1-2019

Emphasizing the Honors College Experience

Kara Rickenberg  
*Grand Valley State University*

Kylee Scholten  
*Grand Valley State University*

Matt Smit  
*Grand Valley State University*

Claire Thomassen  
*Grand Valley State University*

Monica Van Til  
*Grand Valley State University*

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/lib_undergrad

Part of the [Liberal Studies Commons](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/lib_undergrad)

Recommended Citation
Rickenberg, Kara; Scholten, Kylee; Smit, Matt; Thomassen, Claire; Van Til, Monica; and Weikum, Rio, "Emphasizing the Honors College Experience" (2019). *Undergraduate Research*. 42.  
https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/lib_undergrad/42

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Liberal Studies at ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Research by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.
Authors
Kara Rickenberg, Kylee Scholten, Matt Smit, Claire Thomassen, Monica Van Til, and Rio Weikum

This article is available at ScholarWorks@GVSU: https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/lib_undergrad/42
EMPHASIZING the HONORS COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

TEAM BLADE RUNNER
KARA RICKENBERG
KYLEE SCHOLLEN
MATT SMIT
CLAIRE THOMASON
MONICA VAN TIL
RIO VELEZ

PHOTO CREDIT: WWW.GVSU.EDU
Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to engage with our Innovation Portfolio chronicling our design challenge of improving the post-graduation preparation of Frederik Meijer Honors College students. This past semester we have conducted intensive research and utilized the design thinking process to arrive at a definitive solution. This portfolio presents the process that our team learned and implemented, and visualizes our innovations and prototype concepts. We know our solution will improve the readiness of Honors students for life after graduation, as well as continue to enhance the awesome FHMC experience! Thank you again for your interest in our design challenge.

Sincerely,

Team Blade Runner
Kara Rickenberg
Kylee Scholten
Matt Smit
Claire Thomassen
Monica VanTil
Rio Weikum
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design Brief</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Map</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affinity Map</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborator Debriefs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 5 Innovations</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top 2 Design Prototype Concepts</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Prototype Concept</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Video Link</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to Action Presentation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Symposium Reflection</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Statement</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue Scripts</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Bibliographies</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Honors students make up ~8% of the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) student body. These exceptional students come from all disciplines (Figure 1) and their enrollment in the Honors College means their GPA, SAT/ACT scores, and leadership skills are higher than other entering GVSU students. Every Honors student must complete more rigorous, writing intensive and interdisciplinary classes through the Frederik Meijer Honors College (FMHC) to graduate with Honors distinction. In 2018, approximately 150 Honors graduates made the “walk” into the real world. Half of these students earned awards for outstanding contribution to the GVSU community; all of them were presented with Niemeyer awards for being outstanding undergraduates.

The FMHC produces an annual Honors graduate profile report. In this report, each Honors graduate provides a statement of their plans after graduation. Of the 142 student profiles in the 2017 report, about 35, or ~25%, state they do not have solid plans for what they are doing next after receipt of their degree. Here is where the problem lies: if Honors students are so academically successful, why are they unsure and struggling with a post-graduation plan? GVSU offers students access to an on campus Career Center where post-graduation and job-seeking advising is free. It is known that Honors students utilize this resource less than their peers do.
The Frederik Meijer Honors College at Grand Valley State University offers a unique
curriculum for the academically inclined. Interdisciplinary courses and personal connections
with staff provide students with an exceptional well-rounded education. Honors students have
notable skills that outrival competition. Interdisciplinary courses allow students to broaden their
knowledge in many different subject areas. These classes allow students to become extremely
proficient in writing, public speaking, and collaborating with one another. Although Honors
students are a part of an advanced educational community, the numbers indicate that many are
not seeking information to plan a next-step into a successful post-graduate life. Why is there this
disconnect? What are the damaging ramifications of this disconnect? We will enhance the
undergraduate experience for each Honors student enrolled in the Frederik Meijer Honors
College at Grand Valley State University, so that when each student graduates, they are fully
equipped to embark on their future, ultimately creating a community where students feel more inclined to receive help with future-related questions and concerns.

**ECOSYSTEM**

The Frederik Meijer Honors College student, specifically post-graduation, is the focus of our design challenge, or whom we are solving for. To describe the ecosystem, or those that have a role or “stake” in Honors student success, we created a stakeholder map (Figure 2). The stakeholders were categorized into six main branches, with more specific subcategories drawn from each branch. The first group of stakeholders we identified are those within the FMHC. Included in the FMHC branch are student peers, Honors faculty, and Honors administration, i.e. advisors, and directors. We added a separate branch for Grand Valley State University, identifying “non-Honors” peers, disciplinary-related faculty, and alumni. All are important stakeholders as they may offer differing resources or outlooks. Transfer students, outside organizations or clubs, financial aid advisers, and more also correspond with the GVSU branch. Additionally, there are branches for employers, other academic institutions, and Honors student family and friends. Under employers we identified past, current, and future employers, as well as coworkers. The academic institutions branch includes possible graduate schools and competing institutions. The friends and family branch includes parents, siblings, extended family, classmates, and roommates. Although they fall into separate categories, each stakeholder is influenced greatly by both the subject of our design challenge and each other. Ensuring that Honors College graduates have a successful path following their time at Grand Valley will allow them to succeed further in their endeavors in employment. This will not only enhance the relationships between the student and the stakeholders in the employers branch, but also the other stakeholders because all of the relationships are contingent on one another.
RESEARCH METHODS

For our research, we will utilize the five steps of the design thinking process, which are: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test. This process is described in Tom and David Kelley’s “Creative Confidence.” From this book, we will continue to learn how to better our design thinking process and gain inspiration from the documented examples. To empathize, we will conduct primary research through interviews with the stakeholders. The main goal of these interviews will be to better understand the needs, or unmet needs, of Honors students and their
experience with the Honors College. Another aim with these interviews is to better understand the constraints of our project by interviewing stakeholders from campus resources. To redefine the problem, we will use the insights we learned through our interviews. We will also gather more background information from secondary sources, such as the annual reports from the Honors College, which provide an overview of significant events and notable accomplishments within the College, as well as the National Honors Council Program Review Report, which describes strengths and weaknesses of Grand Valley’s Honors Program. To ideate, we will keep our minds open to new ideas and encourage each other’s thoughts without passing judgment. Our possible solutions will be prototype concepts that we will test with stakeholders, as well as gather feedback from our end users, the Honors College students. From testing, we will redefine the solutions for effectiveness. In order for our research methods to be successful, we will revisit previous steps in the process and learn from our failures.

**CONSTRAINTS**

As it stands, too many students schooling in the Frederik Meijer Honors College do not have a good plan of what they want to do in post-graduation life. If they do have a good idea of what they want to do post-graduation, they are challenged in creating the plan to accomplish the goal. As students enrolled in the Honors College that is a frightening thought. While it might never be possible to achieve a clear vision for every graduate of FMHC, we still want to find a solution to support creating a solid foundation for life after graduation. Being a student, however, sometimes can leave us feeling powerless to change the state of things within the very university we are embodying. An obvious obstacle is that we do not directly make important decisions within the Honors College, but that is not to say that our voices cannot be heard. Another major constraint on Honors students is their use of the Career Center - or lack thereof. Statistically
speaking, the rate at which Honors students utilize the Career Center is actually less than that of their non-Honors peers. One might expect the opposite to be true, thinking that Honors students might tend to be more driven to get help in post-graduation affairs. This begs the question of ‘why’ Honors students are participating in the use of the Career Center less. Perhaps it is because we, as members of the Honors College, are generally more resistant to seeking the counsel of others, thinking we can handle the task of forming a post-graduate life all by ourselves. While we believe that we can accomplish anything we set our minds to, it never hurt anyone to seek help; even so, that spark of internal resistance can be a detriment to how we function in seeking the services of the Career Center. An additional challenge that Honors students face is the interdisciplinary nature of the Honors College curriculum. With so many different fields of study being represented by the student body of FMHC, it is hard to centralize advising services that seems to satisfy the needs of everyone. Going forward, it will be critical for FMHC to find some common ground that satisfies and enriches the education of Grand Valley’s brightest students.

**OUTCOMES**

The students in the Frederik Meijer Honors College participate and engage in Live. Learn. Lead courses, the freshman Honors sequence, a junior seminar, and the completion of the senior project. These classes show that Honor Students have a lot to offer future employers. However, we want to make sure these students are fully aware of the benefits the Frederik Meijer Honors College provides and truly prepare students for what is to come next. Our goal is to make sure all Frederik Meijer Honors College graduates are prepared for life after graduation. We want to make sure these students have the skills sets and knowledge they need in order to enter and succeed in the workplace. For example, Honors College Students should be able to network with ease, form deep connections, and have extraordinary communication skills. Students should
also be able to master problem solving, set goals, and let their creativity loose. After graduating from Grand Valley State University with Honors, students should be able to answer the question, “What sets you apart from other college graduates?” The Frederik Meijer Honors College is a part of the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies. This means that Honors Students will be able to draw knowledge from a variety of different fields, thus creating a well-rounded student. Honors College students should not be limited in their knowledge and ideas. We will help Frederik Meijer Honors Students achieve their goals and go far in today’s society.

References:


At the beginning of the semester, our team brainstormed to identify stakeholders that play a role in the lives of FMHC students. To visualize our conclusions, we mapped out the stakeholders into six main categories: Employers, Government, Honors College, Other Institutions, Family and Friends, and GVSU (Figure 3). Throughout the semester, we utilized the stakeholder map to target groups and individuals for our research interviews. It was also beneficial to see the connections that all stakeholders have with the FMHC student, along with each other.

**Figure 3:** A visual representation of all stakeholders related to the FMHC student
Our affinity map is a collection of the insights that we gained through our interviews, bibliographies, and collaborator debriefs (Figure 4). When we learned something that we thought might be useful, we wrote it on a sticky note and added it to the Affinity Map. Some of our insights included what areas Honors students feel they need more preparation in, important skills employers look for, and barriers that prevent Honors students from seeking advising. It served as a visual tool to help us keep track of everything we learned and to organize it for insights based on topic. The titles of the topics that we chose were "FMHC-Specific," "Soft Skills," "Advising," "Curriculum," and "Honors Student Struggles." From these, we created our needs statements, which provided direction for our innovations.

Figure 4: The Affinity Map used to organize our insights from our research
Our class held three Collaborator Debriefs over the course of the semester. In each of the three Debriefs, members of our team presented our problem statement and insights, needs statements and innovations, and top two prototype concepts, respectively. We also utilized this platform to ask questions and create informing dialogue. These debriefs with valued stakeholders allowed our team to gain empathy and feedback, which allowed us to adjust and finalize our top innovations and prototype concepts.

**DEBRIEF ONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Articulating and Revising the Initial Vision</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design Challenge Debrief</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Problem Statement: <em>How can we be sure, when each Honors student graduates, they are fully equipped to embark on their future?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (3) key insights from stakeholder interviews and research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honors students have unique counseling needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There are six characteristics that are essential for professionalism in the 21st Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty, staff, and Honors students do not know how to articulate the “Honors difference.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summary Illustration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Not applicable at this time.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions for the Collaborators</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What are effective ways to reach Honors students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What advice or resources would help us as we proceed in this research process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 1. Debrief Feedback

**Capture What’s Meaningful to Advance Effective Innovation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>In terms of professional skills, a CEO said a positive attitude was the most important in interviews because it affects everything else. Another employer said soft skills, especially communicating via technology.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>We tend to focus on what is immediately in front of us: assignments and deadlines so we do not really take the time to reflect. Our class agreed when the topic of focusing on enjoying life in the moment, versus only concentrating on grades or resume building, was brought up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborator</td>
<td><strong>Honors College Advisor:</strong> Students do not need to learn “how to be adults.” They just need to step it up with the responsibilities they already have. Honors students may not be accustomed to being vulnerable (admitting that they do not have it all together and admitting that they need help) which is a potential barrier to getting advising and resources. Part of [the problem of not feeling empowered to get help] is to honor the whole self. You are not just a brain walking around to classes. You are a whole person seeking validation, vocation, and moving towards a future. This is an important step as a human being, not just as an Honors student. One of the dangers is being hung up on the idea that there is a perfect career that you are going to find and do forever. Thinking about in terms of values and skills can help you align your identity and your priorities around what is a solid next step. What might be the next step after that? You might not have a good-sounding career path, but they should align with your values, your skills, the next step that makes sense. There is no perfect career. How do you move people towards understanding value and vocation as opposed to picking the perfect career? When do we know what we value? You should ask that question all of the time. What does this mean for me? Just because you are done with college doesn’t mean you’re done with asking those questions. Write down questions you want to know about yourself to continuously find possibilities. Your future is going to change a lot; it’s not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
even just about your job. If you have a spouse, you are going to need to be able to make decisions based on your own values and theirs as well.

| Other Stakeholder(s) | **Graduate School Dean:** There are fewer financial resources, such as scholarships, available to graduate students, so it is essential that undergraduate students manage their finances and create a plan earlier rather than later. Graduate schools are also being more holistic in their admissions approach and value the out-of-classroom experiences more than just GPA and GRE scores. It is important for Honors students to be able to articulate the meaning of their experience in the GVSU Honors College because they are competing with thousands of Honors students from other universities. What helps you get into graduate school is being able to collaborate, and demonstrate that you have experience working with others. Honors students need to reflect on their own personal experience because the “Honors difference” is not a right or wrong, clear-cut answer; it is about what every individual student gets out of it. I would rather a student have a lower GPA and more out-of-classroom experiences. What is it that students value when planning their future? How do we get them to think about that and look inside themselves to have a successful career? What does a successful career mean to them? How might we get Honors students to think about that?

**Brooks College Advisor:** What is it that empowers Honors students to seek out academic support when there are gaps in reaching other types of support? The problems of not knowing what job they want to have and not knowing how to talk about their experience are things that Honors students are not seeking help for. When your grades are suffering, you get help. How can we take this feeling of “this class is not right for me” to getting help by reaching out to someone and utilizing resources? There are spaces where you are empowered to get help and spaces where you are not. What moves students to get help? Bring that to these stuck places. You are not going to be doing the same job your entire life. You have to have those soft skills; adaptability/flexibility, being able to understand a complex problem from multiple perspectives, capacity to build relationships and show up authentically in relationships. Often hear career advisors say the biggest predictor of your job is not your major, but your ability to tell your own story, your experiences. The skillset is not just the content of DT, it’s about problem-solving, presentation, and working with others.

**Current Honors Senior:** Last semester in Design Thinking, the employers were looking for soft skills. They are so important. If you are the smartest
person but you can’t talk to people and work in a group, you aren’t going to be as valuable. Also important: cultural competence. Just being aware of other cultures and being able to understand other people and where they come from. Making sure others’ ideas are heard, not just focusing on yourself and your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2. Post-Debrief Reflections</strong></th>
<th><strong>Integrate the Feedback &amp; Ideate Next Steps</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIVERGE:</strong> How did the feedback provided deviate from your team’s current insights?</td>
<td>1. One of our insights was that Honors students do not know how to articulate the “Honors difference.” We thought we might be able to find a correct, objective answer to that question. However, we learned from our stakeholders that it is more about each individual’s unique experience. It is important that Honors students reflect on their experiences and be able to articulate what their Honors experience means to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The problem of students being prepared for life after graduation is not unique to Honors students. Although we do have a list of needs of Honors students that may act as barriers to them getting help, it is helpful to us to think more about what unique problems face Honors students. This will help us narrow down our problem statement and focus our research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Something we have not considered much is finances. This is a problem facing Honors and non-Honors students alike. They need to be thinking about finances early in their undergraduate career because it will only get harder in graduate school. There are fewer scholarships in graduate school and loans have higher (and changing) interest rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. When thinking about the Honors College and Honors students’ experiences, we have focused a lot on thinking about experiences inside the classroom. As we learned from our stakeholders, graduate schools are taking a more holistic approach to admissions. Ultimately, it will help Honors students more to focus on out-of-classroom experiences such as internships, jobs, volunteering, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Something we had not thought about before was that Honors students seek help from professors all the time. What empowers Honors students to seek help from professors and how do we create that empowerment for getting help from other resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONVERGE:**

How did the feedback align with and enhance the team’s current insights?

| 1. | Stakeholders agreed that many within the university, even administrators, do not know how to articulate the “Honors difference.” However, this can be resolved through self-reflection. |
| 2. | One of our insights listed characteristics that employers look for. Our stakeholders added the importance of being able to tell your story (experience), flexibility/adaptability, positive attitude, soft skills, being able to collaborate, being authentic, cultural competence, and building relationships. These are applicable to job and graduate school application. |
| 3. | Something we mentioned in our insights was that Honors students have a stronger need for sense of meaning and identity with their vocation. Our stakeholders discussed the importance of reflecting on one’s values and aligning one’s identity and priorities to guide decision-making. |
| 4. | Some of the key skills that we gain from being in the FMHC are collaboration, communication, and problem solving. |
| 5. | One of our insights listed characteristics that employers look for. While our stakeholders did not contradict this list, they added the importance of being able to tell your story (experience), flexibility/adaptability, positive attitude, soft skills, being able to collaborate, being authentic and building relationships. These are applicable to job and graduate school application. |

**APPLY:** How can you use the feedback provided?

| 1. | We can apply the feedback in our search for innovations for our team problem statement. |
| 2. | We can use this information to be more specific in our problem solving and insights. |
| 3. | We can use this feedback to improve interview questions and further define the research and insights we are gaining. Specifically, we want to |
1. Narrow our problem statement to create a more specific and measurable goal.

2. Re-visit and edit our stakeholder map to focus on a narrower group of stakeholders.

3. Refine our insights and dig deeper into what we have learned from our stakeholders and why.

4. Focus in on our innovations by ideating and creating a list of potential prototypes.
# Telling the Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Challenge Debrief</th>
<th>Team Problem Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>How can we be sure when each Honors student graduates, they are fully equipped to embark on their future?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Needs Statements:**

- Honors students need to know the difference between their advisors (faculty, academic, career, and Honors), and when to use their services.
- Honors students need to be able to articulate their Honors experience.
- Honors students need to be more comfortable interacting with potential employers.

**Top 5 Innovations**

- Mandatory portfolio for Honors students that displays their work from Honors courses and provides opportunity for reflection on their Honors experience.
- Job Shadowing requirements for Honors students or a requirement to attend the Career Fair to further improve soft skills and to narrow the job search.
- “Meet the advisors” event during Transitions where academic, career, and Honors advisors promote their centers and interact with first-year students.
- Informational sessions in Honors classes by Career Center counselors about the services offered and importance of career advising.
Survey sent out to all Honors students to assess their knowledge of and experience with the Career Center to learn how to better educate them and serve their needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Illustration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable at this time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for the Collaborators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Share with us what you believe to be our top innovation. Why did you choose this and how may we improve it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What are we missing in our thinking?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Debrief Feedback**

**Capture What’s Meaningful to Advance Effective Innovation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We need to clarify our first need statement. Culmination of skills is incredibly important. If we decide to pursue the portfolio idea, we should add onto the portfolio year by year to show what we did in our Honors sequence, Junior Seminar, and Senior Project. We should also remember to look at the different types of students there are, such as transfer Honors students when it comes to conducting our innovations and helping to create stronger relationships between faculty and Honors students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A student mentioned the Honors program at Western: how they ran things, their requirements, and their events. Another student mentioned their lack of reading the Honors email and once he started reading it, he realized it was way too long to keep interested in the email. The student mentioned that the only reason why he is reading the Honors College newsletter now, is due to this particular class bringing it to his attention. In the past, he did not read it due to the formatting of the newsletter. The newsletter often repeats information each week. An outline at the top of the newsletter would be beneficial for students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborator

**Honors College Advisor:** They pointed out the fact that the Honors College has limited resources to have one mandatory meeting a month with each Honor student. Along with this, they also liked the idea of having advisors meet with students in a casual setting. She also pointed out that the Career Center would have the best pull for putting together Career fairs, as they can gather the most employers.

Other Stakeholder(s)

**Career Center Advisor:** Career center advisor mentioned how some universities have a day off from classes and have mandatory advising/workshops all day. In addition, they pointed out that often times, there are so many events that other events can be lost in the chaos of it all.

**Graduate Studies Assistant Dean:** The Dean pointed out the difference between mentors and advisors. In his experience, mentorships grow organically. He also like our innovation to have job shadowing more. Also mentioned that having a mentor may be beneficial to Honors students. This could make students choose a new path, such as attending graduate school.

**Honors College Director:** Liked the idea of surveying students to see what they liked and what they did not like. Pointed out that events are offered and sometimes have a bad turn out rate. How can we get students to attend these events rather than recreate the wheel? He also stated it is difficult to get Honors students to attend different events, because oftentimes they do not know that they need it. As for the portfolio, the director posed the question: is a portfolio needed or is an elevator speech needed.

**Current Honors Senior:** Wanted us to focus more on graduate school, rather than just employers. However, we often prepare the same way, whether it be for graduate school or getting a job out of college. Liked the idea of a mandatory portfolio and felt it would be applicable to both graduate school and those seeking employment after college.
### 3. Post-Debrief Reflections

**Integrate the Feedback & Ideate Next Steps**

| **DIVERGE:** How did the feedback provided *deviate* from your team’s current insights? | **1.** The Associate Dean of the Graduate School asked if we had thought about the difference between an advisor and a mentor. A mentor, he said, is someone in the field who may know the ins and outs of applying for a position or skill sets needed that may not be obvious or embedded into curriculum. We had not thought about this before, and it will spark our thinking about how to get students to engage with an advisor or how to find a mentor. Perhaps Honors students are seeking out faculty or others as mentors, so they feel that advising is less necessary.  

2. An Honors Advisor told us that students now learn about their advisors during Transitions (which we did not when we were first-year students), but they are probably too overwhelmed by information to remember or get much out of that experience. This will help us adjust our “meet the advisors” event, which we originally envisioned being during Transitions, by choosing another time or occasion for it.  

3. Several of the innovations that we have already exist in some form, so we now need to look at how we can adjust existing events rather than creating new ones. For example, many of the career events in our second innovation already are put on by other departments in Grand Valley, but have low participation.  

4. Something that we have been missing in our thinking is what does it mean to be prepared for life after graduation? By reflecting on this question as well as our innovations and need statements, we will generate an operational definition for “being prepared for life after graduation” and create a narrower focus for our work. |
<p>| <strong>CONVERGE:</strong> How did the feedback provided | <strong>1.</strong> We never specified whether we were focusing on career or graduate school preparation. During the debrief, the |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>align with and enhance the team’s current insights?</th>
<th>Associate Dean of the Graduate School said that preparing for employment and graduate school is the same thing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. In response to our need statement about articulating the Honors difference, a senior in the Honors College said that he had been asked in every interview he has had so far about his Honors experience. This reinforced the importance of this need statement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A stakeholder emphasized to us how many career-related and professional development events already exist on campus. We have thought about this before and talked about how Grand Valley always has so many events going on, but we need to generate more ideas about how to get Honors students to attend those events. Some questions we will consider are: what makes these career events appealing and what obstacles get in the way of high attendance (possibly due to a conflicting time, not enough awareness, other events going on at the same time)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Roger was particularly interested in our research regarding student interaction with the Honors College announcements. With our feedback, we were able to come to the conclusion that an outline at the beginning of the weekly announcements would be beneficial.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPLY**: How can you *use* the feedback provided?

| 1. We will use our feedback to determine which two innovations we will develop into prototypes, based on which innovations and need statements were the most well received. For example, we realized after our debrief that our innovation about having informational sessions from Career Counselors did not receive any feedback from the stakeholders, so it might not have stood out to them. |  |
| 2. We will use the criticism we received from our stakeholders to critique and adjust our innovations. For example, we heard from a stakeholder that Transitions is probably not the best time to do a “meet the advisors” event because first-year students are too occupied with adjusting to college life. |  |
**ACT: What are your next steps?**

1. We will revisit our need statements to determine if there are needs that we did not present during the Debrief that we want to focus on more or if there are some that we want to focus on less. We will also use these needs statements to generate more ideas for innovations.

2. We will reflect on the questions posed to our peers and us during the Debriefs to consider what we have been missing in our thinking and adjust our innovations accordingly.

3. We will select our top two innovations to be our prototypes, and we will think more in-depth about the specific details regarding those prototypes. We will also use the feedback gathered from our interviews about our innovations this week to do this.
Envisioning the Future

Team Problem Statement:

How can we be sure when each Honors student graduates, they are fully equipped to embark on their future?

Two Prototype Concepts

- Mandatory portfolio for Honors students that displays their work from Honors courses and provides opportunity for reflection on their Honors experience.
- Job Shadowing requirements for Honors students or a requirement to attend the Career Fair/Career Events to further improve soft skills and to narrow the job search.

Summary Illustration

Questions for the Collaborators

1. What prototype do you believe best advances our team problem statement? Why?
2. How do you think we could best accommodate for students job shadowing off campus?
3. If you were reviewing an Honors student’s portfolio, what would you like to see?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Debrief Feedback</strong></th>
<th><strong>Capture What’s Meaningful to Advance your Prototypes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructor</strong></td>
<td>As an employer, I always focus on transitions and decisions and ask about those. Why did you switch your major or why did you take this class? Even if you do not remember why you took it, tell them what you learned from it. It helps you understand why you do things that you are going to do next. Adds to your ability to make decisions. How are you going to capture what people put in a portfolio? What was most important to you? It might not have been a class. How do you get people engaged with the story of me the entire time they are here? Exercises integrated. You could have an exercise embedded in the portfolio that students have to think about. Think about if you are giving it to someone to look at it. It certainly would be memorable but how does that help you be memorable? I think all of the teams have had interviews where students have expressed that they worry about the future a lot. It is a passive fretting and not an active doing to prepare for that. Whether that is budgeting, talking to employers, strategy for graduate school, etc. All of you are trying to address that by making it an active Honors experience. Whether it is intentional job shadowing, networking, etc. You start out in Honors orientation making little clouds and at the end, you are totally different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class</strong></td>
<td>In another team’s interviews, they learned from employers that many new hires (recent college graduates) do not know how to budget, how to apply for a mortgage, what a 401k is, how to establish credit, etc. Students they have interviewed have all expressed wanting to learn these things in college. Another team had one of the same prototypes as we did: job shadowing requirements. They talked about how it would be accomplished through a partnership with the Career Center. Stakeholders mentioned how difficult this would be to implement from an administration standpoint.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Collaborator | Honors Advisor: Is this more for yourself or for your employer?  
I think from the earlier debrief that you went from to this one, you are taking a more active role in how the students do things. Taking ownership and getting students to take ownership is good.  
What are the repercussions of not completing the new requirements?  
Have been in situations where it felt awkward to bring up portfolios- more for the internal person. |
| --- | --- |
| Other Stakeholder(s) | Current Honors Senior: I like the portfolio idea a lot. As someone who is almost going to graduate, I have been reflecting on what I have learned throughout my four years. It takes a lot to remember what I got out of my freshman sequence. When I go to this employer, I can use this as a point.  
If there is a template, you could include the resources of the Career Center, such as sample interview questions.  
Associate Dean of GVSU Graduate School: I can’t tell you how many times I have asked students what they remembered from a class and often the answer is “I don’t remember much.” At a job interview, that is probably not where you want to be. The reflection might help to develop that. I’m thinking of an app where you can make a portfolio and bring it to your job shadow. I would guess that most of you are already doing some sort of portfolio of your life at this point. Social media. Everyone should be able to do this. Instead of being this public domain, we make it more introspective. When I was younger, I built a portfolio on 3 basic questions: What happened? How did it make you feel? Why did you feel that way? It gives you an easy way to build that series of experience and consciously think about the way it affected you. Who am I after this experience or after this event? There are ways to build that regular introspective mindset. You are already kind of doing that in a public domain, this is in a more personal domain. The portfolio shouldn’t be you. You are who you are; the portfolio tells you how you got there. It is less about what happened and more about knowing how you got here. Knowing and being able to see that you are adaptable and being able to say that to employers is great. Say I am adaptable and I can work in groups, etc.  
Office of Integrative Learning and Advising, Brooks College Advisor: Used to do e- portfolios and now they do not. Who guides it? Where does it sit? If your line of sight is back to the value of the Honors College |
experience, make sure the people you go to are able to articulate that Honors

**Director of Community Engagement:** I love the reflection idea but I’m going to challenge your problem statement. Recognizing more of what is needed? We are all on a continuum. What next? What else haven’t I done? I like the idea with the portfolio. I just do not think that is the problem.

Information overload! This is more for yourself.

