important in the innovation process.
- We must understand there is no “correct” admissions process.
- Innovation doesn’t have to be original. We can get ideas from other universities.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “Centralis awards are CMU’s premier merit scholarships. These are exclusive to Honors and are awarded only to students who participate in one of the two competitions.”
- “You must have the minimum 3.7 high school GPA and 1250 SAT or 27 ACT at the point you register.”
- “When a student falls just short of either the required SAT/ACT or GPA (but not both), high school principals can nominate up to two eligible students from their school through the Centralis Alternate Competition Criteria Nomination form.”

Strengths:

There is a lot of good facts and figures on this page.

Weaknesses:

This is only one aspect of CMU’s Honors College.

Questions/Concerns:

- What is your ideal admissions setup?
Citation:


Reason for including this source in your work:

Knowing what perks an Honors College should offer is important to know.

Main argument:

The goal of a university is to attract high-achieving students to an Honors program at public university, instead of a small, private school.

Important Ideas:

- Class Size: Many of your classes will be specifically part of the Honors program. These classes tend to be smaller, and more intensive
- Class Structure: In college Honors programs, often there is more discussion and debate than lecture
- Diploma; Honors Colleges provide special diplomas at the end of your college career that indicate you participated in and completed Honors coursework
- Housing: Typically, both Honors Colleges and college Honors programs offer special housing for the students selected for their program

Evidence:

- Since the class isn’t a long lecture, the atmosphere is different because students have to do a lot of preparation outside of class
- Honors diplomas indicate the rigorous coursework taken in college
### Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “Keep in mind expectation for Honors students are higher.”
- “Honors College diplomas may be attractive for job recruiters.”
- “The dorms will be nicer and more spacious.”

### Strengths:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very concise, basic view of what an Honors College should offer</td>
<td>Doesn’t provide any unique Honors College offering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Connections:

- Niemeyer is GV’s premier student housing on campus
- The FMHC does a good job of creating living/learning community
- Classes at the FMHC offer a lot of opportunity for debate

### Questions/Concerns:

- What can we do with the FMHC to foster even more creative discussion and debate?
- What can we do about housing for students that don’t get Niemeyer?
- What can we do to promote the advantages of graduating Honors?
Research Bib #8

Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
This is a Grand Valley student talking about the offerings and benefits of the FMHC.

Main argument:
The quality and passion of the faculty make the FMHC experience extraordinary.

Important Ideas:
- The faculty make the FMHC experience special
- There are no teaching assistants
- The student was able to meet a lot of cool, interesting people through the FMHC

Evidence:
- The professors never made her feel inadequate or bothersome
- The professors’ enthusiasm is contagious
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “In perspective, my experiences at the Frederik Meijer Honors College have not only molded me into a better student, but they have also made me a more determined, compassionate, and well-rounded person, teaching immeasurable lessons.”
- “The faculty constantly pushes the boundaries of their fields, and they truly encourage students to do the same.”
- “I enrolled in one of the Honors College’s trademark, team-taught, year-long foundational interdisciplinary sequences.”

Strengths:

This provides insight from alumni

Weaknesses:

The article is very brief

Connections:

- This is Grand Valley specific
- This article discusses what makes an Honors professor “good”
- It is important to know what alumni think about the FMHC

Questions/Concerns:

- How can we keep Alumni involved with the FMHC?
- Should we interview alumni?
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
Sometimes you have to look at other universities and see the cool things they are doing with their Honors College.

Main argument:
The students explored inequality through food, housing and education.

Important Ideas:
- The Honors College provides opportunities to give back
- Poverty simulator (working with a fixed budget)
- Teaching students on ways to give back to the community

Evidence:
- MSU faculty and community educators also spoke with the students throughout the week
- Honors College students volunteered at Haven House
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “I loved how we had the opportunity to serve and learn in many different organizations because I got to see so many perspectives.”
- “HC IMPACT is the opportunity to connect with and learn more about the community we live in.”
- “I came into it with an open mind and came out a completely changed person.”

Strengths:

- The article presents on a service project at an Honors College

Weaknesses:

- The article doesn’t go in-depth on specifics

Connections:

- This connects back to our idea that the FMHC should be involved with the local community
- This is a good example of self-promotion
- Grand Valley has a “Make a Difference Day” so it falls in line with what our university already does

Questions/Concerns:

- Should the FMHC offer unique volunteer opportunities Honors Students?
- Can we incorporate volunteer work into the curriculum?
### Citation:


### Reason for including this source in your work:

This article had a different approach on what an Honors College should be instead. Rutgers focused on what a 21st century Honors College should look like.

### Main argument:

Rutgers attempts to create a collaborative forum with an interdisciplinary approach to have students from all majors work together to achieve in the 21st century workplace.

### Important Ideas:

- Eventually, 2000 students will attend the Honors College (total enrollment is around 66,000)
- Students work collaboratively on social-innovation projects
- They are attempting to bring together the liberal arts schools and the professional schools
- Globalization requires a new approach to problem solving

### Evidence:

- Students work in teams on social-innovation projects where, and in the fall, pitch their ideas to professionals for funding and mentorship
- The Honors College at Rutgers joined the Big Ten’s Committee on Institutional Cooperation
Connections:

- Rutgers tries to integrate technology and collaboration areas into their Honors College and so does GVSU
- Rutgers also has a newer Honors College building
- They attempt to get students of all majors to collaborate together

Strengths:

This is a cool article because it talked about an Honors College in the 21st century.