That can extend on and on. To address worry about the future? Keep changing. Your own education and the things you learn from a liberal arts education will carry with you. That should be embraced and expected, not causing anxiety necessarily. Who knows where you will be in 20 years and that’s okay not to know even 5 years from now.

---

**Post-Debrief Reflections**

Integrate the Feedback & Decide on Your Best Solution

**DIVERGE:** How did the feedback provided deviate from your team’s current insights?

1. A stakeholder asked if we thought about how to engage students in the story of themselves the entire time they are here, not just with their Honors classes. In our sample portfolio, we included “leadership experience” and “community engagement,” but it is still something we have to think more about: how to get students to reflect on their out-of-classroom experiences as well.

2. A current Honors senior asked if the portfolio would be a website or something else. Originally, we were thinking it would be a website, but now we have to think about how to balance providing structure to Honors students and allowing them creative freedom. Would there be a required format?

3. We received some suggestions for things to include in the portfolio from our stakeholders: exercises integrated in the portfolio to guide students’ thinking and provide structure as well as resources from the Career Center to encourage students to attend and prepare for job interviews, for example. We had not thought much about the information that Honors students would be supplied with when
assigned the portfolio, so this is something we will take into consideration.

4. Many of the stakeholders expressed that this portfolio would not be shown to employers. Originally, we were thinking that it would be up to the student whether to bring it to an interview or not, however, they expressed that it would be information overload and possibly awkward to give to a potential employer. Its purpose should be more for the individual, then, but students have the option to bring it to employers if they would like. However, we will not be telling students to bring it to interviews.

5. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School at GV said that many of us are already culminating and creating portfolios in a way by using social media. This is an interesting insight we had not thought of before. The portfolio would be different because it would be more personal and introspective. In addition, we think that many students probably do not put as much reflective and serious thought into most of their social media posts the same way they would for a portfolio. It is interesting to think about, though.

1. A current Honors senior said that it would be helpful to have a portfolio to keep track of exactly what you learned from a class, especially the freshmen sequence because it was so long ago. This supports our portfolio idea because it would help Honors students to be able to articulate their Honors experience and take a more active role in preparing for their future. This supports our reasons for choosing the portfolio prototype.

2. An employer said that they always ask about transitions and decisions during interviews. Even if you do not remember why, reflecting on what your experiences have meant will help you be able to explain what you learned from a class or a decision. Being able to articulate this will help you look competent to employers/admissions and help guide your decision-making. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School at GVSU said that knowing how you got to where you are now helps you to be able to demonstrate during interviews that you are adaptable and to provide reasons why, such as experiences you have
had working in groups, for example. This aligns with and supports what our current prototype focuses on.

3. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School at GVSU said that many times when he asks students what they learned from a class, they say, “I don’t know” or “I don’t remember much.” This supports our insight that many Honors students do not know how to articulate their experience and the Honors difference. It also aligns with the corresponding needs statement.

4. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School at GVSU mentioned some of the questions that he asks himself for reflection: “What happened? How did it make you feel? And why did you feel that way?” That is an easy, structured way to consciously think about your experiences and the way it affected you. Additionally, “Who are you after this event or experience?” He also told us to remember that this portfolio is not who we are, but simply a reflection of how we got to where we are today. This really helps us to better articulate what the purpose of the portfolio is and how to better understand it conceptually.

5. The Director of Community Engagement told us that it is important for us to embrace change and to continue to reflect on our experiences because life is always changing. That should be something to be expected, not to get anxious about necessarily. He also said that we will carry our education and liberal arts experience with us for the rest of our lives, and that it is totally normal to not know what we are going to be doing 20 years from now or even 5 years from now. We hope that by getting Honors students to reflect on their experiences with the portfolio, that we will help them to be more equipped for their future, where they will have to make decisions and understand what events and feelings have led them to where they are. Getting them to actively engage with their experiences will help them be resilient to and intentional with change and hopefully make them less passively anxious.

**APPLY: How can you use the feedback provided?**

1. We did not revisit our team problem statement since our last collaborator debrief, but after seeing the other teams’ revised problem statements and hearing about how this whole project is about getting Honors students more actively engaged in preparing for their futures, we have decided to revise ours. We also got feedback that our mandatory portfolio idea is a great idea but does not necessarily fit our
problem statement as it is now, so we will change our problem statement to be more accurate of what we are focusing on.

2. There seemed to be confusion among the stakeholders about whether the portfolio prototype is for the purpose of the individual Honors student or for a potential employer during an interview. We did not convey well enough that it is up to the student to make what they want of the project. For example, certain majors might find it more helpful to use the portfolio in an interview. Others might use it more solely for personal reflection. We will use this feedback to come up with a clearer name for the portfolio prototype.

3. During the Debrief, none of our stakeholders even mentioned our job shadowing/career event requirements prototype (which may have been because they already discussed that idea during another team’s presentation), so we have used this to choose the portfolio as our top innovation.

4. A current Honors senior mentioned using the Career Center to create materials and templates for the portfolio. A Brooks College advisor mentioned asked who would be guiding the portfolio and wanted more details as to how it would be implemented/enforced. We can use this to do more research (for example, into the e-portfolios that Honors students apparently used to do) and come up with more specific details of things that can be included in the prototype and how it will be incorporated into classes and other Honors experiences, like the senior project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT: What are your next steps?</th>
<th>1. Revise our team problem statement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Rename our “mandatory portfolio” prototype to help our stakeholders better understand its purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Focus our energy on improving the portfolio prototype, which we have decided is going to be our top prototype. For example, we will research materials from the Career Center that could be helpful for the portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. We will synthesize all the feedback we have gained to reflect on our experience as a team and write our “story,” which will be used in our team video and storyboard concept.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A mandatory portfolio would be a requirement for Honors students to complete before they can graduate with “Honors.” This portfolio would consist of reflections on each of the Honors courses the student has taken as well as examples of some of their best work (Figure 5). The Honors student would have some creative freedom with this project to be able to express themselves and convey who they are on this platform. A mandatory portfolio would meet our needs statement “Honors students need to be able to articulate their Honors experience.”

Through our research, we have learned it is important for students to reflect on their experiences, values, and newly learned skills to articulate those to potential employers or graduate admissions and to guide their decision-making. This portfolio can be completed using a Google site. Possible pages can include “About Me,” “Transferable Skills from Honors Coursework,” “Reflection on My Honors General Education,” “Leadership Experience,” “Senior Project,” and “Community Engagement.” This portfolio will be worked on throughout an Honors student’s undergraduate career. For example, nearing the end of each Honors course the student takes, they can reflect on what they have learned and what skills they have gained and add that to their portfolio. These reflections can also be shared with Honors faculty to see how their students have grown and what they learned most from their class.
The survey will be emailed to all GVSU Honors students to fill out. To ensure participation, students could enter into a raffle for a prize if they complete the survey and Honors faculty would be encouraged to announce the survey in their courses. The first part of the survey will begin by collecting some basic background information, such as the student’s year, major, and career aspirations. Students will also be asked about career-related experiences they have had, like jobs, internships, or career events they have attended through the Career Center, their department, or another organization. The second part of the survey will assess Honors students’ knowledge of the Career Center and which services (if any) they have used in the past and why. A possible survey item would be a list of Career Center events (or potential events) and participants will be asked to rank which events they will be most likely to attend or will be most interested in. Another question will ask what Honors students feel they need help on or want more information about for life after graduation. This part will not only provide helpful information to the Honors College and the Career Center but also to the Honors students because they will be provided with information about the Career Center in the survey. We predict that if
students learn more about the Career Center, they will be more likely to utilize its services and thus become more prepared for life after graduation (Figure 6).

**GVSU Job Shadow Reflection**

This survey was created to seek information regarding how much students are learning during their job shadows and how we could work to make sure a student is getting the most out of these events.

**Where did you job shadow?**

Your answer

Do you feel working with this company would be the right choice for you?

O

Yes

O No

**Maybe Other**

What did you like most about working with this company?

Your answer

---

**Figure 6. Example of Honors Student Survey Question**

**CAREER EVENTS / REQUIREMENTS:**

The career events innovation builds from existing events put on by other organizations at the University and creates new requirements for Frederik Meijer Honors College students. These events will encourage students of the FMHC to be proactive in their search for a career and ensure that they are on track for success throughout their years at Grand Valley. It will be a requirement for Honors Students to attend a certain number of events per year (Figure 7). One of the events must be the Career Fair, in which students can further improve their soft skills and narrow their job search. The Career Fair is also a great event for networking, and students who attended this may be able to find a future employer. A mandatory job shadow will also be a new
requirement for Honors students. Students will have the choice to shadow a professional in a certain field of their choosing, or if undecided, be placed in a field that utilizes multiple majors. Doing so will not only help guide students’ career choices, but also give them an opportunity to interact with professionals in a work-like environment, further preparing them for post-graduation. Failure to complete these requirements will result in the removal of “Honors” status upon graduation.

![Figure 7. Honors student requirement to attend career events](image)

**ADVISING FOR SUCCESS EVENT:**

During Transitions every year, freshmen in the Frederik Meijer Honors College will attend an event where GVSU advisers from multiple departments will give talks, and after the talks, will have booths set up to provide opportunity to chat with the students individually. Honors Advisors, Career Center Advisors, CLAS Academic Advisors, and even GVSU Financial Aid will be present (Figure 8). All of these service providers will give a short lecture about their services and range of assistance. After which, students will be able to walk around to different tables, get more information, get promotional materials, and make appointments. This event will last about two hours; depending on the class size, there can be a meet and greet with one of the advisors of the students choosing. This meeting will be very informal, but students will be instructed to prepare at least one question before they meet with a service provider; or an advisor will guide this meeting with general advice, motivating stories, and helpful tips to welcome the
In order to help Honors students better understand the services provided at the Career Center, career counselors will come in and talk at least once to every Honors class throughout the semester (Figure 9). Many Honors students do not use the Career Center, simply because they do not know where it is, nor do they know what services are available. This innovation will provide an excellent opportunity for students to interact with career counselors in a small classroom setting, which will take the pressure off scheduling an initial visit, as well as allow for open-ended Q&A. Students will learn more about what services the Career Center offers, and stress the importance of getting involved with the Career Center sooner rather than later. By sending a few representatives of the Career Center to Honors classrooms each semester, it will also allow students to find a specific person they can reach out to for advice at the Career Center and feel comfortable. Instead of forcing the students to seek out the Career Center on their own, by bringing the Career Center to them it will, in theory, lead to larger numbers of Honors students.

**Figure 8.** Honors students meet the university advisors innovation

**CAREER COUNSELING INFORMATION SESSIONS:**
students utilizing its resources, which could help them feel more prepared for anything from their resume format, to their upcoming job interview, to their graduate school application.

**Figure 9.** Honors student career counseling sessions in Honors classes
A required Reflective Portfolio for Honors students will consist of reflections on each of their Honors courses as well as out-of-class experiences, such as jobs, internships, and extracurriculars (Figure 10). Through our research, we have learned that it is important for students to reflect on their experiences, values, and acquired skills, because these are the tools they use to guide their decision-making. They also need to be able to articulate these to employers or graduate admissions. We have learned that this something in which many Honors students need improvement. A Reflective Portfolio will meet this need.

The Reflective Portfolio will be completed using a Google site or other platform of the students choosing. Exercises and prompts will be provided about how they will achieve their goals, why they have made the decisions they have made, and how their experiences at GVSU and the Honors College have shaped them. For example, nearing the end of each Honors course the student takes, they will reflect on what they have learned and what transferable skills they have gained and add that to their Portfolio. Honors faculty will provide instruction and guidance to students by having them complete parts of their Reflective Portfolio about their class. Honors faculty will also have the opportunity to read these reflections and see how their students have grown and what they found most valuable about their course. The Reflective Portfolio will be finished during the senior project, in which the mentoring faculty member will provide feedback and certify that the requirements for the Portfolio have been achieved.
The Career Events and Job Shadowing Requirements prototype will build on already-existing events put on by the GVSU Career Center and create new requirements for Frederik Meijer Honors College students. By requiring Honors students to attend a minimum number of these events per year, it will ensure that they are proactive in their search for a career and that they are on track for success beyond Grand Valley. One of the required events is the Career Fair, in which students can improve their skills through talking to employers with the added benefit of narrowing their job search. A mandatory job shadow will also be a new requirement for students. Students will have the choice to shadow a professional in a certain field of their choosing, or if undecided, be placed in a field based on their interests. Doing so not only will help guide students’ career choices, but also give them an opportunity to interact with professionals in a work-like environment, further preparing them for post-graduation. Students will be required to
job shadow once a semester, along with two other Career Center events. After the student completes their job shadow, they will be required to submit a reflection about their experience with the job shadow. These reflections could be included in the Reflective Portfolio as part of their Honors College experience (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Honors student job shadowing prototype concept
A required Reflective Portfolio for Honors students will consist of reflections on each of their Honors courses as well as out-of-class experiences, such as jobs, internships, and extra-curriculars (Figure 12). Through our research, we have learned that it is important for students to reflect on their experiences, values, and acquired skills, as they will need to be able to articulate these to employers and admissions. When asked in an interview what it means to be in the Frederik Meijer Honors College, students need to have an astute answer. Understanding how they have gotten to where they are will help them when applying to graduate school, interviewing for jobs, and making life decisions. Completing a Reflective Portfolio will help Honors students be better prepared for life after graduation and it will be a valuable addition to the Honors curriculum.

The Reflective Portfolio will be completed using a platform of the student’s choosing, such as a blog or a binder. Exercises and prompts will be provided to guide reflection about how the student will achieve their goals, why they have made the decisions they have made, and how their experiences in the Honors College have shaped them. It will be introduced by the faculty member in each freshman sequence and students will meet up with their Honors faculty advisor at least once a year to check in on the progress made on the Portfolio. For example, nearing the end of each Honors course the student takes, they will reflect on what they have learned and what transferable skills they have gained and add that to their Portfolio. Honors faculty will provide instruction and guidance to students in their classes by having them complete a reflection about their course that students will add to their Portfolio. It will be finished during the student’s
senior project and will serve as a useful resource for students’ to prepare for graduate school and employment applications.

**Figure 12.** Honors Student Reflective Portfolio
TEAM VIDEO LINK:

https://youtu.be/BHYBwlUFuk
College is like climbing a mountain - it seems to take FOREVER. It is hard, and often times we just focus on reaching the end goal – graduation, and lose sight of all the awesome and unique opportunities we partake in here at Grand Valley.
TEAM BLADE RUNNER
DESIGN THINKING 2018

Claire Thomassen, Kylee Scholten, Rie Weikum, Kara Rickenberg, Matt
Smil, & Monica Van Til

Team Introduction
Before we take you along on our journey with us, let us give you a brief overview of what we will be discussing. Let us get started!
As we stated in video, our problem statement is...
So, how did we solve our problem statement? The Honors Reflective Portfolio.
Not only will the Honors Reflective Portfolio benefit students in many ways, but it is also the most cost effective and resource friendly option. Now that you have learned a little bit about what the Honors Reflective Portfolio is, let us show you how it will be put into action.
Here we have Sal as a freshman writing his dreams on the infamous Honors cloud. Jumping ahead to Sal at graduation, he gets his cloud back and he realizes he is in a very different place than he expected just 4 years ago. Luckily, Sal did a Reflective Portfolio and easily can review his experiences in the Honors College. Let us dive into his time here.
In the freshman sequence, Honors faculty will help freshmen through the process of building a Reflective Portfolio with guidelines and worksheets.
Then throughout the next 3 years of his undergraduate experience, Sal goes to career fairs and does a job shadow then switches his major. His senior thesis is on animal medicine.
As a senior, Sal is finalizing his unique Reflective Portfolio for review by his Senior Project faculty advisor. His table of contents is a comprehensive overview of Sal’s GVSU Honors College experience.
Sal feels fully prepared for any question in his graduate school interview thanks to his prompting through review of his Honors Reflection Portfolio.
So, the interviewers loved hearing about his undergraduate career as an Honors student and he gets into veterinary school! He goes on to live a long success life in animal medicine!
Today we went through our innovation process with our video. We talked about our problem statement, and how the final prototype used to solve this problem was the Honors Reflection Portfolio, benefitting not only the students but the entire GVSU community. Through the story of Sal, it is clear that this Reflection Portfolio will be the definitive method to capture the Honors College experience, setting Frederik Meijer Honors College students apart from any other.
Contact Us

- Claire Thomassen
  ➢ thomacla@mail.gvsu.edu
- Rio Weikum
  ➢ weikumr@mail.gvsu.edu
- Kara Rickenberg
  ➢ rickenbk@mail.gvsu.edu
- Kylee Scholten
  ➢ scholtky@mail.gvsu.edu
- Matt Smit
  ➢ smitm@mail.gvsu.edu
- Monica VanTil
  ➢ vantilmo@mail.gvsu.edu
## INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM REFLECTION

### Call to Action

**Envisioning the Future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Description of How Your Presentation was Received</th>
<th>The stakeholders were excited to hear about our Reflective Portfolio and voted on it being their top priority for prototype implementation. They seemed to be encouraging and curious about our presentation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the Teams specific Call-to-Action</td>
<td>By implementing an Honors Reflective Portfolio into the curriculum, we can be sure, when each Honors student graduates, they are fully equipped to embark on their future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Attendee Questions                                     | 1. How will we keep this separate from portfolios already required for different majors?  
2. Have we tried doing the Reflective Portfolios ourselves?  
3. Is it emphasis having done it, or having a physical copy of something? |

### Innovation Symposium Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● I found it interesting that you mentioned retention rates. Can you speak more on that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● A set of questions that connects feedback and experiences would be beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● This would be great for building resumes- that is a good point that students simply put the Honors College on their resume without capturing what they gained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● I really think this would help to shape your identity- in this way you can implement the design thinking process every year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include elements to improve soft skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Think about how you will ensure students complete the career fair/job shadow -- I might encourage you to drop that and focus on reflection. It will be more enforceable if it stays with classes but could still encourage the career exploration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For students, I would make sure they understand why it is beneficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have the Career Center introduce in sequence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meaningful reflection requires guidance from someone who can both support and challenge you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Focus on building identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Avoid “mandatory” and “must” -- instead, think “menu.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make it a Design Portfolio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- “Designing Your Life” book must provide structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- As a student, I think this is great and I know it would have helped me prepare for after graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- LIB Studies requires students to draft and revise an “Integrative Statement” in different classes -- maybe a model?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Stakeholders were actively listening during the video and presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stakeholders would often nod in agreement and participate in asking questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Symposium Reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DIVERGE:</strong> How did the feedback provided deviate from your team’s current recommendations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Our team did not consider the fact that other majors already require a portfolio for their majors. When it was asked how it would be kept separate, we responded the portfolios would be kept separate, but we can also look into combining portfolios if another major wanted to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Due to Honors faculty playing a heavy role in guiding first year students in starting their Portfolios in their freshman sequences, it was brought up that not all professors would be on board with the idea because of their time management and curriculum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. We did not consider the possibility of the Portfolio being a Design Thinking Reflection Portfolio, which brought up by a stakeholder.
4. The book “Designing Your Life” could be a great source of information for implementing this prototype.

**CONVERGE: How did the feedback provided align with and enhance the team’s innovation?**

1. Stakeholders agreed that reflection and building upon soft skills are important in preparation after graduation, which is what our innovation captures.
2. One stakeholder stated that having this Portfolio would have greatly helped in the process of job searching and interviews during and after undergrad.
3. The Portfolio would help students focus on their identity and experience.

**SYNTHESIZE: How can others use the feedback provided?**

1. Honors faculty can use our research to help Honors students better prepare for life after graduation through guided reflection. Knowing the benefits of the Portfolio that we presented will help get faculty on board.
2. The Honors College and the Career Center can collaborate together more to increase Honors student attendance to Career Services events. In addition, to help teach Honors students how to incorporate their Honors experiences into their resumes and how to convey that in interviews. the Career Center could come into the freshman sequences and introduce their services and the Portfolio.
3. Teaching students about the benefits of reflection will help them gain motivation for the Portfolio and help them dedicate more time to better understanding themselves.
4. Refer to other classes, such as LIB studies, which may have similar concepts in place, and gain inspiration from their models.

**RECOMMEND: What next steps does your team recommend to stakeholders?**

1. We recommend that this Portfolio be tested out before it is implemented to work out any issues and see which areas seem to be the most beneficial.
2. We recommend reaching out to the Career Center to help with creating exercises and guided reflection questions.
3. We recommend putting in a strong effort to get all Honors faculty members on board -- if even one faculty member does
not help implement this, many Honors students will not get the guidance they need.

4. We recommend that our stakeholders reflect on what their experience was like as an undergraduate student and what would have been helpful to know or think about. Combine your wisdom and your empathy to come up with questions for students to reflect on.
CONCLUDING STATEMENT

We have worked diligently this semester and synthesized our research to conclude that implementing a Reflective Portfolio is necessary to help Honors students better prepare themselves for their futures. By completing the Reflective Portfolio, Honors students will cultivate better self-awareness of their experiences and values, which will help them make decisions and articulate their experiences to employers or graduate admissions. The Reflective Portfolio is a resource-effective way to facilitate personal growth in Honors students and prepare them for whatever lies ahead. With your support, it will serve as a valuable and resource-friendly addition to the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Thank you for being a part of this journey, and with your support, we are excited to see what happens next!
### DIALOGUE 1

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Non-Honors Students GVSU Senior  
**Estimated Age:** x (22) 20-30  ____ 30-40  ____ 40-50  ____ 50+  
**Gender:** Male  
**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**  
The goal of this interview was to see how much non-Honors students know about the Honors College. We also wanted to see what plans they have made for post-graduation. This would potentially help us figure out what we can do to help Honors students be prepared for life after graduation.  
**How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**  
Conducting this work reflects on my team problem statement, because we are working on preparing Honors students for graduation by utilizing West Michigan’s communities. Non-Honors GVSU students are a part of that community and are vital in recognizing the difference between Honors and Non-Honors students. Interviewing these Non-Honors students is also useful because we want to see what resources they are using when it comes to preparing for life after college. We also want to see what they feel is helpful or not helpful when preparing for the real world.  
**Summary of Research:**  
The subject is a senior at Grand Valley majoring in Marketing with an emphasis in Distribution and Logistics. He is graduating in the Fall of 2018. He knows about the Honors College through friends, in which he holds in high regard. He knew a few things about the Honors College. He feels that college alone does not prepare you for the real world, but real life application of what you are learning does. The internship he had over the summer makes him feel like he is really prepared for the real world. He
does not have any solid plans for where he will be employed after graduation, but he certainly knows what he wants to be doing career wise. He would like to work for a trucking or logistics and distribution company, as that is what he did over the summer.

Important insights:

- The interviewee does not feel college alone prepared him for life in the professional world.
- The interviewee feels that application through jobs and getting real world experience is what has helped him feel more prepared for life after college.
- The interviewee mentions that collaboration and communication are key to success in the real world.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Introduction-

Thank you for your time today! Hello, my name is ___ and this is _____ who will be taking notes. We are both students of the Frederik Meijer Honors College at Grand Valley State University. As part of our design thinking and innovation class, we are exploring the design challenge of how to better prepare Honors students for post-graduate life. I have a few questions to ask you to further guide us towards our innovation. Your identity and input during this interview will remain anonymous. This should take about 30 minutes. Do we have permission to record you during this survey? The recording will be deleted as soon as it is transcribed to a written template. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Question 1: What is your major?

Answer: My major within the Seidman College of Business is Marketing with an emphasis in Distribution and Logistics.

Question 2: How familiar are you with GVSU’s Honors College?

Answer: I have many close friends that have been part of GV’s Honors College. I hold these friends in high regard, and their participation in the Honors College has helped them act and work at such high standards.

Question 3: What is your view of the Honors College?

Answer: I have attended learning seminars at the Honors College, and had a very good first impression. After acclimating myself with other Grand Valley living and academic buildings, walking around Niemeyer displays a higher caliber of living and
learning integration. By decreasing roadblocks that students face, whether it be large class sizes or difficulty finding teachers during office hours, the Honors College fixes these problems by placing houses, classrooms and professor offices under the same roof. The requirements to be accepted into the Honors College are strict, which reflect in the type of students that live there, studious, curious, and a natural passion for learning.

Question 4: Have you thought about applying to the Honors College in the past? Why or why didn’t you?

Answer: My specific qualifications, as I transferred to GVSU junior year, which did not allow me to attend the Honors College, at least for my goals to get out of undergraduate academia.

Question 5: Do you believe it would be beneficial to have an Honors College for each school at GVSU? Meaning, a Business Honors College, Health Honors College, etc. Why?

Answer: While having multiple Honors College would be beneficial for each school at Grand Valley, I would argue that by surrounding students of higher caliber with similar interests and academic caliber learning abilities, having different Honors Colleges for each school segment would deter from the culture that Niemeyer has built up. As a downtown resident, I do not see a viable reason to bring more of Grand Valley downtown to build off Seidman. By the time students are juniors and seniors, they should be living similar to how they will be when the graduate, rather than in one confined building. While having more time to interact with teachers is beneficial to quality learning, the experiences Grand Rapids can offer will be more beneficial in the end.

Question 6: What academic resources have you used through GVSU? (Career Center, Advising, Writing Center, etc.)

Answer: Career Center for Resume building and Seidman office hours

Question 7: Do you feel that you are prepared for graduation and for life in the professional world?

Follow up: What contributed to your preparation for life after college?

Answer: I do not feel prepared for life in the professional world. Going to professional events and interacting with other high caliber working professionals and working 40+ hours a week, as I did during an internship, has better prepared me for the professional world. There is only so much a college can teach. It is the application of knowledge and learning to real life situations that will prepare a student for the real world. While Honors students are likely better equipped for the professional world, there is still
“learning on the job” involved, I believe, that will determine a person's abilities to do so.

Question 8: What are some things you think all students should know before graduating from GVSU?

Answer: School is great; it is a way to educate students based on individual success. How well you do on a quiz or how many classes you attend prove to teachers that you are willing to put in the work. Thinking that life in the professional world will be the same, in most fields, is just untrue. Collaboration and communication are qualities sought after by employers. Honing in on these aspects will push you into the top percentile of your class, guaranteed.

That was my last question. Thank you so much for interviewing with us and helping us with our project. We really appreciate it. Do you have any more questions or comments for us that you think would be beneficial for our assignment? Is there anyone else specifically that you recommend we speak with in order to talk about Honors College students transitioning post GVSU graduation? May we reach out to you again in the future if we have more questions? Thank you for your time.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

One thing I should have asked the interviewee is what are your plan post-graduation? Do you have any? How did you figure out these plans? What do you think would help other GV Seniors figure out their plans for post-graduation? Did anyone help you to form these plans for post-graduation?

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

Yes. He agreed that we would be able to contact him again in the future. He said texting would be an appropriate form of contact.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Students

Possible next-steps:

- Reach out to contacts about their plans for post-graduation
- Add more questions to dialogue script
- Potentially provide more information on the Honors College and what our mission is to provide more insight to those we are interviewing after the interview is completed. I felt that the interviewee was confused on what we were doing exactly.
- Also add “What are your plans for post-graduation?” This question is incredibly important, and we forgot to mention it.
- I also plan on taking out the question regarding adding different Honors Colleges, because it detracts from our main mission and goal.
### DIALOGUE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Honors College Alumni</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: <strong>x</strong> 18-30 _____ 30-40 _____40-50 _____50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of this interview was to gain the perspective of a successful FMHC alumnus and understand what they gained through the FMHC and what they wish would have been was different.

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

This will help us get a feel for what should stay the same in the FMHC and what should be adjusted in order to make graduates as prepared and successful as possible.

**Summary of Research:**

The interviewee thoroughly enjoyed her time at the Honors College and believes that it was well worth her time. If there were to be any changes, she wishes the FMHC include more diversity in its students and include job-related skills such as interviewing and cover letter writing.

**Important insights:**

- The small, discussion based classrooms are beneficial post-gradation
- Two important qualities of an employee are problem-solving and dependability
- Focus less on your goals, and live more in the moment

**Actual Dialogue:**

**Question 1:** Tell me about what you do now in your occupation. What made you decide to go into that field?
Answer: I am currently in Medical School at Michigan State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. I decided to go into medicine because I was very interested in science and Biology in undergrad. I wanted to go into a profession that allowed me to help people and use my knowledge to problem solve. I decided to specifically go to an Osteopathic Medical school, because I like the holistic philosophy behind Osteopathy and I wanted to learn how to do OMM (Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine).

Question 2: What degree/degrees did you graduate with? Did you graduate on time?
Answer: I graduated with Bachelors of Science with a major in Biomedical Sciences and minor in Chemistry. I did graduate on time (I actually graduated in 3 years).

Question 3: What was your experience with the Honors College at GVSU like? What did you like? What did you dislike?
Answer: I really enjoyed my time at the Honors College at GVSU. My first year, I took Food for Thought as my freshman sequence. This class really changed my outlook on the food system in United States as well as my personal choices of the food that I eat every day. The summer after my sophomore year, I travelled to Ghana with the Honor College Service Learning Trip. During this time, I was able to finish both my junior seminar and my senior research project. All of these experiences really helped shape my time at Grand Valley. Also living in Niemeyer my sophomore year was a lot of fun. I do not know if there was anything that I truly disliked about the Honors College. I guess if I had to pick anything, it would be the lack of diversity. I felt like a lot of all of us students in the college were very similar like middle to upper class, high achieving, etc.

Question 4: How do you think being in the Honors College prepared you for post-graduation life?
Answer: Being in courses that made me learn about current topics and discuss in small groups definitely has helped me be more successful in medical school. Additionally, I think that my Live, Learn, Lead class definitely made me a better writer.

Question 5: What do you wish the Honors College had done for you in terms of post-graduation preparation that they did not?
Answer: I think that it could be extremely beneficial to be taught some basic skills that are needed when you leave college (i.e. how to write a cover letter, interviewing skills,
resumes workshop etc.) to make us even more well-rounded applicants.

Question 6: How do you feel now that you are not in school? Good, bad, prepared?

Answer: When I was in my gap year, I was working as a CNA and a Nurse Tech. Both jobs were very strenuous physical labor and did not allow me to use much of my schooling. It was difficult to be working under people that had significantly less schooling than I had had. During that time, I was not very happy with my job, but it was just a stepping-stone to get to where I am today. Now I am back in school and I feel good. I love what I am learning even if it is stressful and a lot of work.

Question 7: What do you think employers are looking for when they hire a new professional employee?

Answer: I think that employers are looking for someone that is dependable as well as someone that is willing to be a problem solver. As a professional, we are expected to do the job that is expected of us in a timely, orderly, respectful manner. That being said, the world is full of twists and turns and I believe that employers value someone that can think on their feet and take initiative to find a solution when problems arise.

Question 8:
In terms of being selected for employment, do you feel that the Honors College helped you other than just being a “resume booster”? If yes, how? If no, what do you think would have helped?

Answer: Although on paper the Honors College may have been a resume booster, I think that the Honors College helped teach me how to communicate my thoughts and opinions well. Because our classes were often so discussion based, I believe that I was a better interviewee as well as a better letter writer.

Question 9: How many times a year do you think you went to an Honors Advisor? In addition, how many times a year do you think you went to a major-related advisor?

Answer: I probably went to my Honors Advisor about once a year. I went to my CLAS academic advisor probably 1-2 times per year.

Question 10: Do you have any advice for upper-class Honors College students?
Answer: I would recommend that while it is important to work hard to finish out your last couple years, I would recommend taking a course you are really interested in just for fun or studying abroad your junior or senior year. Take advantage of your time in college because once it is done you may not get a second chance to go back. Many of us Honors kids are so goal oriented that it can be difficult to just enjoy our time in undergrad.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

“Does it have to be about the Honors College? Maybe if I had the choice, would I join the Honors College again- and the answer would be yes of course. Or how did the living-learning environment foster community/changed my experience at Grand Valley. I think that if I had lived there my Freshman year it would have changed my experience more because I was in the building a lot more frequently, but when I lived there my sophomore year only had a 3 credit class for one semester.”

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

Yes- text or email

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Former director of the FMHC
- Any of the FMHC professors

Possible next-steps:

- Contacting Dr. J for a potential interview (via email or phone call)
- Investigating possible steps to implement interview skills, cover letter writing, etc. into the Honors curriculum
### DIALOGUE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Current Honors Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Estimated Age:**  
- [X] 18-30  
- [ ] 30-40  
- [ ] 40-50  
- [ ] 50+  

**Gender:**

---

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of interviewing a current Honors student is to better understand the experiences that Honors students are having right now. Honors students are our end users so it is essential that we empathize and better understand their needs.

---

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

Our team problem statement is to better prepare GVSU Honors students for life post-graduation. By learning about current Honors students’ experiences and plans post-graduation, we can empathize with them, learn what their needs are, and generate ideas for prototypes for us to test.

---

**Summary of Research:**

The interviewee is a third year current Honors student who is planning to graduate in April 2019. They currently hold two jobs as a cadet for two different police departments because their goal is to go into the Police Academy and to become a police officer in Michigan. Their reason for going into the Honors College was for the general prestige of it (that it would look good on a resume) and because their friend was joining the Honors College, too. Overall, they focused on their experience with the Honors curriculum. They stressed the workload of the courses, the excellence of the professors, and the difficulty of scheduling Honors classes. They did not discuss any experiences with the Honors College outside of the curriculum.

---

**Important insights:**

- This current Honors student said they have never attended the Career Center and knew nothing about its services. This is not surprising, given that we learned that Honors students go to the Career Center less often than non-Honors students do.
• The most memorable experiences this student has had with the Honors College have been inside the classroom.
• This student is willing to sacrifice Honors standing if curriculum requirements would get in the way of them graduating this year.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Thank you for your time today! As part of our design thinking and innovation class, we are exploring the design challenge of how to better prepare Honors students for post-graduate life. I have a few questions to ask you to further guide us towards our innovation. Your identity and input during this interview will remain anonymous. There are eight questions and this should take about 30 minutes. Do we have permission to record you during this survey? The recording will be deleted as soon as it is transcribed to a written template. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Question One: How many years have you been at Grand Valley? What is your major?
Answer: I have been at Grand Valley for 3 years and my major is criminal justice with a minor in juvenile justice.

Question Two: Why did you choose to be in the Honors College?
Answer: I liked the idea of a more challenging experience and my friend was doing it. I liked the idea of not having to take regular Gen Eds. Also smaller class sizes.

Question One: What are your goals after graduation? What are you doing now to reach those goals?
Answer: To complete the Police Academy and to become a police officer in Michigan. I am working two jobs in the field as a cadet at two different police departments to gain experience and starting to form relationships in those fields for more career opportunities in the future.

Question Two: How has the Honors College helped you define or prepare to advance these goals? How do you think it will help you with these goals in the future?
Answer: It has given me— I don’t know, um— I mean, I can’t think of any area specifically. Helped me to be more professional and building professional relationships with professors, doing more than what is asked of me. I think it will serve as a good talking point in job interviews to show that I was a little more disciplined than everyone else in college and I pushed myself more to that extra level.
Question Three: What do you think sets Honors students apart from non-Honors students? How is their experience different?

Answer: It was an opportunity to push myself just a little bit harder, take higher level thinking classes that focused more on professional skills than what would be implemented in a normal Gen Ed.

I think the big thing is the schedule because there are not as many spots available for [Honors] classes, so they are more focused. Instead of working your schedule around your schedule, so you have to work it around your Honors schedule. I think the ability for Honors students to do that and make it work shows a stronger level of determination. It is difficult Honors students to schedule other classes around Honors classes.

Question Four: By applying to the Honors College, what sort of educational benefits did you expect to receive as part of the program? How has your experience so far lived up to these expectations?

Answer: I expected the workload to be heavier, higher expectations from professors. I do feel like I had more work, but the work was focused on going that extra mile with whatever you were doing. Instead of just explaining something, you were applying it. I think I knew it was going to be a challenge, and it was, but it was well-balanced.

Question Five: What resources have you utilized in your time at Grand Valley and in what ways have they better prepared you for post-graduation?

Answer: I haven’t really taken advantage of any of the resources. Meeting with the advisors more than I have needed to, but it is just a good way to be on track and just make sure everything works out. Giving my path of graduating a year early. Went to the Career Fair freshman year, will probably go back this year. Honors advisor twice, met with regular advisor at least three times.

Question Six: What do you know about the GVSU Career Center and the services it offers?

Answer: Nothing. Resume reviewing maybe? I think I read that in an email somewhere!

Question Seven: In your time in the Honors College so far, what is the most beneficial experience you have had or what is the biggest benefit you have experienced?

Answer: I think talking to professors - my Honors professors have been extraordinary compared to other professors.

Question Eight: What do you think the Honors College can do to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?
Answer: I don’t know, I don’t have any qualms with it. I feel like maybe it’s an idea to make it a requirement to meet with an advisor your senior year. Maybe making that part of the program, not to wait until last minute.

That was my last question. Thank you so much for interviewing with us and helping us with our project. We really appreciate it. Do you have any more questions for us or comments that you think would be beneficial? Is there anyone else specifically that you recommend we interview? May we reach out to you again in the future if we have more questions? Thank you for your time!

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

“What advice would you give to incoming Honors students?”

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

Yes, via text

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Another current Honors student
- Academic advising
- Honors Advising

Possible next-steps:

- Interview more current Honors students to compare their experiences.
- Add more questions and change them up – I felt that many of these questions received a similar answer. Also, ask about experiences outside of the classroom. Ask for more examples and stories. Possibly utilize an activity.
- Practice my interviewing skills and prepare more ahead of time for the next interview.
**DIALOGUE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: <strong>X</strong> 18-30 ____ 30-40 _____40-50 ____ 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

To get insight as to what hiring managers think when they see an applicant went to the honors college.

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

If we want to know why students are struggling in their transition after graduation, we need to know what people who are hiring expect from students.

**Summary of Research:**

“Honors” on a resume is recognized. However, it does not necessarily help them in the hiring process. Their communication skills are the most important. In addition, having connections is vital in finding a job that fits the student. Honors students always come very prepared and well organized in everything they do.

**Important insights:**

- Communication skills are lacking in about 50% of Honors students (According to interviewee)
- Advisors play a big role in where students look for jobs

**Dialogue Questions and Response:**

- **Student**

Can you give me a description of what you do for work?
- Hiring Manager (HM)

I work in the emergency department at Spectrum Health hospitals as a medical scribe specifically senior scribe who not only performs clinical work but manages the scribes who just do scribing so I take administrative roles, all the time clock and vacation and you know conflict resolution all those issues as well.

- Student

What do you like about your job?

- HM

I like the fast-paced environment. I like the opportunity for education as I pursue my medical career in the future. I would like to be challenged every single day whether it be just working as a medical scribe as there can be cases that require a little bit more critical thinking as compared to a more easy case that we can get out the door. Or training new scribes, doing recruitment. Everything seems to have an element of surprise and difficulty which always keeps me on my toes. I never seem to get bored. Also the overall excitement factor of working in the emergency department. There's a lot of cool things when I walk in the door. I'm never bored at work. To say the least and I always see something new and I'm always caught off guard by something, and that just makes me want to go to work every single day and see what I could potentially be missing out on. It's a big learning experience and I gained a lot out of it.

- Student

What do you like about the administrative part of your job?

- HM

Well like helping other scribe's become better scribes. Because I know everybody starts off somewhere and you know obviously I started off as a new scribe at one point and I wasn't very good for a couple of months and so I can help people progress faster by explaining about my experiences and what helped me get through. I also like being able to change policy to make things more efficient. For example, having everybody add something into their note that the providers can use to streamline our dictations. We also audit charts and I'm pretty tough when I audit charts and I point out a lot of mistakes a lot of small mistakes and so people that get audited by me have pretty high scores. Which kind of stinks for them. But you know when I can point out the same thing that they've done wrong on every single chart. It accounts for like half of their audit demerits. It changes the way that they do it and makes them better and it helps the providers it is
ultimately better for the patient because they have more accurate documentation performed on them.

- Student

How long have you been involved with interviewing people?

- HM

Since I took a promotion, so about four months. That's online and in person interviewing people.

- Student

Is it one on one interviewing?

- HM

So there's two people. What we essentially get out of the way first is it's an interview with both the scribe academy director and with me who works for a Helix Scribe Solutions. That's who the contract work is for. So like I don't work for Spectrum. I work with Spectrum. And I work for Helix Scribe Solutions so I'm on the Helix side of things. And you know Jeff the Director he's on like the education thing. So he explains preclinical experiences in the six week Scribe Academy and then I talk about the clinical training and employment expectations stuff like that. I run over what we expect out of them as far as commitments and you know working two shifts a week at the very minimum for 18 months because that's how much we ask out of them because if we're paying for six weeks of education for them we want to be able to get a decent amount of work out of them in the long run to make it worth our while.

- Student

What other expectations do you have of the people you hire?

- HM

That they understand the environment that they are going to be in and that they are socially competent. Because it is pretty easy to just let somebody into the Scribe Academy that has a 4.0 and just like other clinically or medically related experiences on the resume and application. However, one issue that we have is people can come in and do that but they have a very hard time talking to the providers. Which makes for a bad note ultimately because they're afraid to ask a clarifying question. So like if they missed something they won't be like "oh hey what was what was that part of the physical exam? You know I missed that," and they'll just not put anything in there which can be illegal. Ultimately to not put in a physical exam finding that was performed could also be
detrimental to the provider because if something went undocumented and it's not in the note and then you know somebody could come back with a lawsuit and be like "oh hey it says here that you didn't check their abdomen and you know they had ruptured appendicitis." It's like no I did check their abdomen. There was nothing acute, but the scribe didn't put something in and it all goes back to people being comfortable talking to providers. Which can be a little scary at first because they are doctors and we have a very high level of respect for them. They are absolutely normal people especially in the E.R. they're kind of a little too normal and they are kind of laid back compared to most areas of medicine. But yeah, just seeing if they can hold a conversation, if they ask questions. Also you know that they're willing to work because it's work for minimum wage. Nonetheless that's another thing that we talk about is the wage. And then I try to explain my personal experience behind the wage thing. When I was at my undergrad I had a roommate who used to smoke a joint, drink a six pack, and then go to the pizza place and make $11.00 an hour while I was offering medical scribes in the trauma bay watching people die left and right making $9.25. I guess back when I started there it was still $8.50. And that made me really mad. But you know when I walked into a medical school with 4000 clinical hours on my application I felt pretty good about that. But just making sure that they know that it's more about the experience and that their expectations line up with ours because we want to be able to further their professional development because it's more about providing an experience rather than a job.

- Student

Is there anything else you look for in an ideal candidate?

- HM

We look for good grades. I sit there and I calculate the science GPA - it is GPA that is just strictly science classes and they do the same thing for medical school so you'll have two GPAs when you apply. Your science GPA is just typically lower because the classes are more difficult, and there's less of them and then there's your overall GPA. I like to calculate the science GPA because not only does it give us an idea of how they work in their more difficult classes but also like their overall competency. If they did well in anatomy that's always a good thing because y'all need to know a lot of anatomy terminology. Also like med-term classes on anything that's medically related to calculate the GPA specifically for that. So just like academic competency, extracurriculars you know we'd like to see like well-rounded people and ask them questions about that. We use that as a tool to see if they can hold a conversation. So asking them about that kind of stuff. While we are interested in their experiences with we're mostly like trying to see if they can talk in a sort of a laid back manner because we run the interviews more like conversational rather than adversarial. Which is a good way to do it. Yeah mostly like academic performance, letters of recommendation and to see if they can converse
properly and communicate well. Because communications a big part of the job not only things that are communicated to you but are communicating with the physician.

- Student

Have you ever seen "Honors" on a resume?

- HM

Yes.

- Student

What comes to mind when you see it?

- HM

That would be hard work and dedication. Mostly just to see that these people are willing to go the extra mile. And if that's correlated with a higher GPA as well as like an abundance of additional experiences then that's just even more in their favor because it shows that they can they can be in the Honors College and they can do well in the Honors College.

- Student

Do you remember that if you see on "Honors" on a resume does it usually correlated with a higher GPA and more extra-curriculars?

- HM

Yeah definitely. Because there are students that want to do more with their life and they're not just content just sitting there doing something which is probably why they're trying to be a medical scribe. When you think about it you know most of the people that come through the program are premed and they want to be doctor, PA, nurse practitioner or something in that realm. And people that want to go into the medical field are usually typically pretty driven and in my opinion, there is no better undergraduate experience for somebody who is premed because there no other job where you get as much communication directly with physicians. And you know it's pretty sought after. We have too many people applying and not enough spots. So these are people that want to do a job, and they want to do well, and they want to have experiences. They're really pushing hard to get into this. And so when we see that it's somebody from the Honors College it's kind of nice to know that they're willing to put in the work, and that they're going to work really hard and make a beautiful note that can serve the provider that doesn't need any addendums or changes or anything like that.
- Student

So like if you see "Honors" does that give them a leg up or no?

- HM

I wouldn't say that, because every time that we do a round of interviews, we discuss the applicants as we saw them for that day. When it comes down to it I wouldn't say that if there was ever two equally qualified candidates and one went to the Honors College that we chose the one that went to the Honors College just because they went to the Honors College. The applications are pretty holistic. It definitely is a factor though, and we discuss that immediately after the interview. Typically when we’re reviewing the applicant we would say oh yeah you know that went well it's nice that they're in Honors College and they were able to talk about their experience and their sequence and all that stuff. And then later, once we discuss all the applicants as a whole, it usually doesn't come up as much there but when we're discussing the specific applicant we were talking about their experiences in the Honors College and seeing if that would benefit them as a medical scribe in the clinical setting.

- Student

Have you noticed Honors students being more able to communicate or more socially awkward?

- HM

I'd say it's a mix and they certainly come well prepared for the interview. They tend to have really good resumes that are like well formatted. Personally for me, it's what's on your resume that's important. But the appearance of the resume is like really big for me because if it's just formatted poorly I'm not really interested in what's on there. And you know Honors kids, they all feel they have a little bit of help when it comes to preparing a resume and making it look good. They all are very professional. There have been a couple of people who showed up to the interview and you know they're not dressed appropriately for an interview. But there's never been an issue with Honors kids. So they prepare good resumes and they always look professional. But some of them do tend to be the more introverted people who do have like great GPAs. They have a little bit more of a hard time communicating. And that's kind of tough because it's like well on paper you're a great applicant, but I don't think that you would perform well in this setting because people who are little neurotic can get overwhelmed quickly. It's not exactly the place for them because you need to be able to be chill and calm when you're 15 notes behind and there's 30 people in the waiting room and you're also working the trauma bay with the floating physician. You're not sitting down and you're having to type with one hand. So
yeah I'd say I'd say it's a 50/50 thing. But you know they do come prepared to the interview.

- Student

Where did you go to college and how do you think that they prepare you for post graduation?

- HM

I went to Grand Valley. I had a double major Biomedical sciences and Allied Health Sciences and a minor in environmental studies but that was just for fun. You can relate all that stuff to medicine, but of my two majors, biomedical sciences is more the hard sciences of medicine like biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, pathophys is all that kind of stuff. Whereas Allied Health Sciences, while they did have science classes, they were the easy versions of the biomed science classes. They took organic and biochemistry together in one semester instead of having like two years of their anatomy and physiology classes. Makes them a little bit more superficial. But the classes that interested me in that area of study were healthcare like Information Management healthcare and overall management. I took a class on being a healthcare manager. Now that I am a health care manager I can utilize the stuff that I learned in that course. Also like a course on health insurance because it's stupid and it doesn't make any sense to anybody because it's a broken system and just health care structure in general was good to know. And when you can take that stuff and combine it with a clinical setting it makes you a much more efficient person. So what I got out of my undergraduate experience was a very well rounded, applicable, and comprehensive education that allows me to function well in the setting because I'm not unfamiliar with you know insurance billing standards and healthcare management techniques. And I also know a crazy amount of anatomy and physiology and stuff that directly applies to the emergency department in the clinical setting. But I chose that. I've made the most out of my undergrad and I chose to do that as opposed to just kind of like floating through it. And taking the bare minimum amount of classes. I wanted to fill all my stuff with stuff that I was interested in. And things that would ultimately help familiarize me with the healthcare landscape. It is complicated. It's bloated and complex and kind of difficult to understand and you know people can have a good understanding of clinical medicine and the hard sciences behind it. But if you toss them into the American healthcare system, they don't know how Medicaid works. That makes them inefficient and health care prevents them from providing the best care possible.

- Student

Did you ever utilize the Career Service Center?
Yeah. But for people in medicine it's a little different. Specifically like physician wise. So we don't really need to worry about finding a job because you're going to get a job whether you like it or not. For us, we prepare for graduate school interviews. It's very different from a job interview: not only the format of the interview but the content of the interview. So the Career Center helped me with more of the traditional standards of interviewing. They evaluated my suit to make sure that it was appropriate. They taught me like basic things that I needed to know like when I sit down unbutton my bottom button - no top button because apparently you never button the bottom button. That's a thing I learned which was nice. Let's see. They give me a padfolio which is like a little padded thing that you write stuff down in and I was going to be walking around all day during interview day with just a folder full of my random stuff and it just looked trashy. They taught me those kinds of specific things but things that they kind of lacked was medical school interviewing stuff because yeah, you don't sit down with your future manager one on one. They do what's called the multiple mini interview where you go and you stand in front of a door and you get like one minute to read the scenario and then after that one minute you enter the door and then you're thrown into the scenario. And it could be an abundance of things. You could be interacting with an actor. You could be given a prompt and you have to state your opinion about the prompt and defend it and then answer follow up questions from the evaluator. You could be playing a game with another applicant, you know somebody else who's interviewing. You could be rating yourself on different things. It's weird. It's like speed dating for medical school and the questions aren't related to medicine. Whereas questions that you're asked at a job interview are most likely related to the job; they are related to your qualities and skills. So you get one minute to read this thing and then you go in and then you have eight minutes to perform it. And then after that you walk out the door you have know 30 seconds to walk to the next door and then one minute it starts on the next door and you've got ten of these and it's exhausting. It's a lot of work. But you know there's ethical questions. You know like this is this is the situation. How do you deal with that? And they're very ethically charged whether it be like race relations or socioeconomic conditions that you have to deal with. They're more evaluating you as an overall person and if you can think on your feet because you have to make a lot of quick decisions in medicine and you have to have a good rationale behind it. Also if you are consistent with the ethical standards that they're trying to convey. So there's that and then they'll usually combine that with a one on one interview with either a medical student or a faculty or something like that. And they just ask you questions about your application essentially and see if you can expand on that if you can talk about it. If you are truly passionate about it. I could see how that would be similar to like a normal job interview. But I feel like a normal job interview they'd ask more questions. Less about like your resume. Whereas this one's like more solely based on your on your application, and them trying to
find out more because if you did research just to put it in on your application and you're not like charged up about it. And they'll tell you during the interview. That's kind of a red flag for them.

- Student

OK. I’m going I read out the list of career services and I just want you to tell me which ones you think were or are most important when you're transitioning out of college for the Careers Center to offer. One is provide the latest career assessment (this is all from Career Center), providing job market trend information, providing opportunity and opportunities to develop professional knowledge and skills. Opportunities for on-site job training. Helping sharpen resumes and job searching skills, help sharpen Job interview skills. Hold job fairs and expositions.

- HM

The job searching and resume those are big ones. Because from an employer standpoint that's one of the first things we see about you. And if it's if trash, that is not good. And what I mean by not good, I mean it's formatted poorly. It just is disorganized and there is completely irrelevant stuff on there. Chances are that's not going to fare well for you. We guarantee an interview. Yeah in other places, I'm sure that they'll look at a bad resume and just throw it in the garbage and not call you back. So there's that and job searching. I feel like a lot of my friends that are in their undergrad still are asking me about how to find a job and how to do this type of thing. They seem to be pretty unaware of the resources that are out there for them and the opportunities. So I feel like basic knowledge on how to find a job and how to apprehend a job are important. Interview skills are obviously important because that's how you actually get the job. That's your first impression with the employer. Job fairs are definitely nice because it shows what's out there and the ones that are bigger that hire people on the spot. You know those are very useful too. And it gives employers an opportunity to get involved in the community to offer jobs to people right in front of them. And to make the initial connection with people. Because everything's online now. For you to be able to sit in front of somebody and explain the job and the position, it's much nicer than having to wait until an interview for instance, and then that way there's no surprises. But offering job shadowing experiences and stuff like that, that's also useful. Yeah I think that those are the big ones. I would say that the other stuff isn't useful but those are. Probably the top ones in my opinion.

- Student
Are there any other questions I didn't ask today that you think would be valuable in helping my research? If you want me to remind you. Our research statement is better preparing Honors students for post graduation life.

- HM

Maybe like what the Honors College could do specifically to improve student's chances of employment postgrad. That would be a useful question. And the issue is I'm not entirely 100% familiar with the with the curriculum and the resources that Honors students have at their disposal. I'm not really sure what I would say that hasn’t already been covered because I mean that I know that they have the regular resources that are available to students you know at great value like the Career Center and stuff like that. But I think probably making sure that they're well-connected with their faculty which I'm sure they are because it seems like a pretty tight knit group over there. And for them to be able to get to a letter of recommendation easily and to kind of build those relationships with the faculty I think that that's useful. It was a big thing for me for graduate school and my job as a medical scribe because I needed letters of recommendation. Other than office hours, general curriculum students don't have like a whole lot of opportunity to mingle with their professors and I feel like the Honors College is small enough that they could create an opportunity for students to do that. And I think that it would benefit them overall because you know the faculty know a lot of people and they can make a lot of connections and get you somewhere- that's only if you get to know them and they're confident in your in your competency as somebody who's ready and willing to work.

- Student

Do you have any suggestions or other contacts that could provide quality insight to this issue? Like on campus or off campus.

- HM

I mean if the Career Center is not already involved in this subject, they would be pretty useful. Advising offices because in my experience, and this just goes for the premed kids and from my personal experience, they are who are steering most people in our direction. So I feel like they can do that in any area of study and promote certain areas of work and job opportunities. Because that's how we're getting most people. We're like, “oh how did you hear about the Scribe Academy?” and they're like oh my advisor told me. So like 90 percent of our people are coming from is advising centers. And they know probably a lot of statistics about what students go where and how they're getting there. So I feel like they would be pretty useful office to help with this subject.
Stakeholder response to “What is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

“What do you think the Honors College could do specifically to help students?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, phone call or email is a good way to contact them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• CLAS advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Career Center –“if not already contacted”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Talk to hiring managers in different fields</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DIALOGUE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Estimated Age: ___20-30 ____ 30-40 ___40-50  x 50+ |

| Gender: Female |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The primary goal of this opportunity was to speak with upper level faculty to get their advice on how to help Honors students for life in the professional world. We gained a lot of insights and information, as the person we spoke with was previously a professor, advisor, and much more during her time with Grand Valley.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Conducting this work reflects my team problem statement, because we are gaining feedback from upper level faculty in order to help Honors students better prepare for post-graduation. We are using the resources through Grand Valley to help the Honors College perform better and act as an aid to students, especially during Honors student’s senior year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Research:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Speaking with the upper level faculty member truly gave us a lot of insight as to what we can do to help the students in the Honors program. The person we interviewed would meet with students to help them figure out their plans for post-graduation and even helped one particular Honors student get an internship that eventually turned into her career. This said faculty member has assisted students in their path to graduate school as well, by using her resources (books, online materials, etc.). She really emphasized utilizing the Career Center for those who are unsure of their plans for life after graduation. This person made recommendations to students and created reference letters to help students with their journey. We really need to learn how to market these useful sources better for the student’s sake. It may also be beneficial to have advisors help students determine what is truly important to them in life. What do they need to live comfortably?
Important insights:

● We need to make sure more people are familiar with the Honors College.
● Students need to be promoting their skill sets during interviews with employers. (Team learning, project based curricular, communication, etc.)
● For projects, make sure the projects being done in Honors is relevant to the student’s interest and major. The projects should be showcased during interviews, because oftentimes, this is what sets students apart from Non-Honors students.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question 1: What are your roles and responsibilities within the Brooks College?

Answer: Basically, I do whatever Dean Hiskes doesn't have time to do. I am very involved with curriculum. I am involved with everything except for personnel and budget; I do not do anything under those. I am very involved with curriculum, both development, and approval, scheduling, strategic planning, assessment.

Question 2: How involved are you with the Honors College?

Answer: Not very involved. I would like to be more involved. But the Honors College Director, Rogers Gilles reports directly to Dean Hiskes. Therefore, I am only privy to the discussions that need a broader view. So I'm not involved in the Honors College very much.

Question 3: You do advising, what are the main concerns of students coming in? How many students are Honors students?

Answer: I do advise them. I did more of it when I was a regular faculty member. In Brooks College, I don't really do that much advising, but I do deal with student concerns. So their main concerns are either concerns about faculty, course content, being treated fairly. That sort of thing. So I don't consider that advising, you know. I consider that dealing with student concerns. So my advising work was mostly in my physics department, which is my academic home, and there everything from helping students pick the right classes to take to helping them get jobs. You know, helping them choose graduate schools. I would say probably maybe 50 percent. A good number of students who I have worked with in the past are Honor students, because most physics majors do qualify for Honors. It is just a matter if they want to do it or not.
Follow up: You mentioned you have helped students get jobs in the past. How did you go about that?