Weaknesses:

Rutgers is a very prestigious and historic school with over 250 years of history. Grand Valley doesn’t have the same resources as Rutgers.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “The more high-quality students we attract to Rutgers, and who go out and change the world, who win Fulbrights, who get Rhodes scholarships—that increases the value of a Rutgers degree for everybody.”
- “It will be a place to call home regardless of where the students go after their first year living there.”
- “The world is changing in dramatic ways, and we’re essentially preparing our students with an education for the 21st century.”

Questions/Concerns:

- Can we incorporate social-innovation projects into the FMHC?
- How does GVSU stack up in terms of having a modern, 21st century Honors College?
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
This is a collection of scholarly works on the topic of Honors College formation in the United States. This article has a lot of great insights on the national trends in Honors education.

Main argument:
Honors Colleges must add a new dynamic to their respective university and the faculty has to be held accountable for the results.

Important Ideas:
- Universities want to improve overall campus quality and recruit better students with an Honors College
- A freestanding Honors College will have a significant faculty budget and the Honors faculty will design the courses
- Honors Colleges do not widely share amenities like an Honors student lounge, Honors IT center, and Honors seminar classrooms

Evidence:
- In an era of increased accountability, we expected to find that the performance of Honors Colleges (like other academic units) is increasingly assessed. 85.7% of Honors College respondents reported being assessed in terms of faculty and coursework.
**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “Sometimes this transformation entails only a cosmetic name change; other times, institutions take the opportunity to review what they are providing in education. The Executive Committee of the National Collegiate Honors Council recognized that the NCHC ought to take a strong interest in this phenomenon. If an institution is simply gilding the name, then "Honors College" becomes a devalued misnomer designed as a marketing strategy and intended to mislead potential applicants into believing that something new exists where, in fact, substance remains unchanged.”

- “In addition, substantive motivations for establishing a college were also widely shared. Among the dominant reasons given are:
  1. 100.0%: Recruit stronger students
  2. 91.4%: Improve overall campus academic quality
  3. 88.6%: Improve the quality of Honors educational opportunities
  4. 85.7%: Raise the profile of Honors within the institution”

- “Other motivations, like fund-raising, curriculum innovation, and the promotion of service learning, inspired around 60% or fewer of the respondents.”

**Strengths:**

| This provides an excellent take on the overall offerings of Honors College in the United States. |

**Weaknesses:**

| This article lacks a student perspective. |

**Connections:**

- Like our discussion of marketing the FMHC, the author of this article suggests a simple cosmetic change or marketing strategy is misleading and not in the best interest of students.

- Connecting to our collaborator debrief, this article also discusses the benefit of an Honors College improving overall campus quality.

- 74.3% of Honors Colleges in their survey hold scholarship competitions within the Honors College and don’t participate in national scholarship competitions (the FMHC holds a scholarship competition).

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Is the FMHC operating in a diverse environment?
- Are Honors faculty held accountable in the FMHC?
- What would an assessment process look like?
**Citation:**


**Reason for including this source in your work:**

This is an interesting take on how public universities make themselves competitive with private Ivy League schools.

**Main argument:**

The author uses an anecdotal story to illustrate the fact that some students would pick an Honors College experience over an Ivy League education.

**Important Ideas:**

- Honors Colleges at public universities are a lot less expensive  
- Public universities can offer a more diverse environment  
- Extremely wealthy families dominate Ivy League schools

**Evidence:**

- Public university Honors Colleges have a student body that has distinguished themselves through GPA and standardized test scores, like Ivy League schools.
### Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “They aren’t elite, but they are capable.”
- “Because of the broader student body at public universities, there is a lot more reach in terms of the type of people you will encounter.”
- “Honors Colleges, in some ways replicate, within a public school, the kind of stratified, status-conscious dynamic at play in private schools.”

### Strengths:

The article makes a case for Honors Colleges over Ivy League schools.

### Weaknesses:

Grand Valley probably isn’t on the list for Ivy League applicants.

### Connections:

- Relating to the collaborator debrief, another team asked how the FMHC could emulate an Ivy League experience
- Another team is focused on diversity and this article discusses socioeconomic diversity as a draw
- Public schools give students a taste of the real world in a sense

### Questions/Concerns:

- How would we define diversity? Does this include socioeconomic status or first-generation college students?
- What makes people choose Grand Valley over other schools?
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
Our team is focused on evaluating faculty and conformity in course expectations and this article is an interesting take on course evaluation.