Answer: Well I made recommendations to them where they might look. And I wrote reference letters for them. The same is with graduate schools; I would talk to the student and find out what they are interested in. Well, I usually know them well enough to know what they were interested in. If I did not know, like I have a student meeting with me this week to go to graduate school so that conversation will begin with “What are you interested in.” That will help me decide what school they might want to look out at. If I do not know the exact field they’re interested in, then I know the research to point them to. There is a big book for physics students called Handbook of Physics and Astronomy Graduate Schools put out by AARP American Institute of Physics. So it is a big resource and it tells, every two pages, is a different school. It will tell you what programs they specialize in and how many faculty they have in the different subspecialties. Depending on what the students are interested in, I might have some input or it might not have any input if they're interested in a field that I do not know much about.

Question 4: Do most Honors students have a plan for post-graduation? What do those plans consist of?

Answer: Yeah, I think mostly they do. The three main categories that I have advised were for people going to graduate school, people either in physics or in other fields. We do have some physics majors. For example, because my field is acoustics, I have had the distinction of advising students who are double majors in physics and music. I have probably had five of those students over my career, which is not a lot because there is not a lot of physics majors. Still it is a high percentage. Almost every student who has a double major in physics and music has me as their advisor, because it is in my field and they do research with me and all of that. So one of those students went on into music theory, for example, and other students go into engineering for graduate school or something like that. But anyway, I'm getting ahead of myself. The three areas that physics majors usually go into are graduate school, high school teaching, or industry. For example, they could have gotten an engineering degree to get the job, but the badge of a physics degree is they would be promoted more quickly, because they have a broader base of knowledge. So yeah those three areas are common for students.

Question 5: What do you think sets Grand Valley Honors College apart from other Honors Colleges?
Answer: I do not know, because I’m not very familiar with it. I am not very familiar with Grand Valley’s Honors College, nor am I very familiar with Honors colleges at other places. My only knowledge of Honors College is when my daughter was interviewing for school. She was a good student, so she often was interviewing for Honors colleges, but she ended up deciding not to go that route. She went to DePaul, where she majored in American studies and minored in community service. So that did not fit with the Honors College at DePaul.

Question 6: Can you tell us about a memorable experience you have had with an Honors student?

Answer: I had a student who is now working in a Steelcase. She was an Honors student. Memorable experiences were many, because I was her research adviser for over two and a half years. She did research with me. I also attended many of her music performances, because she was a double major in physics in music. Getting her that internship with memorable. I have visited her at Steelcase, which was also memorable.

Question 7: How do you believe we can better prepare Honors College students for post-graduation?

Answer: So one thing is to have project based learning and I know that's part of all the Honors revisions that are ongoing. I really feel like problem based learning is very crucial for Honors students that would set them apart from the run of the mill education. For example, this very project that you are involved in. The second piece is being able to articulate to potential employers or potential graduate schools your skill set. Not just to say you did this project. Honors students should explain what you learn from that project and what skills you acquired from that project. So I think that is the main thing to be able to articulate the skills that you have gained from your Honors experience. I know that you people are getting good skills all the time, but some students do not manage to communicate very clearly in a way that makes sense. Just like I have helped students with the graduate school applications and they say “well I was in the Honors College” and that is all they say. This doesn't mean much. Honors programs are so varied. I had tried to guide my advisees to do is reframe that. What skills did you gain from this project? So I just really believe that that is the most crucial thing that Honors students can do is, I was going to say promote themselves, but I think that has a negative connotation. I guess just articulate your skill set that you have acquired from your various projects. For one thing do projects, not all students do projects. Not all Honor students currently have to do projects. During senior year, Honors students do an Honors Senior project that can be anything from a very low level to almost a graduate thesis. So it is a wide variety. I think do a significant project
that's number one. Number two is to articulate the skills that you have gained from that project. Not just that you did this project, but what skills did you gain?

Question 8: If I was in a job interview and I was asked what it meant to be in the Honors College, what do you think I should tell them?

Answer: Again just the skills that you learned about problem solving, by solving this particular problem, and you learned about team working by working on this particular team. You have transferable skills and that is what employers are looking for. You learned about intercultural competency by having this particular experience. It doesn't have to be and it shouldn't be all coursework.

Question 9: From your experience, how would you describe the characteristics of Honors College students? What sets them apart from non-Honors students?

Answer: Oh, they are always very bright. They are generally hardworking. They are often from privileged backgrounds. So I think that is part of not knowing that they need to articulate their skills, because they come from privileged backgrounds and they're just used to saying something and have people applaud or metaphorically applaud. So I think that is probably a blessing to come from a privileged background, but it is also a little bit of a curse. Then they don't get to practice in articulating their skill set that people from other backgrounds may automatically get.

Honestly, in my experience as a physics professor, I did not see that the Honors students were markedly different from the Non-Honors students. As I said, most physics students could get into Honors if they wanted to. So I think in the past, the Honors program has not been comprehensive and intentional. I am very happy that they're revising that program. In the past, it has not been so intentional about project based learning and that sort of thing. So yeah, maybe the diversity of interest. They have a much stronger humanities background than most. I wouldn't say all, because I have had some very strong students who were humanities expertise that were not Honors students. They, in general, have a much stronger humanities background than most Non-Honors science majors. From that, Honors students have a much broader view.

Question 10: How can Honor’s College students use the skills they have learned in the professional world?

Answer: They would use them all the time. Appreciation of diversity that is. I do not know if that is a current skill that most students have now, but it should be. I firmly believe it should be. Everybody you interact with the rest of your life is not going to be identical. Therefore, that needs to be front and center in Honors student’s awareness. Honors students should be accepting and embracing diversity. I have taught one
Honors class at my time here through Grand Valley. I know that there's a lot of team based learning. So at most companies that you work for, you're going to be working in teams. So I think that is a skill that could be promoted. Intellectual skills of course should be promoted. I think weak area might be practical skills. So I know you didn’t ask about weak areas, maybe that's a future question, but the practical skills are equally important to them. Especially relating your educational experiences to the practical skills. Things like being able to get along with people or being able to talk to anybody no matter who they are. Know that that's a skill that is important and I think should come from an Honors education, but it may not always.

Question 11: What kind of advice do you have for Honors students that aren’t sure what they want to do after graduation? (For Seniors specifically)

Answer: I would say explore. It depends on the student, though. There is no one answer for everybody. If the student knows they are happy with the thing that they majored in and they know they want to continue in that field. I would say explore ways to continue in that field. Part of that might be going to the Career Center. Just talking to the Career Center would be a good start. Before you graduate, I think an internship would be essential or something like that. Internships can often turn into jobs. It has just happened for many students. So if they're senior, it is probably a little too late to take the Aptitude Test over the Career Center, but maybe not. I would recommend that they go to the Career Center. I would also just recommend that they sit down with me or somebody else and just talk through what their interests really are and where they see their lives going. It depends on how much money they need to make it. Different careers pay different amounts of money. My son doesn't make a lot of money, but he's very happy doing what he's doing. So he doesn't need a lot of money. He's a ballet dancer. My daughter needs a little bit more money to function in the world. It’s just different people have different personalities and desires. So how much money a certain career makes may be an important factor or it may not be. I would encourage every human being to take a hard stock of what is most important in life. I really believe that vocation, rather than job. And by that I mean “for your deep gladness meets the world's deep need”. That's what I would consider a vocation. That's not my own quote. And so I would encourage everybody, not just Honors students, but every single student at Grand Valley or elsewhere to really think deeply about what they need to be happy. It's really a conversation, so I would need to ask questions and get answers to continue that conversation. There are certainly resources are available at the Career Center, advisors, etc. If they are already a senior, it might be a little late to be thinking of an internship, but maybe not. Perhaps they could get an internship during summer and then get a job in the fall. Maybe taking a gap year or volunteering would be beneficial if they are not
sure what they want to do. Americorps, Peace Corps, etc. may be areas the student would be interested in. This would really broaden their horizons.

**Question 12: What services or events through GVSU do you believe truly help students?**

**Answer:** Well the Career Center is good. I think many of the co-curricular events are really beneficial. I taught Lib 100 for almost a decade and a required part of that course is to go to 3-5 co-curricular events. I always push the envelope and make my students go to five co-curricular events during the course of the semester. It's available to everybody. If you’re not required to go, then many students won't go. That's why I required five events, but by reporting standards, many other professions require three events. I think all that social justice centers like the Women's Center, the LGBTQ Center, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, etc. are helpful for students. I think they are hugely beneficial. The food pantry can help, but probably not for Honors students. As I said Honors students mostly come from privileged backgrounds. There may be a few Honors student that are not from a privileged background. These are the things that I tend to give my money to at Grande Valley. Study abroad is also very useful. I've never studied abroad as a student, but I did live abroad for a couple of years after I graduated. I didn't know study abroad was possible, because I grew up first generation. I thought it was expensive to study abroad. So I never stayed abroad, but I did live abroad for a couple of years and that really transformed my whole outlook on life and the world. So I would say studying abroad is very transformational. If you cannot study abroad for health reasons or family reasons or whatever then study away. Anything that gets you out of your comfort zone is beneficial. It is beneficial to be uncomfortable, because you are expanding your boundaries of who you were before.

That was my last question. Thank you so much for interviewing with us and helping us with our project. We really appreciate it.

**Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”**

**What are some of the weaknesses that Honors students struggle with?**

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

Yes, she did agree to be contacted again in the future. She said email would be the appropriate form of contact.
Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student
- Honors College Director
- Director of Undergraduate Research

Possible next-steps:

- Interview Director of Undergraduate Research to see how she could further assist in our research
- Add the question regarding weaknesses
- Get more feedback on our interview questions
**Stakeholder Group: Honors Senior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Age:</th>
<th>18-30</th>
<th>30-40</th>
<th>40-50</th>
<th>50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The interviewee only has one semester left until she graduates from the Honors College. Seeing as she has minimal time left as an undergraduate, interviewing her will expose her thoughts on whether or not she feels truly prepared.

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

Interviewing an Honors College Senior will give us insight on whether or not she has utilized career finding resources through the school within her time at GVSU.

**Summary of Research:**

The interviewee is a current senior studying clinical exercise science. She is planning to go to graduate school for Physician’s Assistant studies, and has been working at Spectrum Butterworth for a year to prepare for her professional life. She is a stellar student. She has taken full advantage of the resources GVSU provides for undergraduate students, such as the Writing Center, the Tutoring Center, and the Career Center. The interviewee stated specifically that she found the Career Center to be very helpful in creating her resume and cover letter(s). However, she believes Grand Valley State University could do more in assisting with Graduate School planning and applications. She was not sure if there are currently resources to assist with this process or if they simply weren’t advertised well.

**Important insights:**

- Believes GVSU needs to emphasize graduate school application process
- Emphasizes importance of Freshman Sequence and Junior Seminar covering Gen-Ed requirements
- Has taken full advantage of GVSU educational resources

### Dialogue Questions and Response:

“A lot of Honor’s College students have aspirations to go to graduate school after GVSU. I feel like a lot of the planning I have done for my graduate programs has been done on my own. I wish the Honors College provided more resources to assist with this process. There may be resources currently available that I just don’t know about, but these are not advertised well.”

### Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

The interviewee believed the interview questions were sufficient.

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

Yes, via iMessage to schedule in-person meeting.

### Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- GVSU Honors College made study abroad possible w/4 year graduation
- Senior has utilized resources but feels as if they are insufficient in respect to graduate school
- Freshman Sequence emphasized valuable critical thinking

### Possible next-steps:

- Better graduate school preparation
- Advertise educational resources better
- Emphasize 4-year graduation opportunities (study abroad, Honors College)
**Stakeholder Group: Honors Freshman**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Age:</th>
<th>X 18-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Gender:** Female

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of this opportunity was to see why an Honors freshman chose to be a part of the Honors College, as well as to see how their experience is living up to their expectations so far.

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

This allows us to get insights as to why people are deciding to apply to the Honors College before their freshman year, and in what ways the resources available to them can be used to help them advance in their education here at Grand Valley.

**Summary of Research:**

Starting right off in the response to my first question, my interviewee states that graduating with Honors “looks a lot better than not doing Honors.” At this point, at least, it seems she is more concerned with how Honors looks on a resume, rather than how it will set her apart in the interview process post-graduation. According to her responses, getting accepted into the Honors was a large factor for her choosing to come here. So much so that she may not have come to school here had she not gotten accepted. However, she did mention that the affordability and proximity to home were other important factors that contributed to her decision to go to GVSU.

**Important insights**

- Honors acceptance highly important to her decision to attend Grand Valley.
- Has used the Writing Center twice but believes it needs improvement
- Concerned about the credits she is getting from her sequence
Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question One: For what reasons did you choose to come to the Frederik Meijer Honors College?

Response: I was always a good student in high school, so I wanted to challenge myself, and further my academic career. I am interested in getting a Master’s [Degree], and hopefully will go to MSU or something, like a bigger D1 [Division One] school, and so if I graduate with Honors that looks a lot better than not doing Honors. I am a studious person, so I want to surround myself with people who also want to excel in life.

Question Two: What other colleges were you considering when deciding on attending a college?

Response: I looked at U of M, MSU, and here, and MSU and U of M were just way too expensive. This is a very affordable option, and it is close to home, yet it seems like its own little world, I guess. Like U of M and MSU, when I looked at them, you were just a number there, but here I know we are something bigger than ourselves, like the Laker Effect.

Question Three: Did your acceptance into the Honors College play a significant role in coming here, as opposed to going to MSU or U of M?

Response: If I wouldn’t have gotten into the Honors College I wouldn’t, probably not, have gone here. I’m not sure if I would’ve gone to MSU, but I probably would’ve looked at other places then. If I didn’t get into the Honors College here, then I probably wouldn’t have gotten into the MSU Honors College, but I still would’ve applied and tried to get in there. I wanted the nicer dorms as a bonus, and just the better education overall.

Question Four: Next question, what is your Freshman Sequence and what made you choose that one?

Response: My Freshman Sequence is Cultural Power and Inequality, which is interesting because I am the first student to ever take this course. This is being offered this year, like, this is the first year, so they’ve never run this before. I chose this one because it seemed really interesting, I was looking into Big History, too, but that one filled up really soon.

Oh, yeah, that’s what I had. I loved that class!

But the class just talks about, like, a lot of our current issues today are, like, racial discrimination, sexism, and with feminism emerging, and all this other stuff about
minorities now becoming a majority. This class discusses how America got that way, how can we change that, and how we need to not be blind to these issues. So I think that’s really interesting to talk about because this class basically addresses all the things that no one ever wants to address. Like, you don’t talk about religion, politics, and all that stuff, and this class is like, “yeah, we’re going to talk about all that.”

Yeah, that sounds interesting!

It’s really interesting!

Question Five: How do you feel your workload this year compared to that of your high school workload?

Response: It depends on the class. For my Sequence, my one Professor it is a very heavy workload, but I don’t think anything will compare to the workload of APUSH [Advanced Placement United States History]. So nothing has been that bad. But my other Professor, we literally don't have a grade entered in yet.

Question Six: Follow up question for that. Do you feel that your time in high school adequately prepared you for the curriculum of the Honors College?

Response: Because I took so many AP courses I feel very well prepared. It just taught me good study habits. If I was a kid that had never taken an AP class, I don't think I could handle it. It's not even about how hard it is, it's being able to manage your time. I know a lot of kids that just have been skipping classes and stuff.

Question Seven: Have you taken advantage of any academic resources such as the Career Center, the Writing Center, or any tutoring services?

Response: Yes, I've use the Writing Center a decent amount. I've already used it twice. So I guess that's not a lot, but I've only had one paper so far.

What made the Writing Center useful, and in what ways do you think it could be improved?

It was useful because you are talking to someone who is knowledgeable, like more than you are. It wasn't useful because the girl was not educated on it, because I was like, “I need help on ASA format,” and she said, “oh, I don’t know how to do that.” Then I had her go to look through grammatical errors, and she only found like three. And then when I had my professor read it today he said, “wow, this is a wreck.” I wish the lady would
have focused on my argument and not my grammatical errors. So I feel like they aren’t really focused that much. Maybe I just got a “bad” person. My first time going was really good, though.

Question Eight: At this moment in time have you declared a major? If yes, what has guided or influenced your choice in major? If no, is there a specific reason as to why you have not yet declared a major?

Response: Yes, I have declared business general, I believe is what I’m under right now. But I want to end up double majoring in marketing and management.

Question Nine: Last question. So far, what concerns do you have about your education as an Honors College student?

Response: A concern about my sequence is that my one teacher, we have our midterm in a week and I don’t even have my review guide, and I don’t even have a grade in that class yet. So, I don’t think that’s the fairest thing. Since it’s the first year of this class they don’t know what they’re doing together. What concerns me about Cultural Power and Inequality, which I’m in, is that it’s, like, one of three sequences that doesn’t cover an art credit. And so I feel like Grand Valley, knowing I didn’t come in with an art credit, should’ve put me in one [sequence that fulfills an art credit]. It’s weird how it’s set up.

That was the last question I had for you today. Thank you so much for your time! We’ll contact you if we need to know more.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

“I think you should have asked me, like, what are my favorite aspects of learning and living through the Honors College, and in what ways I think they could be made better.”

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

She has agreed to reconnect for further inquiry, if required. Preferred methods of contact are a text or email.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:
- Boyfriend
- Roommate
- Classmate

**Possible next-steps:**

- Analyze how this correlates to our problem statement
- Interview other Honors freshman to see if they share the same feelings
- Compare to other interviews to see how they differ
### DIALOGUE 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Honors College Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: ____ 18-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity: The primary goal of this interview was to gain the perspective of a FMHC freshman and search for similarities of feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement? Gaining the insight of multiple perspectives at different age groups can help us identify areas of improvement for future FMHC students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Research: As a FMHC freshman, this individual has not yet completed a semester in the FMHC. However, as of now, she feels fairly prepared for the curriculum, but would like to work on combating procrastination. As it is halfway through the semester, she is concerned that she took too much on, which could get in the way of a good GPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important insights:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Procrastination influences whether or not students utilize available resources to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- This individual chose their sequence based on what they are interested in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- GPA is viewed as an important indicator of success in college.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: Ok, So for what reasons did you choose to come to the Frederik Meijer Honors College?
A: I wanted to challenge myself academically and get my gen eds out of the way.

Q: Were there any other colleges were you considering when deciding on attending a college?
A: Valparaiso and Calvin College, but GVSU was always my first choice.

Q: What factors made you choose GVSU over the others? Did your acceptance into the Honors College play a significant role in this decision?
A: When I toured campus it just felt right. I loved the environment, class sizes, and opportunities Grand Valley could offer me. The Honors College acceptance made me more excited, but it did not sway my decision at all, because I was already set.

Q: What is your Freshman Sequence, and what made you choose that one?
A: I am currently taking American Civilization 02. I took APUSH [AP United States History] in high school and I’ve always enjoyed history. I chose 02 because I enjoy learning about the 1940s-1980s time periods.

Q: How do you feel your workload this year compares to that of your high school workload?
A: Hm, I have to try a lot harder to put aside time for my work. I’ve been struggling with procrastination and keeping track of what I have assigned for each class because the professors don’t tell you what you have each night. Also, exam reviews have so much information to go over and to memorize.

Q: Do you feel that your time in high school adequately prepared you for the curriculum of Frederik Meijer Honors College?
A: Yes, my high school taught me great writing techniques and helped me become more disciplined. Also, we went through dense lessons that prepared me for this.

Q: Have you taken advantage of any academic resources, such as the Career Center, the Writing Center, or any tutoring?
A: I have not yet, but I do plan on using the Writing Center soon.

Q: What has held you back from not using these resources yet?
A: My procrastination. I write papers quickly before they are due so I don’t have time to stop into the Writing Center.

Q: At this moment in time, have you declared a major? If not, is there a specific reason as to why you have not yet declared a major?
Answer: I am still undecided. I don’t know what my passion is yet, I know a lot of careers I don’t want to pursue, but I’m still searching for what I want to do with the rest of my life.

Q: So far, what concerns do you have about your education as an Honors College student?

A: I guess I’m concerned that I’ve taken on too much of a workload and that my procrastination will get in the way of getting a good GPA.

Conclusion - That was my last question. Thank you so much for your time! Are there any questions you have for me, or was there anything I did not ask you that you believe would be beneficial to our research? May we reach out to you again in the future if we have any further questions?

Nope! And yes for sure.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

“I think maybe asking what resources I could think of would help you especially since I don’t know them all.”

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?
Yes- texting.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:
- FMHC student who lives in Niemeyer
- FMHC freshman
- FMHC freshman

Possible next-steps:
- Investigating effective ways that the resources on campus can be advertised to students.
- Contacting the three connections provided.
- Adding a question like “what are the resources on campus that you are aware of?” to the dialogue scripts for FMHC Freshman and Current FMHC Student.
### DIALOGUE 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Parent of an Honors Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: ____ 18-30 ____ 30-40 ____X____40-50 ____ 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

To gain insight from the parent of an Honors Student. This insight will answer whether or not the parent(s) of the student had any influence on their decision to attend GVSU FMHC, as well as whether or not the parent(s) believe their child has any special counseling needs.

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

Our problem statement focuses on the special counseling needs of Honors Students, so gaining the insight from the person(s) who raised such a student is essential.

**Summary of Research:**

This particular parent of a student enrolled in FMHC believes that as a parent she had some influence on this choice, yet believes her daughter is also very personally motivated and academically driven on her own. She also believes that her daughter has specific counseling needs due to being an academically-inclined student. She believes it is difficult for her daughter to be personally satisfied with herself, despite the positive affirmation she receives from others. This parent believes this is due to not only the high expectations that have been placed on her, but her internal struggle with the pressure to be perfect. Ultimately, she believes her daughter has grown within the three years she has been enrolled in FMHC, stating that she has found more of a sense-of-self, and has gained knowledge on how to balance academics, social, and personal needs.

**Important insights:**

- The personal struggle of being “perfect”—personal satisfaction is difficult for Honors Students.
• Personal growth due to FMHC including sense-of-self and learning how to balance social, academic, and personal needs.
• Was not an Honors Student when attended college and does not believe it would have given her a “leg-up” in her professional career.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question 1: Did you have any influence on your daughter enrolling in the Grand Valley State University Honors College?

I would like to think that I have always pushed my daughter to reach her goals. Both her father and I definitely had an influence on her to be sure she made the choice to pursue and further her education beyond high school. My daughter is very academically driven on her own. She chose GVSU and we supported her decision. It has been a great fit for her as a stepping stone to her professional career. The academic success that she has achieved has roots in the fact that our family has always stressed the importance of education.

Question 2: Where did you go to college? Were you in the Honors College?

I went to college at Central Michigan University for both my Bachelor and Master’s degrees. I did not attend Honors College.

Question 3: Do you think being enrolled in the Honors College at your University would have given you a “leg up” in your professional life?

I do not think being enrolled in Honors College would have given me a “leg up”. I pursued a career in the educational field and ultimately became an administrator of education. In public education, the mandated license and degree is what initially qualifies you for a position. Beyond that, employers are looking for skill set, relatability, strong communication, leadership, and knowledge of the curriculum. I do not think being enrolled in Honor’s College would have prepared me more in my field. However, I do think that in other professional fields that it would definitely make a difference. It may have made a difference if I had gone into the private field of education rather than the public field.

Question 4: Do you think your daughter has “unique counseling needs” such as the pressure to be perfect or fearing failure? Why do you think this is?

I do think that my daughter has unique counseling needs. She puts a tremendous amount of pressure on herself to always be perfect in anything she pursues academically, appearance, and social situations. I believe she does fear failure and has high anxiety levels because of this fear. I think she is continuously in need of the positive approval of
others rather than being intrinsically proud of herself. When she meets a goal or finishes a project, or even looks perfect, it is never enough to satisfy her intrinsically. It’s as if she cannot be satiated. She is forever searching for more to fill the internal gap.

Question 4: How have you seen your daughter grow in the past three years she has attended Grand Valley State University?

I definitely have seen tremendous growth in my daughter. She has always been academically driven. I have noted that she has learned to balance her life over the past few years. A balance between academics, personal, and social life. She has matured and has truly started to find herself and what she wants in life. Throughout her years at GVSU she has tried some things only to learn what she didn’t like. Learning what fits and doesn’t fit.

Question 5: What attributes do you believe your daughter has (as an Honors Student) that sets her apart from regular college students?

Her drive to succeed with many “irons in the fire”. She can juggle many difficult tasks all at one time and do this with precision and success.

Question 6: Are there any questions that I didn’t ask today that you think would be valuable in helping my research?

How does being enrolled in Honors College prepare the student for issues outside the academic and professional world? Personal growth? Social growth? The unfair and unequal world we live in?

Question 7: Do you have any contacts that could provide quality insight to this issue?

No.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

How does being enrolled in Honors College prepare the student for issues outside the academic and professional world? Personal growth? Social growth? The unfair and unequal world we live in?

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

Yes, via phone call.
Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Students are able to succeed with many “irons in the fire”.
- Believes in succeeding due to “soft skills” such as strong communication, and leadership.
- How will the Honors College promote social growth?

Possible next-steps:

- Innovate social and personal growth programs into the “Honors Experience”.
- Relieve “pressure to be perfect” placed upon Honors Students.
- Improve emphasis on “soft skills”.
**Stakeholder Group: Current Honors Students**

**Estimated Age:** _X_ 18-30 ____ 30-40 ____40-50 ____ 50+

**Gender:** Female

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of interviewing a current Honors student is to better understand the experiences that Honors students are having right now. Honors students are our end users so it is essential that we empathize and better understand their needs. It is important to gain perspective from many Honors student so our insights are more likely to be representative of the population.

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

Currently, our team problem statement is “How can we be sure when each Honors student graduates, they are fully equipped to embark on their future?” Specifically, we are narrowing in on what unique needs Honors students have and what barriers they face to seeking advising and utilizing GVSU’s on-campus resources. During this interview, I was most interested in which resources the student has utilized and what they know about the Career Center.

**Summary of Research:**

This student is in their third year at Grand Valley and they are currently studying abroad in the Netherlands. She joined the Honors College because it was faster for her to get done with her General Education requirements that way and that is what she feels is the biggest benefit of being an Honors student. She has had an overall very positive experience with Honors classes because she enjoyed how they challenged her perspective and how she got to know her professors well. She believes that independent learning and completing the Honors senior project will be most beneficial for graduate school. She has utilized Honors advising and found it very helpful.

**Important insights:**
• This Honors student had never been to the Career Center because she believed she did not need it or would not benefit from it. She believed that they only helped students with deciding a major.
• The Honors student feels that being able to learn independently is an important skill for graduate school that the Honors College should emphasize more.
• Her favorite part of being in the Honors College is having her perspective broadened, being challenged, and getting to know her Honors professors.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Background Questions:

Question One: How many years have you been at Grand Valley? What is your major?

Answer: This is my third year at Grand Valley, however, I am currently studying abroad in the Netherlands. I am double majoring in psychology and behavioral neuroscience.

Question Two: Why did you choose to be in the Honors College?

Answer: That is a good question. I chose to be in the Honors College because it is good to condense Gen Eds and graduate faster and get credits faster and it looks good on your degree. I also wanted a more challenging curriculum.

Main Questions:

Question One: What are your goals after graduation? What are you doing now to reach those goals?

Answer: Well, first, I want to graduate! I want to go to a master’s program studying clinical psychology and become a clinical psychologist. So I am taking classes related to that. Also studying abroad in a good school in the Netherlands for psychology. Taking classes that will challenge and prepare me as much as possible.

Question Two: How has the Honors College helped you define or prepare to advance these goals? How do you think it will help you with these goals in the future?

Answer: I think my freshman sequence “Theory and Practice of Rights” and I think that class is a really good thing to do because it was more challenging than any of the other classes that I’ve taken. It was more open and I learned many important things about the world that I would not have learned with other classes. It opened my mindset and had a positive influence on me. It was discussion-based so I was able to make friends and
contacts like my professor, who was super nice and helpful and I’ve talked to them about my future and they’ve been really helpful with that. The senior project I think will give me a lot of experience with that kind of thing, like doing my own research. It will better prepare me for what I am going to see in my master’s program I think.

Question Three: What do you think sets Honors students apart from non-Honors students? How is their experience different?

Answer: I think there’s more expected of you and you have to be more independent as far as the classes you’re taking so I think it sets you apart in that way, that you’re able to do things by yourself and you’re not guided as much.

Question Four: By applying to the Honors College, what sort of educational benefits did you expect to receive as part of the program? How has your experience so far lived up to these expectations?

Answer: I did not really have many expectations, I just knew I would not have to spend as much time on gen eds so I’ve been able to spend more time on my own interests. It’s been nice being able to focus on what I want to focus on I guess. The freshman sequence I was very happy with because it was nice that it was different from all of the other classes that I’ve taken. So a little diversity in my schedule was nice too.

Question Five: What resources have you utilized in your time at Grand Valley and in what ways have they better prepared you for post-graduation?

Answer: I definitely talked to my Honors prof a lot; she is also my Honors advisor I think? I guess the advising in the Honors College. They helped a lot with organizing what I want to do and how I go about obtaining my goals. The people in the Study Abroad Office helped me a lot to decide where I’m going to go and what I’m going to do. I utilized the counseling office but they suck so I’m not going to talk about that. The advisors in the Study Abroad Office and the Honors College are both people that I talk to and are very helpful.

Question Six: What do you know about the GVSU Career Center and the services it offers?

Answer: I don’t know anything about the Career Center. I don’t think I’ve ever been in there. I don’t think I’ve ever needed it before. I don’t think I’ve ever needed anything in that area because I know what I’m doing.

I actually learned recently that they do more than just help you pick your major. They can also help you with your resume, interview skills, and connect you with internships.
Oh… really? I was just under the impression was that it was just to help you figure out what to do. I didn’t know they did resume building and stuff.

Question Seven: In your time at the Honors College so far, what is the most beneficial experience you have had or what is the biggest benefit you have experienced?

Answer: I think that it would be like, the influence that I have gotten from my professors because, I don’t know, I just feel like I’ve learned a lot more perspectives that I didn’t know before. Especially that oil painting class I took was awesome. Also in my freshman sequence, my relationship with my professor was really good and it helped a lot. So yeah, my relationships with professors and what I have learned from them has been the most beneficial and I would not have had that if I weren’t in the Honors College.

Question Eight: What do you think the Honors College can do to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?

Answer: The premise of the Honors College is to--at least what I feel like it should be is to allow you to be more independent in your learning because that’s what’s going to be expected of you in your graduate programs and you’re not going to be guided as much. You’re expected to do a lot of reading and learning on your own. If they had more of an independent focus and have a little bit less of a rigid curriculum, too. Many of the professors in the Honors College have very structured curriculums and you need to do this, this, this, and this. I guess they should focus more on independent learning and less on a rigid curriculum. We’re kind of spoon fed a lot and that’s not how life is.

Question Nine: Were there any questions that you think we should have asked you?

Answer: Uh… no, I don’t think so. I can’t really think of anything else.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

Did not think of any.

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

Yes, by phone.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:
- More current Honors students
- Honors professor
- Honors advising

**Possible next-steps:**

- Interview more current Honors students to discover which resources they utilize and why they do not utilize others.
- Learn more about Honors Advising and what sets them apart from Career Center advising.
- Research what Career Services other universities have to offer.
**Stakeholder Group:** Honors Graduate

**Estimated Age:**
- X 18-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50+

**Gender:** Female

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**
The primary goal of this opportunity is to gather information about what the graduate of the Honors College thought were strong points of the program, as well as where the program could improve. Being someone who went from start to finish in the Honors Program, they would know well what has worked for them and where they felt unprepared for life after graduation.

**How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**
This interview allowed me to find out what aspects of the Honors College have been beneficial, the highlights of the unique curriculum, as well as the downfalls that the graduate feels could be addressed to better prepare future graduates. This will help to emphasize how the Honors College can be used to separate graduates of our program from their competition.

**Summary of Research:**
The graduate had plenty of good things to say about the program. She says she was grateful for being a part of the Honors College, and in many ways, it changed her life. It was her first time being on her own, so it taught her a lot about responsibility, such as cooking meals for herself for the first time. Furthermore, she really liked the creative side of the Honors College, as well as the emphasis the curriculum placed on writing and critical thinking skills. That being said, she felt that the Honors College (really, the university in general) could have done more to teach her about personal finance and management of money.

**Important insights:**
- Loved the creativity allowed in the Honors Senior Thesis
• Found a lot about herself as a result of being enrolled in Honors
• Felt that after she graduated, she was still unprepared for managing her finances

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question One: Tell me about what you do now in your occupation?
Response: I am a photographer. I started my own business six years ago. I was in college at the time and my business has grown greatly! Currently, I photograph weddings, events, retreats, portraits. I also am a creative in the art scene in Grand Rapids and beyond, so I am often seen at exhibitions and other gatherings. It's hard to describe my occupation, [interviewer name], because I am a, like I'm an entrepreneur. So, I come from a family of entrepreneurs and I'm also an entrepreneur in my mother's business she runs The Remedy House as a natural health practitioner, and as a family we put all the pieces together for her business. So, I am the marketer, I am the website presence, logistics coordinator.

Wow, that’s a lot that you’ve got to do! Keeps you busy, though, right?
Yeah! So that basically sums it up.

Question Two: What degree(s) did you graduate with, and did you graduate on time?
Response: I believe “on time” is a, how do you put it, relative answer. I went to school from 2010 to 2015, and graduated with photography, Chinese language in the Honors program.

That was a double major then?
Chinese language was a minor.

Question Three: What was your experience with the Honors College at GVSU like? What did you enjoy? What did you dislike?
Response: When I think back to my time in the Honors College, I am really grateful for my experience. I began in the East Asian civilization course Curtis Smith and Craig Benjamin, and that course changed the course of my life. I was studying Spanish at the time, and when I took that course my eyes opened to the world and I was so drawn to Chinese culture that I jumped at the opportunity to do this study abroad program with Curtis Smith in Taiwan. Which, in turn, being in Taiwan led me to my photography. I was photographing the whole time while I was there, and I came back with a whole portfolio and decided to pursue the photography program. So beginning in the Honors Program was just, it was so awesome! I really loved the dorm environment. But being
able to have a kitchen also change my life. Being in the South end of campus I was near the Sustainable Agriculture Project, and so during my freshman year I started volunteering at the SAP. I started bringing my vegetables home, and cooked them, and again it changed the course of my life. I was used to eating boxed foods, not cooking for myself, so having my own kitchen as a freshman taught me responsibility. It gave me an excitement to have control over that part of my life. So I think that’s an overlooked feature of the Honors College, but it’s truly a huge plus! I didn’t have to be on a meal plan, which allowed me to… like, it made it much more affordable for me. So, that’s the recap of my first year. And I remember all of my classes really well. I really liked my Society and Self class, which was co-taught by two professors I don’t believe teach there anymore because they were really old. But that class was, like, sociology and psychology side-by-side. Which, before, I had never seen put side-by-side, and so it was just really awesome to just be reading about the same topics from two different perspectives, with two different teachers. That class taught me humility. I’m that person who raised my hand at every single question, and one time, the teacher was like “I’m not going to call on you because it’s time to hear from somebody else.” And so, anyway, I’ll always remember that. It was a really important part of my college career. I took Intercultural Communication with Professor McGall; [I] loved it, loved it, loved it! The fact that a class was taught like that… I don’t know, it was just so good. I guess I can’t remember any specifics from that. But other highlights were being able to choose what my Senior Thesis was, and being able to bridge… the Honors College Senior Thesis - the open-endedness of it - allowed me to bridge everything together. So I went to China for my Honors Senior Thesis, and photographed. I was able to show a gallery, like an exhibition, of my work. It was a huge confidence builder, my first full gallery of just my work, with over forty images. So that open-endedness allowed me to be extremely creative and innovative, on my own time, in my own way. I know a lot of others found it really difficult, they took much more conventional routes, like writing papers, but I loved that - at the time, Dr. J - was so open and willing to consider any idea. Actually, before I pitched the China idea, I didn’t know if I was going to be able to pull it off, so I pitched him an idea of road-tripping around the U.S. and doing a photoshoot based on that. I had a few cited works that I was going to emulate, or research, along the way and he was a-okay with it. I thought it was so fun! You literally can do anything. I was able to be myself, and I loved that.

Question Four: How do you think being in the Honors College prepared you for post-graduation life?

Response: I found that the work, there was more work involved in the Honors College classes, but what I liked about it was that it taught a lot of multitasking, and just like a
high-caliber of work that you had to turn out. So there's that. How it prepare me for life...
I think the autonomy of the program, at least in my classes, there was so much encouraged creativity, and encouraged non-traditional methods of output that I was able to translate that later in life, and just keep that “creative wheel” spinning. Maybe it’s me, maybe it’s the program. I don’t know.

It could be a good mix of both!

Other ways that it prepared me for life was it… I felt a lot of the office at the Honors College was really helpful. I just felt that the office was always helpful for anything I ever needed. Quick, responsive. That didn’t prepare me for the future, though, I guess.

Maybe it did in ways you don’t realize!

Sorry I am so disjointed, it has just been a while since I have thought about my experience. The only other thoughts on that are, I won a lot of scholarships and I think part of that was because of my writing ability that I cultivated throughout the Honors program. Like, every single class required you to write papers on your opinions, and your thoughts and all those things. I won over fifteen grand [$15,000] in scholarships that I just applied for through writing.

They do put a big focus on writing, and critical-thinking ability.

Yes, I would say both of those things helped me later on in life.

Question Five: What ways do you wish the Honors College had done more for you, in terms of post-graduate preparation?

Response: Well, the biggest downfall of the Honors College, and just the University structure, is the lack of emphasis on finances and home skills that I think are essential to functioning. For example, understanding how to do your taxes when you get a scholarship. I mean, that’s something. Understanding how to do taxes in general. But, when I got a scholarship in college, they didn’t tell me that it was taxable. I had no idea how to go about that; I think that that was a failure. I think financial well-being needs to be addressed if you’re going to put students in sixty-thousand-dollar debt.
Well said. That’s actually something that’s been brought up in our class is having more classes or opportunities to teach students about taxes and finances, some of the real world things.

And that’s not a “fluff” topic. People think it’s “fluff” and I would almost recommend that everyone take a business class, but it needs to be a cultivated business class about how to fine-tune your own skills within the business of your life. Which includes taxes, managing your checkbook, managing what money is going out every month, what money is going in every month. These are just really simple things that no one ever teaches you, unless you ask your parents. And what if your parents weren’t good at it?

Then you’re out of luck.

Exactly, and then you’re in the poverty cycle. I think that should be a part of it for sure, because that’s something my photography program failed on as well. My photography program was very communication and arts based, with no emphasis on business. The only business I learned was when I put myself out there, and went to photography conferences, and I went to my professors individually and asked questions. I drafted contracts and had them looked over. There was no one that taught me how to do that, and therefore a lot of people in my program failed and did not pursue photography after graduation. You can’t just be a photographer, you’ve gotta have the business side of things, and they don’t teach that currently.

Question Six: How do you feel now that you are out of school? Good, bad, unprepared?

Response: “I [expletive] love it! I appreciate all the homework I had to do in college, but not having homework to do has opened up so much space and capacity for other types of “home work,” which includes developing my personal life, developing my house, as well as developing my own business.

Which are all very important postgraduate things.

Yeah. I personally did not feel lost after college, however directly after college I went into AmeriCorps, which deferred my student loans and taught me a lot of financial management tips. We would, literally, have these workshops where we would all come together and just learn how to be on a team in a business. It was just, like, really specific
presentations about real-life work experience. So, anyway, directly after college I went into a two-year AmeriCorps program that really continued to shape my business and financial skills, and sharpen those. So now that I’m finished with that, in my own business, I’m not afraid of the months that I don’t have any clients, because I know that when I get to those months, I’m just going to continue to “sharpen,” put myself out there, and get new clients.

I think that’s a good way of looking at things, because if you stress about it all the time, it’s not healthy. But, at the same time, you’re not being complacent about it; you’re honing-in skills and all that.

Absolutely! That would be my number-one recommendation for postgraduate, is to continue to educate yourself. Even now, this year, I have been to at least three self-initiated classes, programs, or retreats, or workshops, that have bettered some part of myself. Because learning is never over; you’re a student throughout your entire life, and so it’s a fool who thinks that when they graduate college, they’ve learned everything they need to know. Truly. With that being said, after college, you do have a certain right to claim for yourself. So, it’s like, you can’t be squeamish and be like, “oh my God, I can’t get out there.” You have to take risks, you have to put yourself out there, and you have to try. But you have to be humble while you’re doing it. I would say so.

Well said, I think there’s a lot of good insights there.

There’s just so many people I’ve seen who’ve failed after college, and it’s primarily because they’re lost. They don’t know what to put themselves into. Let me just say, when I went into AmeriCorps, I knew that that was not something... like, I like the nonprofit realm, and I like businesses that support other people, I knew that wasn’t going to be my path. But, it was an opportunity to sharpen different skills, so I took the job anyway to teach me new things, and to set me up financially to succeed. A lot of people when they get out of college are looking for that perfect job. Well, it’s not going to come right away. You have to make it. Life is negotiable, and I think that mindset is lost. I don’t know where it’s not clicking. Life is handed to you in college... “here’s your homework, go and work on it.” After college, no one is giving you that “homework” except for yourself.

Question Seven: What do you think employers are looking for when they hire a new professional employee?
Response: For me, it’s slightly a trick question because I have been an entrepreneur for most of my time after college. But, when I was in AmeriCorps, I was exposed to a lot of employers in the non-profit realm. Truly, what they’re looking for is someone who can critically think, and also take direction. Those two things put together can be difficult on a spectrum because there’s certain people who don’t know how to be autonomous. They want to be told what to do at all times. Like, “give me a project and I’ll do it. Give me a project and I’ll do it.” Employers need you to step up, and they need you to see the gaps and to fill them. So you need to have some self-initiative there to actually do it without being told. But on the other end of the spectrum, you can’t be the person to do everything, and create everything without taking any direction. Because otherwise they’re not going to want you, either, because you’re coming into a new business and they have set goals… yearly goals, you know. Five-year goals, ten-year goals… you know, whatever it may be. But they’re not just going to take some “hot-shot’s” new advice, right? Like, you’ve got to take some direction and have self-initiative to fill in the gaps. So it’s, like, a balance there. I would say that’s one of the biggest things I’ve seen people struggle with. I as well had to figure out that balance.

Question Eight: In terms of being selected for employment, do you feel the Honors College helped you other than just being a “resume booster”? If so, how? If no, what do you think would have helped?

Response: Again, as an entrepreneur, I feel like the Honors College helped me into my career path by continuously asking me to express myself authentically, and with a lot of research. So, it has made me cautious, in a good way, when putting myself out there. I guess, what I mean by that is, I feel like when I launch a project, I’m well prepared, and doing research about whatever it is I’m going to do. Like, if I’m going to launch a website, I’m going to do my research, and I’m going to look at ten, fifteen other websites to see what pieces of it I like. Then I’m going to step back, and I’m going to express myself authentically in creating a new website, which I think are skills I earned in the Honors College for sure. I learned how to project manage, priorities, knowing which step to take first, trial and error - in the Honors College projects.

All important things to learn.

Mhm. Well, they’re never “learnt,” remember? We are always learning and we have strengths and weaknesses, every single one of us, that help the greater picture. So it’s just, like, identifying where your strengths are, sharpening your weaknesses.
Question Nine: How many times per year do you think you went to an Honors adviser, and how many times per year do you think you went to a major-related adviser?

Response: That’s a trick question. It’s only a trick question because there were Honors professors that were both in the School of Communications - which is where photography was based out of - and in the Chinese program - which is where my minor was. I would say, more often, I went to my photography professors, but that was because I was shaping my career. I found every time I went to an Honors adviser to be helpful when it came to organizing my GVSU academic path, which is different than shaping your career with advisers in your career.

Question Ten: Do you have any advice for upper-class Honors College students?

Response: Get out there! Basically, my advice is take your Honors Senior Thesis seriously, and get creative with it. Do something out of the box because this is your opportunity to do so. Once you get a job you’re going to have to do it within the confines of your employer’s vision. Right now, you have the opportunity to do whatever you want within your vision. Truly, the options are limitless at this time. So don’t just write a paper. You can just write a paper, but I would encourage you to do something in addition to the paper, so you have something physical to take with you. In my photography Senior Thesis, I walked away with experience from running my own exhibition, as well as a whole portfolio that I can share with future employers. I would encourage you to do the same thing. Consider what your path is leaning towards within your major, and do something big that is not just a line on your resume. Do something that you can use as a physical example of your worth, like a portfolio. Have fun with it because, in some ways, college is not as serious as the real world. That would be my main piece of advice for while you are in school, would be to take it seriously but have fun with it.

That was my last question! Thank you for helping me and my classmates with this project. Do you have any questions or comments for us that you think would be beneficial to our assignment?

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

“I think we covered most of it, I guess I just want to say that I was personally really grateful to go through the Honors program, and I had a fantastic time learning from every single one of my professors in the Honors program. I loved living in the Honors dorms, and I loved the work the Honors College inspired me to create.”
Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?

Yes, they will reconnect for future inquiry. Preferred methods of contact would be text message or phone call.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• College friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Former professors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Compare and contrast to other interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look through insights and see how they pertain to the current curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Address the apparent downfalls of the Honors College, while also emphasizing its strengths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DIALOGUE 12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: GVSU Honors College Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: ____ 20-30 ____ 30-40 x 40-50 ____ 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of this opportunity was to gain more feedback from the Honors College on how we can better market GVSU Honors College students to employers. We also wanted to get insight as to how we can better prepare these students for post-graduation.

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

Conducting this work reflects our team problem statement, because we are gaining more insight on how the Honors College at GVSU believes we should better prepare its students for life after college.

**Summary of Research:**

Soft skills are incredibly important in today’s world. Honors students have gained some of these skills through GVSU’s Honors College. The freshman sequence and senior project help to set GVSU apart. The interviewee believes that GVSU Honors College students are very successful and prepared for life after graduation, but there is always room for improvement. The new GVSU Honors College curriculum is currently in the works, which should help students to be more prepared for life in the real world. Senior projects should also be brought up during interviews with employers to show what the Honors College is exactly. This gives GV Honors Students a chance to highlight what they have done through their time in the Honors College.

**Important insights:**

- Soft skills are one of the things that students really learn in GVSU’s Honors College.
- The senior project and freshman sequence really set GVSU apart from other Honors Colleges.
- There is a new curriculum that is going to be implemented soon and it is already out on GVSU’s Honors College webpage.
- Most Honors students the interviewee works with have plans for post-graduation or are working on plans.
- There are courses that Non-Honors students can take that are a part of the Honors College (look into more).

**Dialogue Questions and Response:**

**Question 1:** What are your role and responsibilities within the Frederik Meijer Honors College?

**Answer:** So my technical title is office assistant. I kind of liken it to an office manager position where I pretty much am responsible for managing the front part of the office, working with the budget, supporting any of the other staff in the office and faculty.

**Follow up:** Since you manage GVSU Honors College students, how many have plans for post-graduation?

**Answer:** Yeah for sure. I'm going to say 100 percent of them. Yeah and sometimes it's not always exactly sure. They may be job searching but that's their goal. Or if they're not already planning on going on to further education.

**Question 2:** Can you tell us about a memorable experience you’ve had with an Honors student?

**Answer:** It's so hard, because of where I'm at, I see so many Honors College Students. The memorable experiences that I've had really had to deal with my student assistants, because I'm seeing them on a regular basis where we get to know each other. We get to be kind of part of each other's lives and then seeing them go on and do other things is always kind of cool.

**Question 3:** How successful do you think GVSU Honors Students are post-graduation?

**Answer:** Very. I mean like I said, if you just kind of read through some of the profiles about where they're going to school, or the opportunities they have for school, or the jobs that they're getting. And I mean just the Meijer Lecture this week included alumni from the Honors College and what they're doing now. It was really interesting.

**Question 3:** How do you feel the Honors College prepares its students for life in the real world?

**Answer:** Well, I mean, we are a general education program. So I feel like the experiences that they have in the classes are helping in those soft skill areas; You're speaking, you're
reading, your writing. You know, those kinds of things that I think ultimately help in the future. I think the senior project, since it's a unique project for the students to interest themselves. It gives them an opportunity to have something to talk about or say “Hey, this is mine.” You know as far as grad school interviews and job interviews and stuff like that. It's got to be more about the skills though.

Question 4: What do you think the GVSU Honors College could do better for preparing Honors students for life after graduation?

Answer: I think there's always room for improvement. I think that the new curriculum will hopefully address some of that, because I think some of our focus is making it more of an experience for students. And so, the relationships that they make with students and professors could also be an important part of things that they do in the future.

Follow up: Can you give us an expansion on the new GVSU Honors College Curriculum?

Answer: So we are in the process right now. It actually just went out on our website live yesterday, so you can take a look at that and see what we're doing. Basically, we kind of came up with some things that we want to keep and then have been agreed on by a majority. Now we're actually looking at some options that we're wanting people to weigh in on. Most of them have to do the second year experience. So you can see that out on our website.

Question 5: What are main concerns of Honors students during meetings/discussions?

Answer: Figuring out what they want to do. Also, you know, when they are figuring that out the changes that they need to make, that can be anxious, cause anxiety, or stress as far as switching gears. I think grades tend to be a big part of it too, unfortunately. How they are doing in their courses.

Question 6: What do you think sets Grand Valley Honors College apart from other Honors Colleges?

Answer: First of all, the freshman sequence. In some of the research that we've done, I think that that's very unique to Grand Valley and that is one thing that is something that will be kept. I think we're looking at ways to streamline it and, you know, make every student have similar experiences no matter what sequence they're in. But I think that that's a really unique aspect that causes students to create a cohort that first year.

Question 7: If I was in a job interview and I was asked what it meant to be in the Honors College, what do you think I should tell them?
Answer: I think the sequence is a big part of it and the senior project is a big part of it. So I mean, just the idea of being with other like-minded students and fulfilling what is required, as far as the general education, in unique ways. The sequence is unique in that you're looking at several of those different disciplines through, you know, maybe one specific topic or location. But, you know, kind of how to tie that all into things that the students may not even realize they don't know. If they have that feeling like: “Why am I learning this?” “Why do I need to know this?” Honors students are gaining these skills and all of that along the way probably without even realizing, it until later on in life. Even later on in their career at Grand Valley.

Question 8: From your experience, how would you describe the characteristics of Honors College students? What sets them apart from non-Honors students?

Answer: Driven, successful, inquisitive. The difference between Honors and non-Honors students is again the drive that they have. I mean it's different. I think there are definitely good things and bad things. I mean, if the student can be good at many different things that makes it more difficult for them to figure out what direction to take. There is a difference in the way that they interact within all of their classes compared to non-Honors students, I would guess from what I have heard.

Question 9: How can Honor’s College students use the skills they have learned in the professional world?

Answer: Oh, just like I talked about those soft skills. The ability to have a discussion, writing, presentation, speaking. I mean all of those things I think are skills that they can take with them into their life.

Question 10: What kind of advice do you have for Honors students that aren’t sure what they want to do after graduation?

Answer: Talk to as many people as you can; your professors, career services, other students, colleagues, parent’s colleagues. I mean I think the more you talk to people about the ideas, because there are so many things out there that maybe you won't even realize is an actual job or a career path or you know to go to grad school or whatever. I mean I think the more you can talk to people to get ideas from what services are advanced through GVs you do really truly help students.

Question 11: What services or events through GVSU do you believe truly help students?

Answer: I can go so many different directions with us. I think any of the offices that are there to support students; Career Services, tutoring, etc. I mean all those kinds of things I think help make the student successful. The student has to sometimes reach out and be
the one to make the contactor, you know, be able to take advantage of those services. But taking advantage of those services I think can make a student very successful.

Question 12: Are there any questions that we didn't ask that you think would be beneficial in our research?

Answer: No.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

Could you explain more as to what you are hoping to gain from the interview or the project that your class is doing?

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

Yes, she agreed to reconnect for further inquiry. Email is the best option for her.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Advisor
- Honors Faculty
- Honors Faculty

Possible next-steps:

- Work on giving more background as to what we are doing and what our goals are before conducting interviews.
- Interview Honors Advisor, since she may have different insights.
- Honors faculty only teach in GVSU’s Honors College and may have a lot of insight to provide to us.
Stakeholder Group: GVSU Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Age: <em>X</em> 18-30 ____ 30-40 _____40-50 ____ 50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Gender: Female

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:
The primary goal of interviewing a current GVSU student who used to be in Honors is to better understand why some students have a negative experience with the Honors College and decide to leave. This is a unique opportunity to learn more about some of the downsides of being in the Honors College. It is also interesting to hear why this student is transferring away from GVSU.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
We are working to find ways to better prepare each Grand Valley Honors student for life after graduation so knowing what it is that makes students leave is insightful. We can use these insights to make sure that students are having a positive experience with the Honors College.

Summary of Research:
This current GVSU student spent a little over a year in the Honors College and then decided to drop Honors because it was too overwhelming to try to balance taking Honors classes with the classes for her major. She felt that it would hurt her GPA and thus hurt her long-term goals to be in the Honors College. She also did not feel that her academic advisor for pre-OT was helpful and thought she would be better off completing her college education at Baker College, which is where she will be transferring at the end of this semester. She believes Honors classes should have a smaller workload because they are meant to be Gen Eds and boost her GPA. She will not receive much credit for her Honors classes by transferring to Baker so it does not feel worth it.

Important insights:
• This student dropped Honors because it actually got in the way of her long-term goals (by lowering her GPA and taking away from courses in her major).
• Although this student utilized many of the resources at GVSU, including the math center, chemistry center, writing center, and academic advising, she did not ever visit the Career Center and does not know anything about its services.
• This student is transferring to another college because it will help her achieve her goal of getting a Master’s in Occupational Therapy faster and she is frustrated that she will not receive credit for her Honors courses there.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

How many years have you been at Grand Valley? What is your major?

This is my third year at GVSU and my major is clinical exercise science.

Why did you choose to be in the Honors College?

I thought being in the Honors College would be a good alternative to taking your regular Gen Eds. It seemed like I could learn more about cultures and other parts of the world that interest me.

Why did you leave the Honors College?

I had a super load of science classes and trying balancing those along with Honors classes seemed like it would be hard to maintain a good GPA. I was not wrong. I figured I'd rather take classes that pertain to my major than take Honors classes. My freshman Honors courses were pretty difficult and I think I could have done a lot better had I just taken regular classes.

Why are you transferring to Baker?

I'm transferring to Baker with the hopes that I will be done in the long run faster than I would if I stay at GV. The wait list to get into the OT program here is unbelievable and my advisor really didn't help me very much in taking the fastest route available to me here. She always just recommended putting things off until spring semester.

What are your goals for after graduation?

After graduation, I want to continue with my Master's to become an Occupational Therapist. Hopefully there I will decide what kind of path I want to take with OT, like burn victims, special education, inpatient, outpatient.

How do you think being in the Honors College will help you with that goal?
I think the Honors College introduced me to new ways of researching topics and reflecting in a good paper what I have learned from that research. I think this will really help me anywhere.

What do you think sets Honors students apart from non-Honors students?

Honors students do take some pretty tough classes, but honestly after seeing how well Honors courses didn’t transfer to other schools, it doesn't really seem like taking Honors courses at GV means much anywhere else!

Which on-campus resources have you utilized in your time at Grand Valley and what was your experience like?

I've utilized the writing, math, and chemistry centers. I go to the library pretty often. The math center is awesome, always super helpful, along with chem and writing centers. The math center just really goes out of their way to teach you things.

What do you know about the Career Center and what they do? Have you ever visited there?

I don't really know anything about the Career Center and I’ve never visited there before.

What was the most beneficial part of being in the Honors College?

I liked the things that I learned about other cultures during my classes that I took at the Honors College.

What do you think the Honors College can do differently to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?

I think the Honors College needs to remember that Gen Eds are generally supposed to boost your GPA, and not overload students with what they need to do in order to "just pass" the classes. I took Alliance and Conflict [for freshman sequence], though, and I do know the workload in that class was especially ridiculous.

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

Maybe if schooling before, like high school, prepares students adequately for the Honors College? I don’t know.

Can you give us any ideas of other people we should talk to about our project? (How to make Honors students more prepared for life after graduation?)

Sean, ask him how life after graduation has been and if he thinks taking Honors would have made a difference to him, haha.
Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

Maybe if schooling before, like high school, prepares students adequately for the Honors College? I do not know.