Main argument:
- Anonymous evaluations are pointless, biased, and don’t help
- Students are not good evaluators of their own learning
- Students give good marks to funny professors or professors that teach the test

Important Ideas:
- Students want an easy A and don’t want a heavy workloads or hard tests
- Students should evaluate a professor in a non-anonymous evaluation to produce real changes in the course and teaching practices
- Evaluations impact career trajectories, all right, but only of the most vulnerable faculty in the university
- Professors that have tenure rarely get impacted by negative student evaluations

Evidence:
- Students evaluating their own learning is biased and doesn't consider how much better they are at a certain skill
Connections:

- We are focused on having an effective faculty evaluation system for Honors
- A collaborative student-faculty evaluation of the course and professor would embody an out-of-the-box approach to evaluation
- In addition to the LIFT evaluations, Honors Students will have an evaluation opportunity that is unique to the needs of the FMHC

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “Asking students to evaluate their professors anonymously is like Trader Joe’s soliciting Yelp reviews from a shoplifter.”
- “Only in the rarest and most politicized cases do even scathing evaluations harm tenured big shots—who, unsurprisingly, often care about undergraduate teaching the least.”
- “Because of all this—off-topic vitriol, irrelevance, bias—most tenure-track professors I know (who aren’t hanging onto their evaluations for dear life) don’t read their evaluations at all.”

Strengths:

This paper offers a great alternative to traditional evaluations.

Weaknesses:

The article is obviously biased (by a professor) and a lot of the information is anecdotal.

Questions/Concerns:

- How could we implement a collaborative evaluation period into the FMHC?
- How do students at the FMHC want their professors evaluated?
- What should be included in a faculty evaluation?
**Citation:**

**Reason for including this source in your work:**
Our team is focused on faculty evaluation and this article talks about the effectiveness of evaluations on outcomes.

**Main argument:**
- Over evaluation can lead to more harm than good
- The effectiveness of evaluations is questionable
- Minor changes in curriculum and teaching probably won't change learning outcomes and skills students will acquire

**Important Ideas:**
- No one considers faculty evaluation when picking a college.
- There are opportunity costs with our current evaluation process.
- Accreditors must provide evidence that it offers benefits commensurate with the expense that goes into it.

**Evidence:**
- No one has tried to compare institutions with different approaches to assessment (personal statement about what the author saw)
- No one has considered whether assessing student-learning outcomes over many years has made American colleges, or students, better in some way? (personal statement about what the author saw)
Connections:

- Standard assessment of faculty is haphazard, and we need an outside-the-box solution to this problem
- Improvement and more focus in one area might drag down other areas
- Our current assessment process may not be the most efficacious way of doing things

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “People who work in assessment complain that faculty treat it as merely a compliance issue.”
- “Advocates may be able to point to modest improvements in student learning in specific programs or courses with evidence generated by assessment instruments, but this is worryingly similar to surgeons patting themselves on the back for taking out tumors without checking to see if their interventions are affecting mortality rates.”
- “If advocates could point to evidence that good assessment has led to improvements that are external to the process itself — like changes in a college’s reputation, ranking, or employment prospects for its students — I suspect faculty would give it more support.”

Strengths:

This article does a good job at questioning the validity of the assessment of faculty.

Weaknesses:

The author doesn’t specify what we should do to fix this problem.

Questions/Concerns:

- Do we have any research/interviews to support a change in our current assessment methodology?
- What do we consider improvement?
- How does a professor teach in an effective manner?
Reason for including this source in your work:
If we want to change faculty assessment standards and implement curriculum workload conformity, we need criteria to judge a professor’s performance.

Main argument:
- This article provides 22 bullet points describing what makes a good professor

Important Ideas:
- Professors should reassess their grading practices
- The college classroom is the last place to experiment and play before entering the “real-world”
- Classroom structure is important

Evidence:
- Do something different once in a while: take your students outside, if possible, or hold class in an unusual place -- like in a library courtyard or on a theater stage.
- Don’t be a helicopter teacher -- always looking over your students’ shoulders, making sure they are doing everything “correctly.”
If we want to assess professors, we need an understanding of what makes a good professor. We want classroom at the FMHC to a place of innovation and new teaching methods. We want Honors Students to be independent thinkers.

Strengths:
This article discusses how a good professor should act.

Weaknesses:
This is just one person's take on what makes a good professor.

Connections:
- If we want to assess professors, we need an understanding of what makes a good professor
- We want classroom at the FMHC to a place of innovation and new teaching methods
- We want Honors Students to be independent thinkers

Questions/Concerns:
- How often should professors grade assignments?
- How can professors at the FMHC provide a unique experience in terms of a classroom setting?
Concluding Statement

So, as you can see, this vision for the Honors College creates strong short and long-term effects. From insight to innovation, we transformed students’ inability to see value in their Honors education into confident, interdisciplinary students who can utilize their skills in their future after FMHC. Students see the value in their education immediately as the skills workshops happen. With the student-professor discourse, students take accountability for their education and professors interact with students who are engaged contributors. This enhanced course curriculum model is both flexible and purposeful, and builds on the current FMHC model. This vision for the Honors College is distinctive; what other program lets the students have a hands-on experience developing their curriculum and learn how to directly apply their Honors skills?

Thank you for being a part of this journey to innovation and we strongly recommend supporting this vision of the Honors enhanced course curriculum.

Warmest Regards,

Selena Brown
Kendra Smith
Sara Harman
Michael Guscar
Josh Schneider
Cassondra Anderson
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