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

Yes, by text or email.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student

Possible next-steps:

- Look into the demographics of how many Honors student come from each major. It would be interesting to see if other students going into the health fields feel the same way this student did.
- Try to learn more about other students who started in Honors but left. Maybe the Honors College should do some sort of exit-interview or survey to learn more about why students leave. This would be interesting to look into.
- Look into whether the academic tutoring centers promote the Career Center at all. It seems like these should go hand-in-hand, so maybe they should work together more.
**Stakeholder Group: Transfer Honor Student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Age:</th>
<th><strong>X</strong> 18-30</th>
<th>__ 30-40</th>
<th>____ 40-50</th>
<th>____ 50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Gender:** Male

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**
To gain perspective into what it’s like not coming into the Honors College as a freshman.

**How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**
If we are trying to help all Honors students graduate and do better, we need to get insights on all different types of students in it.

**Summary of Research:**
This transfer student was driven to join to the Honors College due to their studiousness – not because anyone brought it up to them. They were motivated to talk to someone at the Honors College in the beginning of their time here. And so were able to figure out a clear path to graduate with Honors. Overall, they loved being in the Honors College. However, now they are not taking classes and feel a disconnect. They feel as if the Honors College helped grow their ability to work well with a team and communicate better.

**Important insights:**
- Never had a transfer Honors orientation
- The Honors advising was very helpful and flexible
- No feeling of connectivity in the Honors program when not in classes

**Dialogue Questions and Response:**

C): What is your major and why was it chosen?

Interviewee (I): So I’m a statistics major. I chose it because I’ve always loved numbers. I always loved math. I got to preface this. What is your major? Before I continue.
C: Oh I am a geology major.

I: Oh. okay. So I want to be a math major but I don't want to get stuck teaching which is why I asked you what your major was. So I kind of went the statistics route. So it's kind of how I ended up there.

C: Do you want to do research or?

I: So that is an excellent question. So I'm kind of working that part out. So I know I want to do something with statistics but I don't know exactly what yet.

C: So I really don't know. Like what do you guys even do when you get out of college like what is a job that you would have?

I: So there's a lot of different routes you can take it. There are some people who go see the data science route so that's more of a combination of statistics and computer science so they'd be working with like data warehouses. So maybe less on the numbers side more on the computer science. There's also maybe more like the analytics route. So that would be like purely numbers based looking at company’s numbers trying to predict or forecast the future. So for example I work at Meijer looking at your supply and trying to forecast how people are buying and what their trends look like to see if they have the product or stuff that can be cycled.

C: Well before I ask any of these what year are you?

I: I'm a senior.

C: Okay. And you were a math major to start?

I: Nope I started out at GRCC kind of taking the general out of courses. So yes I knew I wanted to go to the math science route when I was a CC that's kind of when I decided I want to go with statistics. So I transferred to Grand Valley. I transferred knowing that I was a statistics major.

C: So when you went to GRCC, they don't have an Honors program do they?

I: They do have an Honors program. So it's similar to Grand Valley in the fact that you have to kind of apply separately and there are a few classes you can take while you're there to graduate with Honors. I wasn't in it.

C: Well why did you choose Grand Valley and the Honors College here?

I: So Grand Valley because at GRCC they have this, I think it's the Michigan transfer agreement. So in applying to transfer from there to any state university in Michigan I automatically would come in as a junior. So they have to accept all your credits. So it was
definitely narrowed down at that point to a few universities because of that transfer rule. But I also had met with some of those statistics faculty here and had good conversations with them. The people I talked to that are previous alumni really liked the school and I had a couple of friends who went out west for their freshman year and then they were transferring back to GV when I was going to go there so that kind of worked itself together.

C: Yeah that's one of the reasons I came here to have so many friends here. Did you get an Honors orientation?

I: I did not get an Honors orientation.

C: Me either.

I: Were you a transfer student as well?

C: Yeah I went to Western for just one year and I transferred up here. And I never got my Honors orientation. My GV orientation was also very, very, small.

I: I'm trying to think if I even had a Grand Valley orientation. Oh Yeah I was at a transfer thing. Like sign up for classes. Yeah. The sounds that sounds about right yeah. I did a campus visit though too. I knew a little bit of the campus but not a lot.

But GRCC was my first year. So you see I kind of got used to the homesick college experience, with college feel like having classes where I'm not in class all day and going between different buildings and signing up for classes. It is very similar to how they do here. I wasn't super worried about it in terms of not knowing where classes were because like I said I had the campus visit. So I got a little bit of a tour so I was a little bit familiar with it. So really the orientation for me just getting signed up for classes, and that was, you know, it wasn't great. It could have been better but for me that was enough, and I didn't felt worried or anything else after the classes were signed up for.

C: In hindsight with like Honors and stuff you wish that you had more help with trying to deal with being a transfer student and the Honors College?

I: Yes, I didn't necessarily talk with anyone at the Honors College, but transferring and it was always sort of this idea I have good grades, and I'm a relatively good student. I should probably be an Honors program just so I am going to graduate with Honors. So I didn't talk with anyone but I knew I wanted to do it regardless of what it was going to take or all that extra information provided. So I was going to do it anyways. But like you said I didn't really talk with anyone about it.

C: OK. Did you even take a sequence then?
I: No I did not. So when I was kind of transferring and got to the Honors College I met with Meg Marshall. So she's really great again. I cannot say enough great things about her. She was so helpful about the whole process and this is what you have to do. So for me Honors was very flexible around me. So in terms of a sequence because I was coming in as a junior, what they had me do was take two junior seminars. And then when I did my senior project it had to be three credits. So I'd have a total of nine credits. So those were the results. So I didn't take the sequence but they were always very flexible. I had just had two junior seminars as opposed to a traditional one and then a senior project. I had to do at least three credits for a total of nine credits.

C: What did you take?

I: So I took design thinking last fall so I have had a little experience in the class and then I took - I can't think of the exact name it was like aesthetics and culture or music and aesthetics something like that, with Kurt Ellenberger. I took that last spring and then I took my Honors senior project over the past summer.

C: Oh really. And it was that about?

I: So I worked with my local church campus designed a questionnaire survey and then kind of did analysis on the church doing the surveying and seeing what people said and that sort of stuff. So it was it was really cool project.

C: So that had to be three credits?

I: Yup. So I think the role was because I was a transfer student the minimum number of credits I had to take to graduate with Honors was nine. So because each of the junior seminars was three.

C: Here's my question. I guess you already answered. You did visit with an Honors Advisor. So I guess can you talk a little more about your Honors advising and why you went, and how it went?

I: Yes so I can't remember if it was at the actual orientation the transfer orientation. There was a separate orientation but at some point I kind of sat down with Meg and she kind of walked me through. Here is what we are going to do for you because you are coming in as a junior transferring so obviously it's a little different. It's too late for you to take a sequence and like I said just had to take the two junior seminars. And then the third kind of senior project and that was I was the only requirements I had. So I guess that it was really flexible. I was a little worried I was going have to go back to the sequences or they would make me do more work, or it would be a little bit more difficult to do the Honors program because I was a transfer student. So at least in my experience the Honors
College is really flexible and I thought they did well. I have I've had a great Honors experience here at GV so I can only say really like good things about it.

C: No I definitely had a good experience. I was just like I didn't know I didn't have to take that sequence so yeah that would've been nice to know. But it's kind of on me I didn't talk. So I guess you just mentioned your Honor experience like if someone were to ask you in an interview like about the Honors College and about you in the Honors College do you know what you would say like how does it set you apart?

I: How does that set me apart that is excellent question and I actually had an interview yesterday where they something similar. Yes. So one of the biggest things I would say and you will definitely be able to kind of you know be able to respond is in the sense that you're taking this class. You know it's like I always usually start with talking about my design thinking class. So obviously it's probably the biggest team project I've worked on my whole life. So I always like to talk about kind of learning to work with other people. One of the big things I've got out of the class was, do you guys still do the Myers Briggs?

C: Yeah

I: So we did we did that. So it was really at the beginning. We kind of got to know each other's personalities and it was really adapting through the semester trying to figure out how other people think and how they interact with each other so you can kind of morph how you think. This has been helpful because I think a certain way and I always want to be in this box of how I think, and now I realize other people think differently. So for me it was when we got into team meetings or when we're in class working together; it's trying to think and present things in ways that they would understand or that they would appreciate more. So I think that's one of the things I would focus on in an interview is how I just got to be able to develop; to kind of be able to learn people's different styles of how they think how they work and then be able to kind of work in a team knowing how they work and how they think. How can I make the team function better and be more efficient and produce a better final product at the end? So one of the examples I was giving my interviews is telling them I was like an INTJ. I think so very like analytical logical. I'd like to get to work to get things done. But there's three or four people on my team that have more of the social aspects of the Myer Briggs. So one of the big things I have learned is anytime we had a team meeting the first five 10 minutes was sit down and everyone talks about how their day was, and you know what their plans are for the weekend. And for me that was kind of painful because I want to get to work and to get out of here. I've got stuff to do. But for them just being able to start a meeting communicating, seeing how everyone's doing was really important. So that's one of the examples I always like to give. So to answer your question that in itself I would say would kind of set me apart due to my Honors College experience.
C: That's awesome. Yeah it's really well articulated. What was your interview?

I: It was for a business analyst position at Meijer sales. I was an intern there this summer.

C: Oh really. I have a friend who was hired from her internship.

I: OK. That's awesome. Does she like it?

C: Yes she does. She lives in Holland and still commutes so that she doesn't like. But yeah she does look good. Yeah. So do you feel prepared to graduate? Are you ready? Feel like Honors College has prepared you for it?

I: Yes. So obviously I would say like just the Honors College alone has prepared me. Definitely you know high school, GRCC, and then other classes here. But the Honors College definitely has helped prepare me. Like I said talking with the you, you know design thinking. I think for people who take that class you really get that team experience, that group project for us it was really cool. In terms of saying this is probably one of the classes I've worked the most and most of the time was just trying to meet up with everyone's schedules so we'd work at odd hours. But I guess if we put the most work into that of any class, but I think I got the most out of it just in terms of working with other people and being able to present this final product to the people who can actually make a difference and that they might potentially implement. So for me it was a really awesome experience. So I think that's definitely part of it; it helped kind of prepare me for life after graduation but the other part is definitely the Honor senior project. I've got a really cool idea. It's a pain to try and think of what I'm going to do for the project; trying to figure everything out. Figure out the deadlines. Figure out the proposals. Figure out survey planning. I had to get approval from the review board because it was human subjects so that was kind of a pain. But I think that was a great experience to learn all the difficulties in preparing a survey. We had difficulties with trying to get people to respond to the survey. I had difficulties with the church and how they presented the data to me. So I kind of had to do some transformations to the data. So all that was really good life experience. So I would say definitely the Honors College helped prepare me for the next phase after graduation.

C: How is the design thinking class compared to a music seminar class because not everyone takes design thinking.

I: So design thinking was definitely a lot more work. Definitely a lot more team than the music class I took. Professor _________ is one of my favorite professors I've ever had. He's just very enthusiastic. The class is very different from the traditional science math courses I've taken. You came to class each day and we kind of listened to music and we figured out the different styles of music. And so we had this list at the beginning of the semester with 25 different genres of music. So like I think 12 were classical music and 13
different styles of jazz. And this semester he's going to play music and we have to fit what we hear into categories. So that's something I'm probably never going to use again in my life. I mean maybe to hear a song on the radio and I'll try and put it into a genre. But it was really cool to be able to kind of apply and learn a new skill in music and something that's really you know, I don't study a lot or get into that much. So it wasn't you know heavy work load class or anything like that. It was a very easy class. I'll put it that way but it was really cool just go from beginning a semester saying this is going to be impossible. Getting to where we listen to music every day in class. We talk about the different styles through the semester. It's a really easy final and you can put all the different music styles and all the different genres. He also took us to the symphony. He took our class. So we all went to his house for dinner one evening before the symphony and then we went to the symphony. So I thought that was really cool. I don't know how many professors do that so I was a really cool experience too. So definitely different from the design thinking and what I got out of it and the whole purpose of the class. But I it was still a really enjoyable class. So I would have taken it again.

C: That sounds fun. How do you feel the Honors program could improve? And what are they lacking and where are they good at?

I: So definitely what are they good at. At least in my experience. It sounds like it's different from the transfer student perspective. I think they do a really good job of molding the set of classes you have to take. Like I said didn't take the freshman sequence but there was an alternative where it's up to you and your seminars and then the three credits in your project. But I think kind of going off of your experience too as they don't advertise it well so no one reached out to you and said, “You're a transfer student coming to Honors College. You need to take two junior seminars.” You had to figure it out and take a sequence that you don't know if you're doing what's correct. So I think that's one of the things that can definitely improve on in terms of at least for a transfer student perspective is reaching out to those students who are coming in. I think one of the other big things they can improve on is just advertisement altogether. So when I was looking to apply to Grand Valley and going through their website and finding all the information I saw almost nothing on the Honors College. Even when I applied for information for stuff you know you give them your email they provide you information. I still didn't get a lot of Honors College information. The only reason I looked into the Honors College information was because like I said I thought I'm a pretty good student so I wanted to be in an Honors College. And I had to verify that they do have an Honors College. And so for me it wasn't like they were reaching out to me and I said OK let me do this. It was me kind of on my own. Looking to see if they had an Honors College and then just applying to it. So I think advertising in general is something they can kind of improve on.
C: Is there any questions you think that I should ask going forward and different interviews that I didn't ask that you think would be helpful. Our research is to how to improve students in the Honors College to graduate, improve their success graduating post graduation.

I: Maybe something to the effect of you know what was your analysis sounds kind of cliché? What was your favorite part of the Honors College? You know I mean you asked someone I think along lines of what do you think was maybe the most important aspect of it. What if you could only do one thing in college in your experience? What would you do? That's really all I can think of in terms of other questions.

C: Did you ever live in Niemeyer?

I: I did not, no.

C: How do you feel like do you feel really connected to the Honors College?

I: I'm going to say no to that question. So like I said I took my first junior seminar in fall semester and the second Junior seminar in Spring. And then on to the senior project in the summer so I was done with the Honors College experience in a year which it's hard to you know try and make it a longer experience because then students are paying for more classes and then you're turning potential students away because they don't want too much of a workload and an extra bill. But while I was in the College, when I was in either of my junior seminars, I felt very connected because I was working with different people asking lots of questions. So like in preparation for the senior project I was talking to Dr. Gillis. I was talking to Professor Chamberlain just trying to get contacts. Talking with Meg asking her questions. Like I said I had to get my proposal reviewed by a committee because it was human experimentation or working with humans so I worked with a guy who was going through it. So the year I was in Honors College I felt very connected. But once I was done or am done I feel kind of just separate. Like I said it's done now. I don't worry about that till I graduate. So the answer to your question when I was in it, I felt connected. But now that I'm out I don't feel connected.

C: I think that's everything. Thank you so much for your time.

I: No problem.

C: If I have any questions about the transcript is it okay if I contact you.

I: Yep any other questions you could think of you have my email feel free to reach out something. So yeah no problem.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was your favorite part of the Honors College?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible next-steps:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talk to someone about orientation – Honors and general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Find who deals with transfers on campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DIALOGUE 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Non-Honors GVSU student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: <em><strong>x</strong></em> 18-30 _____ 30-40 _____ 40-50 _____ 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain the perspective of the FMHC of non-Honors students and to compare their college preparation to those of the Honors students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It compares the preparation of a non-Honors student for post-graduation to the Honors students that we have interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Research:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From this interview we gained the insight that the Honors College is not necessarily viewed as beneficial and is looked at as extra work just for “an extra word on your diploma.” This particular student utilized several of the resources on campus, but also is not familiar with many of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important insights:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students outside of the FMHC do not view it as more than a resume builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Non-Honors students are not aware of what exactly the Honors College is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Patience is important in preparing for post-graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question 1: What is your major?
Answer: Double Major in Dance and Exercise Science with a Clinical Emphasis

Question 2: How familiar are you with GVSU’s Honors College?
Answer: I don’t feel like I am incredibly knowledgeable of it, but I do know a few people in it and understand that there are a few extra credits and projects needed to be taken in order to graduate with Honors.

Question 3: What is your view of the Honors College?
Answer: Personally, I do not see the point simply because it seems like you are doing all of this extra work to have an extra word on your diploma.

Question 4: Have you thought about applying to the Honors College in the past? Why or why didn’t you?
Answer: No, because my ACT score was one point too low and I was told that it isn’t necessarily worth it to try and fight that.

Question 5: What are your plans for post-graduation?
Answer: I plan on going to PT school.

   Follow up: Who/what contributed to organizing these plans?
   I did, really by myself.

Question 6: What academic resources have you used through GVSU? (Career Center, Advising, Writing Center, etc.)
Answer: Tutoring, CLAS advising, just professors in general.

Question 7: Do you feel that you are prepared for graduation and for life in the professional world?
   Follow up: What contributed to your preparation for life after college?
Answer: Absolutely not. No, I don’t mean that. I think I’m just overwhelmed right now of the professional world, but I do feel like I have a strong base knowledge of it.

Question 8: What are some things you think all students should know before graduating from GVSU?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer: Success stories and failure stories. I think that we forget to emphasize that “it” may not happen right away, and people need to understand the importance of persistence and hard work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”  
“Maybe where I am planning on going to PT school.” |
| Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?  
Yes- text or in person |
| Three more connections this stakeholder provided:  
- Honors student  
- Non Honors student |
| Possible next-steps:  
- Investigate a better marketing system for the FMHC as a whole, to students at GVSU so that more are aware of resources.  
- Compare more Honors students with more Non-Honors students to find repetition of behaviors and opinions.  
- Contact the connections that this stakeholder provided. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: GVSU Honors Sophomore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: x 20-30  ____ 30-40  ____ 40-50  ____ 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The goal of this opportunity was to gain insight on our top five innovations from students that are actively engaged in the Honors College curriculum at Grand Valley State University. We wanted to ultimately find which innovation Honors students feel would really help convey their Honors experience to employers/graduate school.

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

Conducting this work reflects our team problem statement, because we are working our way to help Honors students prepare for life for post-graduation. Our top five innovations were created in order to accomplish this goal. Seeking out feedback from GVSU Honors students would help us to figure out which innovation would be most suitable for those involved in GVSU’s Honors College.

**Summary of Research:**

As you can see, the student really took a lot away from her freshman sequence, but she also feels that it is totally possible to graduate from the Honors College while taking away nothing from the experience. She also does not feel entirely connected to the Honors community and often feels that the Honors College is not setting her apart from others with employers. One thing she felt would help her post-graduation, is if the Honors College set up students to work with more Grand Rapids employers. As for innovations go, she wanted something that would cultivate experiencing the Honors difference along with being able to show this to employers. The student’s favorite idea was the innovation portfolio and the meet the advisors session. Although, she does feel that meeting with advisors should be less general and more about how Honors students should explain how to set themselves apart in the real world.
Important insights:

- Student really enjoyed the portfolio idea and felt that it would showcase Honor’s students work the most.
- Student didn’t feel the Honors College is setting her apart from employers.
- If meeting advisors, she believes it would be beneficial for advisors to explain how to set Honors students apart to employers/graduate school, rather than having a general meeting session.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Background Questions:

Question One: How many years have you been at Grand Valley? What is your major?
Answer: This is my second year at GV and my major is Human Resources Management.

Question Two: Why did you choose to be in the Honors College?
Answer: I knew that I wanted to go to a school that set me apart. I also was very interested in the academic programs, specifically the Theory and Practice of Rights sequence. I felt that the experience I could have taking this course, as opposed to normal general educations courses, would set me apart and encourage my personal and professional growth.

Main Questions:

Question One: What are your goals after graduation? What are you doing now to reach those goals?
Answer: After graduation I would like to work for a company that shares my values. HR is a part of a company that can either be used to greatly improve or greatly hold back that company’s culture. I would like to work for a company that would allow me to extend their culture to make sure that everyone is safe and respected so that they may contribute positively back into their company and communities. The support system HR is able to provide at its best is what I would like to devote my life to. Currently I am working toward this on a very personal level by ensuring that I am being kind to those around me and using my morality as a compass in my actions. I have to say that my experience in my sequence last year is a big part of these personal goals.
Question Two: How has the Honors College helped you define or prepare to advance these goals? How do you think it will help you with these goals in the future?
Answer: My experience last year in Theory and Practice of Rights opened my eyes to the world around me in a whole new way. I now see the way that my experience is one of privilege, and my job during my time on Earth to do whatever needs to be done to make the world a better place for those who do not have the same choices as me. This has become my main goal in my personal life as well as what I would like to do with my career. In the future, it is my hope that I will carry the values the Honors College has given me with me.

Question Three: What do you think sets Honors students apart from non-Honors students? How is their experience different?
Answer: I think that it greatly depends on the Honors courses one takes. I think that is entirely possible to leave the Honors College and be no different from anyone else except that “Honors” is on your resume. However, if one takes the right classes I think that they can end up being more conscience global citizens.

Question Four: By applying to the Honors College, what sort of educational benefits did you expect to receive as part of the program? How has your experience so far lived up to these expectations?
Answer: I expected to be immersed in a new culture with a new community. For the most part I feel connected to this community, but finding a way to connect those who do not necessarily take classes together would enhance my experience.

Question Five: What resources have you utilized in your time at Grand Valley and in what ways have they better prepared you for post-graduation?
Answer: I utilize my professors’ office hours, the tutoring center, and the Career Center often. These resources enhance my educational experience and make me a higher achieving student, which ultimately with make me more employable to the people who I would like to be employed by.

Question Six: What do you know about the GVSU Career Center and the services it offers?
Answer: I often go there and have participated in a Mock Interview as well as resume work.
Question Seven: In your time at the Honors College so far, what is the most beneficial experience you have had or what is the biggest benefit you have experienced?
Answer: Once again, my sequence. Professor Zivi and Galbraith quite literally shaped my college experience and I have no doubt that two years from now when I am graduating I will still regard this as my most valuable experience at Grand Valley. What I learned from them cannot really be summarized, but I felt like an incredibly lucky person to have the opportunity to be educated by them.

Question Eight: What do you think the Honors College can do to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?
Answer: I think that offering more connection to Grand Rapids based employers would be valuable. This could be done by working with the Career Center. I don't really get the sense that me being in the Honors College is truly setting me apart with employers.

Question Nine: What do you wish that the Honors College would do differently, if anything, in terms of preparing you for graduation and life after graduation?
Answer: (Same answer as question 8)

Question Ten: What are your thoughts and opinions on our top 5 innovations? (I then proceeded to show the student our design brief 2 descriptions of our top five innovations.)
Answer: Okay, so the first two sound great! I think the second one should not be required though. I really like the portfolio idea. Meet the advisors seems like a good option! I don’t think the informational sessions are necessary. Maybe if it was something like “how to use your Honors experience to set yourself apart,” but not just something general. The survey is a great idea!

Follow up: What is your favorite innovation and why?
Answer: I think the portfolio is my favorite. I think that is a really great way to showcase the work Honors students do and could be a good tool for job searching and things like that. It would also be something cool to look back on and would increase the pride students take in having been in the Honors College at GVSU.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”
**None.**

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

Yes, they agree to be contacted for further inquiry through text or email.

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Honors Student
- Honors Student
- Honors Student

**Possible next-steps:**

- Poll on which innovation Honors students like best.
- Reach out to more faculty in the Honors College to get their input on our innovations.
- See if any other Honors Colleges mandate an Honors portfolio and see how they went about incorporating it into the Honors curriculum.
### DIALOGUE 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group:</th>
<th>Honors College Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age:</td>
<td>18-30  30-40  40-50  X 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of this opportunity was to gain insights into what an Honors Faculty member thinks the Honors College is doing well, as well as where they believe it could be improved.

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

This interview was focused on the aspects of the Honors College that prepare its students for life after graduation, and many of the insights gained were related to success stories of Honors graduates, and what it means to graduate with Honors.

**Summary of Research:**

From this interview, I learned a lot about what responsibilities full professors have in the Honors College. Particularly with regards to advising and committee work. Also, I gained valuable insights as to how the Honors College prepares its students to lead, by sharpening skills such as critical thinking, well-argued research papers that are not focused on a “black and white” issue, and being able to develop clear and cohesive thoughts on the spot in the instance of spoken words. These also seem to be the main ways in which Honors students set themselves apart from non-Honors students, as well as potential competition in the job market or graduate school.

**Important insights:**

- Expects Honors students to be able to write and speak complex thought, as well as think critically and conduct complex research
- Thinks Honors students are much more likely to be leaders in their fields of study
Believes the Honors College is doing a great job, but the future curriculum redesign will help make it even better

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question One: How long have you been a faculty member at Grand Valley State University, and was there any reason you were drawn to come to the Frederik Meijer Honors College, specifically?

Answer: Good. I have been… this is my sixteenth year as a professor at Grand Valley. I saw an advertisement in an online journal in Australia for this place, I had never heard of it. [I] sent off an application, amazingly, got the job, and came here and started teaching in the history department. In my second year, I think, the Director of the Honors College, at that time, said they wanted to put together an Eastern Civilization Sequence. They had a Western Civ Sequence, they wanted something like East Asian history, and they asked me to team-teach it with another colleague from modern languages. So, I came over and was immediately struck by the difference in quality of the students in the Honors College - I loved the experience of working with them. And so, I kept teaching that course, and, in fact, I’m still teaching that course. Then, after a couple of years, Honors needed more faculty over here to help share in service commitments and in committee work, and advising students, right? So, the Dean’s created this position called “Faculty in Residence” in the Honors College, which meant fifty-percent teaching in Honors, and fifty-percent in your home-department. I absolutely loved that, right? I started to introduce the Big History course, at that point, and I realized very quickly that I couldn’t teach two sequences here [the Honors College] and teach anything in the History department at all. So, after a couple of years of trying to balance both departments, I said, “You know, I want to stay in Honors.” I put in an application to transfer here full-time, which was difficult because the Dean of CLAS was not impressed that I was leaving, my colleagues [in History] were not impressed. But, I knew this was where I wanted to be. I’ve been happily full-time here now for, about, the last six years, I guess. Many years teaching with no connection here, except I’d come over and teach from History. Then, a couple of years as a Faculty in Residence, and then as soon as I could, I’ve been full-time ever since. And extremely happy in doing that.

That’s awesome! I can see why you like teaching Honors so much because, just from our experiences last year, it was just a great experience.

And, you know, it’s not that there’s not a lot of students in the regular community that aren’t also Honors material, I mean they could be. So, it’s partly the quality of the students here, but also the Sequences - that was the first thing I taught here, and just being in the same class with twenty-five students for the whole year - that was another
attraction. The actual structure of the syllabus and the curriculum, and the sort of courses you could teach. Plus, I was told I could teach whatever I want, so Big History and Ancient Eurasian History, which are my two fields, you know? Anyway, so the quality of the students - I don’t want to sound too elitist, and somehow look down upon the students that are not in the Honors College - but it was the quality of the students, the fact that you’ve got twenty-five high-achieving students all together, right? And the fact that the course is five hours per week for the entire year, it’s just perfect for me.

Yeah, I think that’s especially a big thing, that you got to teach what you wanted to. You weren’t being told what to teach. So, I can see that being a huge plus to coming here.

Oh, sure! It’s huge!

Question Two: What are your roles and responsibilities within the Honors College?

Answer: Well, I’m a full-time professor here. Sorry, I’m a Full Professor. One of several - I mean, this little unit of only twelve faculty members has many Full Professors, which is very unusual. I only have to teach two courses, but they’re six credits each, right? They’re long courses, because they meet twice a week. So, I teach two classes of twenty-five students: Big History, and the focus on Asia course. And, like all faculty members, you do your share of advising - I do a lot of advising - I serve on various committees.

And, because Honors is part of the Brooke’s College, I also represent Brooke’s on several university-wide committees, as well. Like, the Personal Procedures Committee, Sabbatical Review Committee, and so on. So, all Full Professors have got a bunch of, sort of service commitments they’ve got to measure up to, as well as their teaching and research. Plus, of course, I’ve got to be an active scholar and keep producing scholarship. That’s crucial.

I knew some of that about your job, but I didn’t know it actually went that deep for all the Full Professors.

Yeah, because there’s an expectation that you’ve gone as high as you can go in your chain of command, basically, here. So, you need to give back to your younger colleagues in various ways, and help mentor them. For a long time, I chaired the Brooke’s College Personnel Committee, which looks at all the files of people applying for promotion and tenure. It’s always a very political, and delicate, and awkward process, so you want to have a Full Professor in charge of that. Right? So, Full Professors are expected to step up and do the sort of “tough” service commitments that younger colleagues shouldn’t be doing at that stage. And that’s fine, I’m happy to do that. You know, I appreciate the opportunity to do that. But then also, as I said, we have to be scholars and I’m constantly writing papers and books, and going to conferences, and producing stuff all the time, so that never stops - that expectation of being an academic.
Question Three: In general, how successful do you think GVSU Honors students are in their post-graduation endeavors?

Answer: All of the Honors students I’ve known that have gone on to post-grad have been very, very successful. I know several that have got high-level Master’s [Degrees] or PhD’s, I know one student is a professor now - working in the field of Ancient History himself, South Asian archaeology. So, every student that I’ve known personally that went to grad school, I can’t think of one that has not been successful. I think we’re doing a good job, in that sense, in preparing. I’m trying to think through now as I said that to you, if I can think of anyone who I knew who dropped out, but I can’t. Everyone I know finished their program, and got into high-level programs, too. I know this because I write reference letters for so many of my former students as they are going on to grad school. So, I’m literally in touch with probably hundreds of former students now. [We’re] successful, so we’re doing that right.

Yeah, well that’s great to hear! Especially since you have so many personal examples of it to back that up.

Question Four: In what ways do you feel the Honors College prepares its students for life in the real world?

Answer: Life in the real world, or post-graduate? Real world, that’s interesting. Let’s answer both questions. We were just talking about grad-school, right? Where you’re going to need to do independent research; produce some high-level writing; engage in articulate, symposium type discussions with professors and colleagues; and also probably do some teaching, yourself, as a teaching assistant, right? Where you might lead the discussion section of a class, while the professor is lecturing to two-hundred people, or whatever. They’ll then break that up into smaller sections for discussion during the week, right? So, there are the key things that grad students are going to have to do. In my courses, we try and model all of that. First year we have a lot of high-level discussion of complex topics, so that people become more confident in oral expression. We also choose topics for writing and discussion that are quite difficult and require a lot of critical thinking, right? There’s no right-or-wrong answer, it’s all these shades of grey all the time, so that’s really preparing minds to think critically about problems. Then, in my classes - and, I think pretty well in all the first year classes - we do a great deal of important research writing. Not just silly, throwaway, busy work, but questions that are really of interest to historians today. You know, that professional historians are wrestling with: the transition to agriculture, patriarchy in so many societies, and so on. I have very high expectations there, we go through a writing process: submit a first draft, I edit it like I would a professional paper by some other scholar, right? We talk about it here, students get the chance to rewrite it and submit it again, and we do that, we build on each essay through the whole year. So the key skills a grad student needs are good writing
ability, critical thinking ability, oral expression ability, right? And maybe the ability to, sort of, facilitate discussion. That’s what I’m trying to do in my classes from Day One. And then, we were talking about the “second year slump” before. We think now that we can design the curriculum better to keep building on that, right, through the next three years. Which I don’t think we’re doing quite so well, at the moment. Because, basically, in second year, you sort of go back out into your “regular” classes, and that emphasis is lost, somewhat. In terms of preparation for the real world… man, the same skills, right? You’re going to be judged for the rest of your life by how well you can put words on a page. Every job application, everything you ever write, people are going to judge you by that. You’re going to be judged by… you know, the boss calls a meeting and says, “what do you think?” Right? And you’d better be able to, sort of, think of something and say it. Or the boss is going to think, “well, you’re a bit of a dead-loss.” Also, the problems in the world today, and the problems even in business and so on, are so complicated. You need to be able to look at it sideways, and think about it from different disciplinary perspectives, and really think critically, in the best sense of that word, about the problem. So, I think you need that to survive in the real world, as well. All of those things, right? I expect all Honors students will become leaders, in some way, in their world, whatever that world is. Because through nature and nurture, you’ve got some talents that other people don’t necessarily have. So, sure you can survive in the world through just being a good plumber and never having to write anything, or you know. But the sort of positions and roles I expect Honors students to occupy in the real world later, are going to require all of those skills. The particular niche in society that I expect most Honors students will end up in will require those skills.

Question Five: What do you think the Honors College could do to better prepare students for life after graduation?

Answer: You and I were just talking about second year. At the moment, the Honors program is a substitute for the General Education program. It’s just another way of satisfying Gen Ed. We all know that the first year experience is so enriching, and so even students like you who bring in AP [Advanced Placement] credit, would probably agree afterward that it was worth getting some of that same credit again for the experience you had, right?

Yeah, absolutely.

So, now we need to do something like that in second year, and third and fourth year as well. Because, at the moment, there’s a couple of second year classes you need to take simply to satisfy Gen Ed, like another social science class, or an art class that you didn’t get from Big History, for example. Then, there’s a couple of science classes that everyone needs to have, right? But they’re sort of random, and not really connected the way the first year sequence was. So, we’re trying to create a much more connected, like
keep that cohort of friends connected somehow through each year, so that each class will build upon those same skills that we developed, I think, so well in the first year. What we’re doing right now, this curriculum revision process is crucial to avoiding the second year slump, and to keep building on those skills that emerge in first year. I think we’re going to get that right; it won’t kick in until 2020. It’ll be an improvement, but I already think it’s a great experience in Honors anyway, I really think it is. I think this is going to be better. The first year sequences will stay, some of them will be modified somewhat. A lot of them, at the moment, are just teaching, like, just history, right? We want to see them somehow grouped around different themes, like thematically different topics. So, they’ll be modified but they’ll still be the core of the first year. Then we’ll look at different possibilities in the second year, for example one possibility is a colloquium class, where it would just be a three credit class, but over the semester, this group of twenty-five students, whatever, goes to maybe five or six different events on campus together, go to a play together, or go to a music concert together, whatever, and then in class we discuss it, we write an essay on it, some sort of paper, and so on. So, you’ll still have that shared experience with this group of twenty-five great - one year older, but still great - students, some from your sequence, some from other sequences, right? You’ll have this shared experience of attending these events, and talking about it, and writing about it, and so on. We want to have some problem-based learning courses, we want to have community-based learning courses, where you all go and work with a community partner somewhere as a group, and so on. So, it won’t be, like, “check this social science box, check this science box,” you know? It won’t be like that anymore. It’ll be the whole connected experience that will transition students all the way through. We’ll keep something like the Junior Seminar, something similar to that. High-level, interesting courses. Every student has got to do a Senior Project; we want to standardize that to maybe three credits because, at the moment, you can choose one-to-four credits for your Senior Project. So, you can do some little throwaway, five-page thing, or you want to make this meaningful. We might have a one credit prep the semester before, where you’ll talk about high-level research, and how to approach a professor, and how to put a proposal together, and prepare for the senior project. Then, every senior project will have to present publically, in some sort of conference that we’ll set up here in the Honors College, that Honors students will come to. So, in every way, I think that in terms of preparing for the life of work, and graduate school, is just going to keep building on those first year skills and enhance them.

I like that whole idea of the “connected experience”, because right now it does seem a little bit disconnected. Kind of just, you know, pick a class here. For me, Design Thinking is a good class, but it was also the only one left for me to choose. So it doesn’t really feel connected, it more feels like picking what’s available.
Yeah, I think we all sense that. Like, the last day in April, you know, it’s a sad day because everyone realizes, “well, this experience is over and we’re probably never going to have something quite like this again.”

Yeah, and I didn’t expect any of my other classes to really match that because I think there’s just so much you could do with six credits per semester that you can’t really do… or it’s hard to emulate that afterwards.

No, you can’t. You don’t have the time together. You can’t get out in the woods and go hiking, and that sort of stuff, in a rapid-fire, three-credit class. Anyway, we think now that, for example, I might run some of those colloquium classes. I might let one of my sequences go, probably will be the Asia class because I’ve been teaching it for so long, and instead I’ll move into those second-year shared experience classes, facilitating going to different events and talking about it, and, you know, I think we’ll have a lot of fun doing that, too. So, that’s something I can look forward to, too, a slight change in my teaching schedule too. It’s pretty exciting for everybody actually.

Question Six: What tend to be the main concerns of your Honors students during meetings? Like, during office hours.

Answer: Chemistry class. [Laughs]. Chemistry is the number one concern, “I’m not doing well in my chemistry class Professor B!” But no, probably more anxiety, haven’t made the right major decision. “Am I on the right path through life? Is this what I really want to do with myself?” Feeling overwhelmed by pressures, grades, concerns, all the normal stuff. Roommate issues, you know, personal stuff like that; family issues, often. So, depression, anxiety, sense of feeling overwhelmed, more about, you know, “am I on the right path to lead a rich and fulfilling life? Is this really the major for me?” It’s a crisis, you know? It’s a crisis. So, I regularly have students in here with similar crises of confidence in the choices they’ve made so far, and essentially what life has in store for them. Normal stuff. But I think Honors students are so high-achieving, and I actually had one girl in here the other day saying, “the classes are not as demanding as I thought they’d be. I have more time on my hands to think, and the more I think, the more I worry about the decisions I’ve made.” I think you’ve been through something similar.

Question Seven: In your experience, what makes the Honors stand out from the rest of Grand Valley, and how can students use that to set themselves apart from competition?

Answer: Boy, it’s hard to answer that without sounding elitist. These are the elite students of the university, their intellectual ability is clearly superior to most other students that I’ve encountered in my years here. I taught many, many years of non-Honors classes, right, so it’s the quality of the thinking that goes on in these students, it’s their desire to keep improving and be really good at whatever it is they’re doing. To like, be ashamed if
they turn in a crappy essay draft, like, “I can do better than that.” There’s this drive to always do the best work you can. Sort of, the ability to embrace complexity of problems, and the messiness of so many problems in the world, and issues. A lot of students can’t cope with any issue that there’s not some black and white, yes or no issue, but almost any of the big issues you want to consider are never going to have that sort of answer. So, Honors students are, sort of, after being a little bit… initially finding it difficult, they’ll talk for an hour about this very important topic and not resolve it? No, just talking about it is the critical part. So, the ability to really embrace shades of grey in the major problems, I think it makes them better equipped to deal with these problems, and think of solutions to these problems. Never to look for a yes-no, or right-wrong answer to any issue. Getting back to what I said before, for me that means Honors students are ideally positioned and skilled to become important leaders in various ways in the future. Every single Honors student that I’ve interacted with, I’m looking at that person and thinking, “You will be a leader in your field in the future. People are going to look up to you, take inspiration from you.” The way you respond to problems and deal with pressure, people are going to learn from that, and take comfort from that. That comes with an awesome responsibility, but it’s a lot of pressure on your shoulders for an eighteen, nineteen-year-old guy. But I just know it’s going to happen for all of you, that you’ll end up very high up in your business, whatever you end up doing. Become a leader. And so this ability to, sort of, cope with that additional pressure… I mean, you didn’t ask for this pressure. It’s through nature and nurture, you’ve been given a certain intelligence and ability, right? And it’s going to come with responsibilities. I think that if we do our job here in the Honors College, we’re creating a whole generation year-after-year of leaders of the future that will deal with the incredible problems that, you know, my generation has created, and deep political divisions within our country. People that will just say, “That’s just crap. There’s another way of thinking about this.” I just hope that more and more of you come out, but the trouble is this is always just going to be the ten-percent of the university, at the most. Only ten-percent. But yeah, every Honors student I look at I’ve got incredible confidence. More confidence in the future in the way I know that person is going to step up and be a leader.

I think that’s something that’s not talked about enough is being a leader here. Because, I think, many people, when they first come in are expecting Honors to just look good on a resume. But what we’ve been talking about in Design Thinking is, it’s not how it looks on a resume, it’s how you can use that to show that you’re different, or maybe better than, the competition. It’s not just something to put on a piece of paper; being in the Honors College should mean something that definitely sets you apart.

Yeah, it means something a lot more than what’s written on that transcript. A lot more than that. If you’re graduating and coming to me for a job, and I know something about the program here, I’ll know the, sort of, rigorous intellectual debates you’ve had over the
last several years. I’ll know that you write, I’ll know that you’re tolerant and you can see different perspectives on things and just a cut above in every way. I’m going to look at you and think, “Okay, here’s a guy who’s going to maybe start at this level, but I’ve got this guy marked out already as heading up the chain here. He’s got all the qualities we want in this company.” Whatever field it is you’re going into. I see it all the time, because Honors students even getting part-time jobs, working on-campus or whatever, they’re so competent, they’re so good at what they do, that next thing you know their boss is saying, “Can you work a few more hours here?” And next thing you know there’s pressure to work twenty, thirty hours per week because they’re so damn good at the job! See, that doesn’t happen to a lot of regular students. So, it’s the blessing and the curse of Honors, right? Honors students, in general, are very good at whatever they do, so people recognize that and they get more stuff piled on them because they can do it. The other blessing is that you can do almost anything with your life, as you and I have just been discussing, but that’s the curse as well is, “What am I going to do with my life? I could do this, this, or that, or a hundred that’s!” You know? So, as I was saying before, take some pressure off yourself, and think, “These skills I’ve learned through the Honors College and through my business studies, they’re going to set me up to do a million different things in life. So many paths I’ll be able to follow.”

It came up in a previous interview of mine, she said that the extra work she had to do really taught her responsibility. She said that was one of the things that she really appreciated about the Honors College, and she had very positive things to say overall about her Honors experience. She said she was very grateful for it.

That’s great. That sense of responsibility is true, someone having very high expectations of your essays, right? Don’t give me some piece of crap here, I want a high-quality, well-argued essay exploring this complex problem to which there is no right or wrong answer. That’s what I want from you. But Honors students step up and can do that. I wouldn’t assign those same sort of essays to non-Honors students. I wouldn’t do it, you know? Complicated research, how to explain the transition to agriculture, for example. Through the expectations we have of our Honors students for high-level work, you live up to that responsibility, and that ties directly into this leadership role in the future as well. You know how to be responsible, you know how to get good-quality work in on time, and as I said before you’d feel ashamed if you turned in some crappy piece of work. It’s in your nature, you wouldn’t do that. For many other students, it’s like, “Let’s just blow this thing off until four o’clock in the morning and send it off. I’ll take the B-Minus or C, I don’t care.” So yeah, that’s the responsibility you display, which will be recognized by future employers.
Question Eight: Do you think Honors students are made well aware of the academic resources available to them (e.g. Writing Center, Career Center, advising)? Or do you think they need to know more to make full use of them?

Answer: That’s a good question. When I read an essay draft, if I realize a student has got serious writing problems, I’ll write back to them in the comments and say, “You need to go to the Writing Center before you submit the second draft.” Mostly, I don’t do that because most Honors students are already writing at a much higher level than most non-Honors students. And, to be honest, pretty well all the advisers in the Writing Center are former Honors students that came out of sequences. Every year from my classes, at least two or three of my students get selected. The same is true in the so-called Knowledge Market in the Library, they’re all former Honors students, right? So my answer to that would be, if I think a student needs those resources, I’ll make them aware of it, but most Honors students, I don’t think would benefit too much from the advice they get there. Probably about ten percent of the students would benefit from that, so that’s only about two-and-a-half students [per class] that I would send over there. But I’m very proud of those programs, and I’m proud of how many former students of mine are working both in the Writing Center and in the Research Center.

That’s a different take than I’ve heard, that being Honors students don’t need those resources as much. We were talking to someone in class from the Career Center, who said Honors students are less likely to go there.

Career advice, I understand that. But even for Career advice, Honors students have already thought through a lot of the advice they’re going to get there. And that’s why, I think, there’s another huge benefit to the Honors College, that I only have fifty students each year that I teach, we build a very close relationship, and so they can get professional advising directly from a professor, which, without trying to sound rude, is going to be much higher quality than what some other student is going to give you in the Writing Center.

Yeah, and I think that’s fair too, especially to someone at the Writing Center, you’re just another student walking in saying, “Hey, can you look at this?” But with a professor, it’s like someone you’re building trust with and getting to know through class, and in your case, you do write for a living.

You know, the detailed feedback I gave you, and the track changes thing, and then sitting one-on-one and going through it, then sending it back to you and you get to rewrite it. Even with the best advising in the Writing Center, you’re not going to get that.

Yeah, because aren’t they just students there anyway?
Yes. They’re good students, there are many good students from my classes and they’re
great writers…

But they’re not professional writers.

No, they’re not. Their role, I think, is to help the less-achieving students, the non-Honors
students, learn how to write. And that’s why I’m so proud of them all over there doing
that, but it’s very rare I have an Honors student that gives me an essay that’s got so many
problems that I think you need help from another student. Very rare. Because Honors
students have got so much more advanced writing skills. You guys have got the skills to
find obscure stuff. So I think that’s the reason. It’s not that I don’t think those programs
are good - I support them strongly, and I send some of my best writing students there
every year - but it’s that I don’t think most Honors students need that.

Question Nine: As a member of faculty, what advice do you have for current Honors
students?

Answer: That’s a hard question, man. That’s a really hard question. First year, just relish
the experience and enjoy every moment of it. Take everything you can from it because
you’re never going to get an experience quite like that again, so just enjoy it and do your
best work always. Second year, when you now find yourself in a bunch of random classes
with non-Honors students and so on, just get through them the best you can. Remember
your responsibility to yourself, which is to, even if you’re not enjoying your class, you’ve
got to do the best quality work you can; you never want to sell yourself short with crappy
work, even if it’s the last class in the world you want to go to, last essay in the world you
want to write. You’ve got a responsibility to yourself and your ability to make sure it’s
good quality work always. Enjoy the Honors classes that we offer in second and third
years. We offer some great classes, you know, the Junior Seminars, some of the
psychology classes, social science classes are fantastic. Look forward to your Senior
Project, it’s a chance to really show what you’ve done and bring things together, and
produce a quality piece of writing or whatever it is that you do that might help you in
applying for grad school. These Senior Projects, many students use them as part of their
application to grad school. Look forward to that opportunity, not just something to check
off, but a part of the rich Honors experience. When you graduate from here, know that
that’s not the end, you’re going to be headed for higher education or an MBA in the
future or whatever, and realize that you’ve got all the skills - be confident - that you’ve
got all the skills as a result of this experience here to go out and really make a huge
success of yourself, and really change the world around you in positive ways. You guys
can do that; all of you can do that. I expect that, I’d be disappointed if you don’t do that.
So, realize what an incredible future you’ve got ahead, even as you go through the dirt,
the drudgery of some boring, bloody, whatever class it is. Think long-term. Think about
your life ten years from now, and what a difference you’re going to be making five years
from now. We’ve all got to get through the boring stuff, but the goal is there in the end of a life that’s really going to be worth living. A life of success, responsibility, being someone people will look up to for guidance and assistance, and literally every one of you changing the world around you in positive ways. I’ve got total confidence in that. Fantastic futures, both in terms of personal success, but more importantly of what you’re going to give back to the community. No doubt about that.

Okay, awesome! That was my last question. Thank you so much for your time!

| Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?” |
| “I can’t think of anything. I think we covered a lot of stuff there.” |

| Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to be contacted? |
| Yes, they are willing to reconnect. Preferred method of contact is email and in-person meetings. |

| Three more connections this stakeholder provided: |
| Any Full Professors at the Honors College |

| Possible next-steps: |
| - Compare insights with that of other staff, and Honors graduates |
| - Use insights to help refine our innovations |
DIALOGUE 18

Stakeholder Group: Student who dropped the honors program

Estimated Age: __X__ 18-30 ____ 30-40 _____40-50 ____ 50+

Gender: Male

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:
To understand why student would consider dropping from the Honors program. What drives that and how can it be fixed?

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
We are trying to better prepare Honors students for graduation, so we also need to see how to keep students in this program; i.e. improve it enough that people won’t want to drop.

Summary of Research:
This student started off his college career in the Honors College because his parents encouraged him to go into it. He took a sequence. However, after his freshman year he realized he would not graduate on time if he decided to stay in the Honors program and take a junior seminar and senior capstone class. Now he has decided to graduate in four years and drop this program. When asked if the Honors College could do anything at this point to change his mind he said no. He provided good feedback towards our innovation.

Important insights:
- The Honors program can put a wrench in students’ graduation timeline
- The people in Honors are really wonderful and helpful
- Registering for a sequence can be difficult and you don’t get much help

Dialogue Questions and Response:
C: What's your major and why did you choose it?
Student (S): I am a geology major with an environmental emphasis. I chose this major because I took a geology class and an environmental class in high school and loved both subjects, so I wanted to find a major that included both.

C: Why did you choose to be in the Honors College in the first place? Why don’t you plan on continuing?

S: I chose to be a part of the Honors College because my parents always pushed me to do be in Honors. I joined more for them than I did myself. I chose to leave because after looking into it, I found out that I would actually have to take more classes than if I wasn't in Honors.

C: What do you like or dislike about the Honors College?

S: I liked the people in Honors. It was nice to get to know a group of people my freshman year that I would have a class with the entire year. There wasn't really anything in particular that I did not like about the Honors College.

C: Is there anything they could do to get you to stay in the program?

S: Not really. If I were to choose to stay in the Honors college now, it would take me longer to graduate.

C: The problem we are trying to solve is Honors students feeling underprepared for life after graduation. Based on some research we have come up with a few possible solutions. One is making all students do a mandatory portfolio of their undergraduate experience so they can better articulate what Honors means to an employer. Another is job shadowing experience frequently as a young undergrad to gain experience and networking skills. Another is a "meet with the advisors" event with transitions so student become comfortable talking with them and utilizing their services. Of these innovations which do you think would be the most beneficial in solving our issue? Why?

S: I think the most beneficial of these choices would be job shadowing. It would be an amazing opportunity for Honors students to get to meet people in the field they are studying and make those connections for when they graduate and are looking for a job.

C: Do you have any suggestions as to something you would have liked the Honors College to do that they aren't doing or any innovations you think would be helpful if implemented?

S: I think it would be helpful to make so that when people are registering for their sequence, they have someone they can talk to in order to find out what the sequences are
I felt like I was going in blind when I chose my Honors sequence, and would have loved to talk to someone about the different classes.

C: Are there any questions I didn’t ask that you think would be helpful in this research project?

S: Nope

C: Do you have any suggestions of other people/ stakeholders I could talk to, to get more perspective on this issue?

S: You could possibly talk to my co-worker __________. She was in the same Honors sequence as me.

C: Can I contact you again if I have any questions? How would you prefer to be contacted?

S: Feel free to contact me with any other questions you may have. Feel free to email me at this same address or call/text me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Email or text

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- GVSU Career Center Advisor

Possible next-steps:

- Talk to the Honors advisors – they might be unaware of the sequence sign up difficulty
## DIALOGUE 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Honors Student Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: 18-30 30-40 40-50 50+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain insight on our top two innovations in order to make improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Parents will provide great insight on our innovations, for they know their kids and their unique counseling needs the most.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Research:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This stakeholder believes that the mandatory Honors portfolio would be a great addition to the Honors College Curriculum. She believes this would be a perfect way to set the student apart in a competitive job field, seeing as employer’s interview so many candidates for one position. The portfolio would add a personal voice to a one-dimensional piece of paper (the resume). She believes, if done right, this innovation could be very beneficial for the graduating student. This could be done by reflecting on what each course taught the student, as well as including real-life experience in the portfolio. This stakeholder also believes that our job shadow innovation would be extremely beneficial. Job shadowing will allow the student to decide whether or not they truly want to continue with their field of choice by gaining real-life experience. This innovation would also allow the student to develop essential soft-skills by collaborating with employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important insights:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Portfolio adds personal voice to a one-dimensional resume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Job shadowing will allow student to decide whether or not they truly want to continue with their major of choice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Job shadowing will allow student to develop essential “soft-skills” by collaborating with employers pre-graduation.

**Dialogue Questions and Response:**

Please read through the descriptions of these innovations and prepare to answer questions regarding the current status and improvement.

A mandatory portfolio would be a requirement for Honors students to complete before they can graduate with “Honors.” This portfolio would consist of reflections on each of the Honors courses the student has taken as well as examples of some of their best work. The Honors student would have some creative freedom with this project to be able to express themselves and convey who they are on this platform. A mandatory portfolio would meet our needs statement “Honors students need to be able to articulate their Honors experience.” Through our research, we have learned it is important for students to reflect on their experiences, values, and newly-learned skills to articulate those to potential employers or admissions and to guide their decision-making. This portfolio could be completed using a Google site. Possible pages could include: “About Me,” “Transferable Skills from Honors Coursework,” “Reflection on My Honors General Education,” “Leadership Experience,” “Senior Project,” and “Community Engagement.” This portfolio would be worked on and added to throughout an Honors student’s undergrad. For example, nearing the end of each Honors course the student takes, they could reflect on what they have learned and what skills they have gained and add that to their portfolio. These reflections could also be shared with Honors faculty to see how their students have grown and what they got most out of their class.

Do you think this portfolio would be beneficial for the Honors Student? Why or why not?

Yes. I think this portfolio would be beneficial for the Honor Student in the reflective sense and in the professional world. Post-graduation, many students are actively seeking in a competitive job field. Setting yourself apart is essential in getting noticed amongst the flooded sea of applicants. A portfolio done in the right manner would provide personal voice to a one dimensional piece of paper label “Resume”.

Do you think the portfolio would accurately display the “Honors College Difference”? If created with the forethought that the outcome of the portfolio project will set them apart in a competitive field, it could serve them very well. If created with haphazard and lacking importance, it will be just mehhh. So, I guess my answer is…it depends on the student creating the portfolio.

What can we improve upon in this innovation? Perhaps not only reflect on what each course taught but to further the education by posing further questions and hypothesis
based on real life events or projects. In addition to add what they would have liked to have been presented with and learned.

The career events would build off existing events put on by other organizations of the University and create new requirements for Frederik Meijer Honors College students. These events would encourage students of the FMHC to be proactive in their search for a career and ensure that they are on track for success throughout their years at Grand Valley. It would be a requirement for Honors Students to attend a certain number of these per year. One of the events must be the Career Fair, in which students can further improve their soft skills and narrow their job search. The Career Fair is also a great event for networking, and students who attend this may be able to find a future employer. A mandatory job shadow would also be a new requirement for students. Students would have the choice to shadow a professional in a certain field of their choosing, or if undecided, be placed in a field. Doing so not only would not only help guide students’ career choices, but also give them an opportunity to interact with professionals in a work-like environment, further preparing them for post-graduation. Failure to complete these requirements would result in the removal of “Honors” status upon graduation.

Do you think making a job shadow mandatory would be beneficial? Why or why not? Absolutely beneficial. When I was an administrator of schools we would often take student teachers into our program. On more than one occasion throughout my years as principal, I have either had to call upon the student’s advisor to discuss their removal from the field, or have witnessed the student decide on their own that the field of education was not their passion. Knowing early that the fit was not as anticipated was very helpful in their ability to make educational changes. Better to know where your passion is prior to graduating than after.

Do you think this innovation will improve soft skills of the Honors Students? Yes. Being knowledgeable in a field is only part of the package. Learning to work together with others that may have diverse opinions is extremely important. This cannot be taught sitting in a classroom. Learning how to deal with constructive criticism can prove to be a challenge in the real world. Many 4.0 Honors Students may fail due to the fact that there is so much that cannot be taught between the 4 walls of the classroom…it’s a real world experience.

What can we improve upon with this innovation? I think it is important to not only have the students shadow one person but perhaps a couple. This would give different perspectives to learn from.
**Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”**

Not Applicable.

---

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

Yes, email or phone call.

---

**Three more connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Stakeholder believes several job shadows would be beneficial for student to find specific passion in their field of choice.
- Stakeholder believes there needs to be a specific outline for the mandatory graduation portfolio in order to be beneficial.
- Stakeholder believes portfolio could be created with haphazard and lack importance if not done correctly.

---

**Possible next-steps:**

- Create portfolio requirements and outline.
- Further specify requirements of job shadow innovation.
Stakeholder Group/Location: GVSU Honors Student and Career Center Employee

Estimated Age: x 20-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+

Gender: Male

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:
The primary goal of this opportunity was to see how an Honors Student working at GVSU’s Career Center could help us to gain insights on what innovation would be best for Honors students to be more successful after graduating from Grand Valley State University. Having experience as an Honors student and working in the Career Center really gave us a lot of insight.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
Conducting this work reflects our team problem statement, because we worked with someone who is double dipping in Honors and the Career Center. This gave us a lot of feedback on our innovations. Working with this particular student reflects on our team problem statement, because it gives us an upper hand when it comes to finding which of our innovations would be best suited to help Honors students be successful throughout their college career and after it as well.

Summary of Research:
This interview provided a lot of insight and different ways the Career Center could be incorporated in our innovation. The student we interviewed is a part of GVSU’s Honors College and Career Center. The student is constantly working with other students to improve their skills and professionalism. The student found that the job shadow and career events innovation was the most important innovation. They felt that this particular innovation would truly set Honors students apart and would make a huge impact when it comes to applying to graduate school or jobs. The student noted that students often struggle with time management, so perhaps we could implement a way to get students to stay on task when it comes to conducting these job shadows. Working with the Career Center could also provide assistance when it comes to keeping students on task during their job shadow search. Along with this, the student also has experience in Design
Thinking, which is relevant to the class and makes a huge impact on the innovation that they chose.

Important insights:

- The student felt that the job shadow and career events was the best way to highlight what Honors students have learned. He believes it will get the students to step out of their comfort zones and become more comfortable with the professional world.
- The student working at the Career Center often tells other students in the Honors College to highlight the projects they have completed. This is good, because the Honors College can be more project based and students should be expressing that to employers or graduate school admissions.
- For the Career Events innovation, the student stated that the Career Center could work together with Honors to help Honors students with job shadows. This may also encourage students to go to the Career Center more for other things, like resume building, interview practice, and more.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Background Questions:

Question One: How many years have you been at Grand Valley? What is your major?

Answer: This is my third year at GVSU, majoring in Marketing and Human Resources Management.

Question Two: Why did you choose to be in the Honors College?

Answer: I chose to be a part of the Honors College to create a unique college experience for myself. The different approach to the general education curriculum was very appealing to me. I had the opportunity to be taught by the former Honors director, Dr. J, in my Social Product Innovation sequence, which has paved the way to narrowing in on a major in Marketing.

Main Questions:

Question One: What are your goals after graduation? What are you doing now to reach those goals?

Answer: After graduation, I plan to pursue a role in either Sales or Human Resources at a corporate company in the Grand Rapids area. Given that these career paths are fairly
different, I am seeking a variety of experiences in both avenues to help me decide which path to pursue. Last summer, I worked as a Human Resources Intern for TRUMPF North America. For this upcoming summer, I am pursuing more Sales and Marketing related internships. In addition, I will be study abroad in Germany for the Winter semester of 2019. This will be something that will help distinguish me from other candidates from approaching each situation with a global mindset.

Question Two: How has the Honors College helped you define or prepare to advance these goals? How do you think it will help you with these goals in the future?

Answer: The Honors College has helped me define these goals through gaining knowledge in Design Thinking with my sequence. The methods of design thinking are something I mention in nearly every job interview with how I solve problems and think outside the box. In the future, I hope to dig even deeper in the design thinking realm.

Question Three: What do you think sets Honors students apart from non-Honors students? How is their experience different?

Answer: I think Honors students take a different approach to learning and understanding material. They look at problems as an opportunity for innovation, not as a challenge. With taking a sequence, junior seminar, and creating a senior project, a student can get a completely different experience. Based on my experience, these courses are more working with experimental learning with real world problems, rather than taking a myriad of general education requirements that may or may not benefit one’s college journey.

Question Four: By applying to the Honors College, what sort of educational benefits did you expect to receive as part of the program? How has your experience so far lived up to these expectations?

Answer: I expected to have harder classes and be tied down with many project each week, but still gain a lot from that. In reality, the biggest benefit I have reaped is having to take a limited number of general education classes with an amazing sequence that covered many requirements and helped me grow as a student. Taking Social Product Innovation opened me up to the world of design thinking, which can be applied to nearly any real-world problem. This class also helped received admission into the Design Thinking Academy.

Question Five: What resources have you utilized in your time at Grand Valley and in what ways have they better prepared you for post-graduation?
Answer: The services I have utilized the most in my time at GV are the GVSU Career Center, Tutoring Services, Writing Center, and the Student Life office. These resources have helped do well in my courses and become involved on campus to the point where I feel like GVSU is my home away from home!

Question Six: What do you know about the GVSU Career Center and the services it offers?

Answer: I currently work for the GVSU Career Center as a Career Connector, so I absolutely cherish all the wonderful services the Career Center offers. The Career Center offers walk-in resume review, undecided resources and mock interviews. There are advisors that specialize in certain majors to better understand how to answer student’s career questions. You can also print resumes on fancy paper for 10 cents a copy.

Question Seven: In your time at the Honors College so far, what is the most beneficial experience you have had or what is the biggest benefit you have experienced?

Answer: The biggest benefit I have received was gaining acceptance into the Design Thinking Academy Fellowship.

Question Eight: What do you think the Honors College can do to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?

Answer: I think they should provide more opportunities for professional development specifically for Honors students.

Question Nine: What do you wish that the Honors College would do differently, if anything, in terms of preparing you for graduation and life after graduation?

Answer: I think that the present Honors College structure prepares students well to build skills of initiative and thinking outside the box.

Question Ten: Who else do you recommend we interview? Name 3.

Answer:
3 Honors Students

Question Eleven: Out of our top five innovations, which is your favorite?

Follow up: Why was it your favorite?
Answer: My favorite innovation was having job shadowing requirements for students. This not only helps students see what a professional job is like, but also, helps them make connections within that particular workplace. The Career Center could work hand in hand with the Honors College to help students in locating businesses to shadow at.

Question Twelve: You work at the Career Center, what do you do there?

Answer: As a Career Connector at the GVSU Career Center, I assist in teaching students’ professional development in a collaborative space called the CareerLab. I facilitate and conduct presentations on interview skills, using LinkedIn for networking/job success, and resume building. In addition, I help develop creative marketing campaigns to promote the Career Center on-campus.

Question Thirteen: What do you feel GVSU students struggle with most? How many Honors college students come in to get help?

Answer: I feel that GVSU struggle the most with time management and sometimes, with development of papers. I feel that Honors students are more likely to come in for help than the average GVSU student.

Question Fourteen: How do you tell students to set themselves apart from others when you see that they are Honors students? What do you tell them to put on their resume?

Answer: I tell them to highlight projects that they have completed in their courses and are relevant to the job they are applying to in some way.

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

Question Fifteen: Are there any questions I didn’t ask you that you think would be beneficial to our research?

Answer: I think I answered all questions relevant to understand my Honors experience.

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

Yes, they agreed to be contacted by cellphone or email for further inquiry.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:
- 3 Honors students

Possible next-steps:

- Reach out to other Honors students who have taken the Social Product Innovation Honors sequence, as they may have some important insight for our innovations.
- Work on formatting an innovation that could incorporate the mandatory portfolio and career events/job shadow.
- Get more Honors students involved in deciding their favorite innovation. Perhaps hold an event where Honors students can explain their likes and dislikes on our innovation and how to improve them.
### Stakeholder Group: Honors Alumni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Age:</th>
<th>18-30</th>
<th>30-40</th>
<th>40-50</th>
<th>50+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Gender:** Male

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of this interview was to get feedback on our list of top five innovations and how to improve them. Another goal was to narrow them down to the top two, which will be our prototypes.

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

This Honors alumni provides a useful perspective for our problem statement because he has already graduated and can provide feedback on which innovations he feels he would have benefited from doing as a GVSU Honors student.

**Summary of Research:**

This Honors College alum is currently in graduate school at the University of Michigan. He provided feedback on our five innovations and thought that the mandatory portfolio and info sessions with career counselors were our top two innovations. He expressed that he was very busy as an undergraduate and was not likely to be going to events or participating in things that were not considered mandatory. He believes that whichever innovations we choose should be ones that do not add much extra burden to Honors students’ already large workload. He never went to the Career Center as an undergraduate student but thinks his statement of purpose for graduate school applications might have been a bit better if he had gone.

**Important insights:**

- Mandatory portfolio and info sessions with career counselors in Honors courses are the two best innovations in the interviewee’s opinion because they would be helpful without being a burden on Honors students.
Job shadowing is something that Honors students should be doing anyways and making it a requirement is not fair for everyone based on their career aspirations and schedule. For example, he could not have job shadowed a therapist because he could not be present for that.

Some Honors students are very busy and do not want to go to events that are not mandatory.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

We have been researching the needs of Honors students and how to better prepare them for life after graduation. We learned that Honors students need to know the difference between their advisors (faculty, academic, career, and Honors) and when to use their services. We also learned that Honors students need to be able to articulate their Honors experience and need to be more comfortable interacting with potential employers.

With those statements in mind, we have come up with five possible innovations and we want to get feedback to help us decide what the top two are. These top two we will be presenting to the Honors College.

Our five ideas are:

1. Mandatory portfolio for Honors students that showcases their work from Honors courses and provides opportunity for reflection on their Honors experience.
2. Job Shadowing requirements for Honors students or a requirement to attend the Career Fair to further improve soft skills and to narrow the job search.
3. “Meet the advisors” event where academic, career, and Honors advisors promote their centers and interact with first-year students.
4. Informational sessions in Honors classes by Career Center counselors about the services offered and importance of career advising.
5. Survey sent out to all Honors students to assess their knowledge of and experience with the Career Center to learn how to better educate them and serve their needs.

Question: What comments and questions do you have about these innovations?

Answer: So, the portfolio would be a website? Would students have to do it outside of class?

Interviewer: Yes, it would just be a Google site or similar platform. There would be guided instructions but it would give the Honors students a lot of creative freedom. It would be for credit or no credit, just based on whether they put in effort to do it or not.
Ideally, it would be incorporated into the courses. It is not designed to be a lot of extra work. It is really a time for reflection.

Answer: I feel like job shadowing is always a good thing, but everyone always ends up just job shadowing someone they know. Like, “Oh, I have to do a job shadow, so I’ll just job shadow my uncle who does this.” Personally, I feel like getting a job shadow is so awkward. I feel like you’d be better off just asking them a few questions about what their job is like. That would be more useful to you. When I debated becoming a marriage therapist, I sent her an email and asked her if I could ask some questions. So she said I could call her and I did and asked her a bunch of questions and it was really helpful. There is no way I would’ve been able to job shadow her because she’s a therapist. Some jobs you really cannot job shadow. That’s not even to mention how hard it would be, some job shadows take months to plan and you would have to miss class and work and that’s just miserable to make students do.

That [reaching out to someone and asking them questions about their job as opposed to job shadowing] would be much easier and better to do, but it would be too hard to enforce as a requirement. I feel like students should be doing this on their own and maybe this would come from some of your other innovations. Doing this once a month would be insane.

The survey feels a little bit like passing the book, like maybe we’ll have someone else come up with a better idea for us. It is very helpful to get more information on a larger scale, but you don’t really get as meaningful of information and it doesn’t really solve your problem. I feel like the Honors College and Career Center should be doing this anyways, it’s a perfect idea for them but doesn’t really make sense for your project. Although I think it is a really good idea and they should be doing this anyways.

I like the info sessions by career counselors. Who doesn’t love missing out on some class time? [The Career Center] seems ambiguous sometimes and it’s hard to find out stuff like that on your own so having someone come in and spell it out for you makes it a little bit easier.

I hate the “meet the advisers” event period. I hate all events. I think they’re worthless. If someone did that one, you would end up like our Title IX coordinator lunch [where there was very little attendance]. People don’t care, and they don’t want to go to more than they already want to. Unless it was something during Transitions where people are going to lots of informative events anyway, that would be the only time that would work. But I don’t know that if when people are freshmen that would be the best time to go. Freshmen aren’t going to go to the Career Center because they’re worried about other things at that
point. For some people, going to the Career Center would be a waste of time if they already know what they’re doing and they’re independent and figuring it out.

Question: Did you ever go to the Career Center?

Answer: No, I didn’t go to any center. I didn’t go to anything. I’m sure my statement of purpose could’ve been way better. I used the Career Center’s website for resume format. Took forever to figure out what font they used haha.

Activity: The innovations were written on sticky notes and the interviewee was asked to order them from “best” to “worst,” in their opinion.

Order of innovations:

1. Mandatory portfolio
2. Info sessions with career counselors in Honors courses
3. Survey sent out to Honors students
4. Meet the advisers event
5. Job shadowing requirements

Question: Which two ideas do you think are the best? For example, you could think about what would be the most helpful, which would be the most practical, or other things.

Answer: Mandatory portfolio and info sessions in Honors classes are definitely the best.

Question: Can you explain why you believe these two are the best?

Answer: I like these because there’s not really much work outside of class. Kids already have a lot on their plates and they don’t need another thing to do, that’s just going to make them more frustrated. I think portfolios would look cool and could be useful and wouldn’t take a lot of time. Same concept for the info sessions, it’s nice that it’s just a structured time that you can hear about it.

Question: Do you think it would have been helpful to experience these two innovations in undergrad?

Answer: I wouldn’t have done anything that wasn’t required. The portfolio is tough because I’ve never been asked to present a portfolio. I would need to be told a little bit more about when it is helpful. Would you send it with your application for grad school? Is it more helpful for certain majors? With my statistics background, I have some visuals...
and posters and research that would have been cool to put on there. It would be nice to put as much effort into it as you want to or as much as you think it would be useful to you. If you want, you could go ham. If you didn’t want to and didn’t think it would be helpful, you wouldn’t go that ham.

The info session would have helped me be more likely to go to the Career Center and it would’ve been nice to learn about it from someone guest-speaking in my class. I always liked that kind of thing.

Question: I just have a couple quick questions left. What is one thing that I didn’t ask you about that you think I should have?

Answer: I honestly have no idea how to answer that.

Question: Is there anyone else specifically that you recommend we interview?

Answer: I don’t know, maybe people currently in the Honors College, like the director or students.

Question: May we reach out to you again in the future if we have more questions? How can I reach you?

Answer: Yeah, phone or text is fine.

Thank you so much for your time and for interviewing with me! This really helps us with our project. Let me know if you have any more questions or comments that you come up with. I appreciate it!

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

I don’t know. I honestly have no idea how to answer that.

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

Yes, by phone or text.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors College Director
- Current Honors students
Possible next-steps:

- Gather more feedback about our innovations from other stakeholders and compare to narrow down to our top two prototypes.
- Conduct research into our portfolio innovation to figure out more details. For example, in what situations are you asked to present a portfolio? Can it be included in graduate school applications?
- Maybe create more details for the “info sessions with career counselors” innovation. It is a very simple and straightforward innovation, so maybe we can think more about what is important for the career counselor to talk about in these sessions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: FMHC Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Estimated Age: _x___ 18-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender: Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Primary Goal of this Opportunity: The goal of this interview was to obtain the opinion of a senior of the Honors College on our innovations. As a senior, this individual was able to relate their own experience to which innovation they believe would have been helpful.

How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?
Having the perspective of FMHC senior allows us to see what students who are about to enter the post-graduate life think would have been beneficial for their success.

Summary of Research:
After conducting this interview, it was determined that this individual preferred the portfolio innovation over the career events one. However, she also liked the career events one, especially the job shadow component, and even suggested combining both innovations into one.

Important insights:
- This individual believes that the portfolio is the most beneficial prototype.
- The portfolios should be tested out on different platforms before implementing them.
- Job shadowing is also important, and students often have to take the initiative on their own.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Question One: What is your major? Answer:
Exercise Science for pre-PT

Question Two: Why did you choose to be in the Honors College?
Answer: Originally, it wasn’t my choice to be in the Honors College as my parents made me, but I am glad that I joined.

Main Questions:

Question Three: What are your goals after graduation? What are you doing now to reach those goals?

Answer: I will have to go to PT school after I graduate. I’m applying to programs right now. Right now I am doing the student volunteer program at Mary Free Bed to gain experience and shadow hours. I also am making connections through my mom’s work- she is an OT and that has been helpful.

Question Four: How has the Honors College helped you define or prepare to advance these goals? How do you think it will help you with these goals in the future?

Answer: The Honors College helped me develop skills like communication and persistence that I think have helped me make solid connections at Mary Free Bed. I also think having professors actually care about my success has pushed me in my college career.

Question Five: What do you think sets Honors students apart from non-Honors students? How is their experience different?

Answer: I think Honors students are more driven than non-Honors students and are more used to success. I think being used to success encourages us to continue that success in the future. Our experience is different because there are higher expectations for us and we have different requirements.

Question Six: In your time at the Honors College so far, what is the most beneficial experience you have had or what is the biggest benefit you have experienced?

Answer: Having my sequence was probably one of my favorite things about the Honors College because it kind of forced me to become close with my peers and I was able to find a community of people my freshman year.

Question Seven: What do you think the Honors College can do to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?

Answer: Maybe encourage job shadowing or provide more opportunities for it. I had to find all of mine on my own.
Question Eight: Which innovation did you like the most and why?
Answer: I actually really like the portfolio idea. Having this at interviews would have been so beneficial for me because I have been asked about my experience in the Honors College, and I have always given an answer similar to what I told you, but…..

Question Nine: Are there any changes or adjustments to these innovations that you would make?
Answer: I don’t really have any changes, but more of a suggestion. Before you present the portfolio idea, you guys should test it out on different websites to see which one is the most user friendly since a variety of students will be using this.

Question Ten: Do you have any new ideas for innovations?
Answer: No, I think you guys targeted the most important areas with your current ones. But maybe you could combine the innovations into one, like how your statement said to include the career events in the portfolio.

Question Eleven: If these had been a requirement for you as a freshman, do you think it would be intimidating?
Answer: Yes, I think along with anything that college throws at you at first seems intimidating, but once you’ve gone through with it, I think I would look back and see that it really benefited me and be glad that it was a requirement.

| Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?” | “I think you asked sufficient questions for your project.” |
| Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? | How do they want to contacted? |
| Yes- phone call |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Honors professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honors student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honors Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible next-steps:
- Narrowing down and specifying our top innovations.
- Deciding on which platform we will use for the portfolios.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group: Honors Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Estimated Age:**  
| 18-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+ |
| **Gender:** Male |
| **Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**  
| To gain insight on our top two innovations so that we can refine them. Also, possibly see which one would be more beneficial to the students |
| **How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**  
| This interview will help us see from a faculty’s perspective - who has seen many students graduate successfully – what will help students post-graduation. |
| **Summary of Research:**  
| This interviewee was very talkative, so I had a hard time asking any of the questions I had prepared; however, we had a lovely talk. He gave me great advice and his opinions were clear and fruitful. His most prominent opinion on our project was that a college can’t really prepare students for life after graduation. It is really something that a student just has to experience to understand. Also, he mentioned, students 10 years post graduation finally get on their feet and understand that their college helped them as much as it could have. Life right out of college is just a hard time for many factors: for example, Honors students who are used to lots of recognition for being outstanding, no longer receive such affirmations which can be a hard adjustment. |
| **Important insights:**  
| • Student’s lack affirmation post-graduation and it can be detrimental to their vision of success  
| • “Life is a lived experience. No one can really prepare someone for what they will run into after graduation. What I hope to do is teach you skills that can help students deal with problems later in life” |
Dialogue Questions and Response:

Interviewee stated:

- Your problem statement becomes an issue of realistic expectations of what colleges can do or should do.
- Honors students spend essentially 18 years being really good students – gratification of grades – after college they then “feel like they’re going off a cliff” and it leads to a struggle for identity.
- (he tells students): the first 4 or 5 years after college are very hard – can be terrifying and exciting – “no one can prepare you for it but life is a lived experience.”

In his Honors sequence he tries to teach important life skills

1. Professional discipline: Taking attendance, assigning weekly assignments, participation points > “essential practices students need to have”
2. Writing: “writing skills encompass problem solving skills”

He discusses diversity issues:

- Students need to learn a comfortability with people who aren’t like them when they get to college. “Learning how to interact with a diverse population is fundamentally important and is part of just good citizenship”
- If students don’t develop good interpersonal skills with people like them, it can lead to a lack of empathy and “lack of empathy leads to disaster”

He hopes that he can provide the self-confidence and skills to students that will help them deal with challenges they may face in life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
NA – but gave me a book to read: *The Defining Decade* by Meg Jay

**Possible next-steps:**

- Talk to 10 year post graduates
- Revisit this interview with more time and ask all questions

**Reason for including this source in your work:**
I used this as background research for the Design Brief introduction. It is a great resource looking directly at our target audience.

**Main argument:**
The document states what recent graduates are doing, what they did, and where they hope to go. Most of them have plans for after graduation – which is good data for figuring out problem areas. In the introduction, the author provides a description of their view on what Honors students are.

**Important ideas:**
- ~75% of all graduates had a plan after graduation
- All graduates successfully completed research and preparation of a thesis
- Many excelled in leadership positions on campus and/or studied abroad

**Evidence: Provide.**
The graduates themselves wrote and submitted their statement profile pages for this document.

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**
“Live. Learn. Head.”
- This is the Honors ‘motto’ used to describe the attributes of a successful honors student’s existence.
“It takes exceptional motivation, persistence, and achievement to graduate in good standing in the Meijer Honors College”

- As Honors students, we understand this. How do we show perspective employers?

“She will be attending the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign iSchool for her masters in library and information science with a focus in academic librarianship. There, she will conduct a graduate assistantship teaching freshman students information literacy principles” (33).

- Good example of a solid post graduate plan from Paige Dhyne’s profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary source</td>
<td>Not detailed information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn’t reflect on graduates’ feelings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connections:

- Our problem statement directly involves graduates feeling comfortable in the real world. Since we don’t have time to interview them all, this document is great to get a better picture of many different paths Honors students take upon graduating.
- The profiles depict each student’s journey at Grand Valley. We could try and see patterns of their journeys during and after their time here.
- We could use this document to find people to interview.

Questions/Concerns:

- How can we efficiently gather data and find patterns with these profiles?
- Who would be a good interview candidate?

Reason for including this source in your work:

- Has many sources, which establishes a good foundation for their research.
- The article is all about how much potential Honors students have in their professional lives, which is directly related to our project.
- Was not done too long ago to the point where the research is out of date.
- Relevant and professional.
- Great tables and graphs.
- Efficiently organized.
- Cohesive.

Main argument:

The purpose of the study is to see if Honors students excel in the workplace and their professional lives. The Honors students rate themselves in a survey and show significant results compared to non-Honors students.

Important ideas:

- Intelligence, creativity, and motivation are the three biggest components when it comes to excellent achievements in the professional world.
- Honors students are significantly different from non-Honors students in terms of the combined, as well as separate, variables, with the exception of persistence.
- Six characteristics were measured that were considered “central” to productive professionals: intelligence, creative thinking, openness to experience, desire to learn, drive to excel, and persistence.
- 1,122 students total were surveyed (467 Honors and 655 non-Honors)
- Honors students were from different Honors Colleges depending on the major and all of the Honors Colleges were surveyed.
- Results were slightly different depending on the Honors College. For example, Law and Humanities Honors students were different from the non-Honors students in terms of their drive to excel.
Honors students in the physics department assess themselves as lower on the creative thinking scale, drive to excel, and persistence than non-Honors peers do.

Evidence: Provide

- Honors students had a greater desire to learn according to a study performed by Kaczvinsky (2007).
- “Mean scores for all students show highest scores for their desire to learn, while scores for drive to excel are lowest. These two characteristics are the largest difference between Honors and non-Honors students.”

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- There is not a ton of research regarding the characteristics of gifted students at a university level.
- “A study that withstands this critique is that of Long and Lange (2002), who explored personality differences between Honors and non-Honors bachelor students in a large regional university in the United States. The student group was largely Caucasian, and covered a variety of disciplines as well as liberal arts.”
- “Kaczvinsky (2007) found that Honors students were more academically confident, more intellectually interested, and more open to new ideas than their non-Honors peers were.”
- “Rinn (2007) found Honors students to be more confident in their abilities.”
- In the Netherlands (where the study took place) the Honors programs are said to be comparable to those in the United States.

“Rinn and Plucker (2004) state, groups of non-Honors students will also include a proportion of potential Honors students. Potential Honors students could have various reasons for not applying.”

Strengths:

- Large sample size (1,122).
- Results were significant compared to non-Honors students.
- Relates to our topic.
- Interesting way to survey students
- Gave us a variety of other sources to use.
- 6 characteristics used to test subjects.
- Each characteristic was broken down to explain why they were

Weaknesses:

- The data was taken from one university, so it cannot be generalized.
- The data was all self-reported, so someone could have reported something inaccurate.
- Not one Honors College as a whole, but different Honors Colleges depending on the major.
- Honors and regular programs do not distinguish talented students from regular students in their selection process.
using it and how it was important in the professional world.
- Good measure of characteristics.
- Tables and Graphs were relatable to study and made sense.
- Clear sections.

- Some parts were slightly confusing.

Connections:

- This resource helps us to see that there can be a significant effect between Honors and non-Honors students in the professional world.
- It also shows that Honors students can differentiate themselves from non-Honors students, and thus answer the question of what sets the Honors students apart.
- The other citations used in this article will also be beneficial to our research, as they are also directly related to the team problem statement.
- We are trying to see how to better prepare Honors students for the professional world, so we can use the six characteristics in our solutions.

Questions/Concerns:

- How can we make sure that the Honors students at GVSU are being represented in an accurate manner?
- How could we make it so that our information is as accurate as possible?
- How can we reduce our limitations during our research?

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

This is a dissertation based on a case study in which both interviews and research were conducted around students at a private university. It contains valuable insights to both the upsides and downfalls of an Honors program, from the student perspective.

**Main argument:**

Dr. Gerri Ann Robbins takes on a case study in which she asks students – both those in the Honors College, and those who are not – their perceptions of the Honors College, and why or why not they are a part of it. As this dissertation is over one-hundred pages long, I am focusing mainly on the research questions as listed in the table of contents.

**Important ideas:**

- Discusses what students think about the Honors College at their institution
- Begs the question of why – or why not – students are partaking in their Honors program
- Statistically compares the six-year graduation rates of students involved, as well as those not involved, in the university’s Honors program

**Evidence:**

One statistical example displays the rate at which Honors students graduate as compared to non-Honors peers. “Based upon a six-year graduation rate, with students having graduated by the end of 2009, the graduation rate for students who completed the requirements of the Honors program was 70.00%. This percentage was calculated based upon 40 students who were students who completed the requirements of the Honors program, of which 28 students graduated in six years and 12 did not … the graduation rate for students who were qualified to participate in the Honors program and chose not to do so was 75.00%. This percentage was calculated based upon 92 students who were potential Honors students, of which 69 graduated in six years and 23 did not.”
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “Students shared that the benefits of the Honors program are difficult to see. One student shared, ‘More incentives for Honor’s Students could possibly cause more eligible students to participate. Also, the students need to know how the Honor’s Program could benefit them or their future careers.’” (Robbins, 78).
- “Several students mentioned that there was a lack of publicity regarding the Honors program. One student wrote, ‘There ought to be more information regarding what the Honors program is and how students can enter into it …’” (Robbins, 78).
- “Students who dropped out of the Honors program described a lack of direction and guidance while participating in the program. One student shared, ‘The Honors program would have been more successful for me if there had been more direction and guidance …’” (Robbins, 86).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contains many examples of what students think of their Honors College, why they are a part of it, and how it could be improved.</td>
<td>Since this is a case study from one institution, many statistics and opinions are present that may not be so at other institutions with a similar Honors College program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connections:

- Connects to our problem statement in that it questions what an Honors College offers to its students
- Begs the question of how the Honors College prepares students for graduation
- Gives potential reasons why students dislike their Honors program as well as potential solutions to address the issues present

Questions/Concerns:

- What is the perceived benefit of being part of the Honors College at GVSU?
- Why do students at Grand Valley decide to participate or not participate in Frederik Meijer Honors College?
- What are some reasons that might cause current Honors students to drop their participation in the Honors program?

https://www.jstor.org/stable/1183492?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=honors&searchText=college&searchText=students&searchText=successful&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dhonors%2Bcollege%2Bstudents%2Bsuccessful&refreqid=search%3Abb18f1f6cd85d110653d15feb538a765&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

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

This source investigates the qualities that a successful Honors Program has and these can be applied to the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Having a more solid foundation in the Honors College could help students in their post-grad lives.

**Main argument:**

This article discusses the characteristics that an ideal Honors College may possess. Simplicity, accessibility, skill development, risk minimization, and incentives that combat procrastination are the main qualities discussed and the layout of their Honors curriculum is explained.

**Important ideas:**

- Honors programs should have “in depth learning experiences,” or capstone projects that promote active learning through “planning, organization, determination, and perseverance”
- Several short-term deadlines can help prevent procrastination
- Recruiting for an Honors College is essential to maintaining it
- From this Honors College, a majority of students said that the Honors College was the most important part of their undergraduate education
- Quality over quantity
Evidence:
- This Honors curriculum breaks up the senior project throughout the junior and senior years with an independent study so that seniors are not as stressed or likely to procrastinate

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- “Principles that guide a successful undergraduate economics program include simplicity, accessibility, skill development, risk minimization, and incentives that combat procrastination”
- A one-credit class taken junior year is an independent study, and this is the basis of the senior project
- “The single most thing we have done to invigorate our Honors program is recruiting”
- “An Honors program emphasizes quality over quantity”

Strengths:
- Provides many characteristics that an Honors College should possess
- Has proven evidence to back up claims
- Is coming from the perspective of an established and successful Honors College

Weaknesses:
- Limited in terms of this being an economics only Honors College
- Slightly outdated as it was published in 2001
- At this school, the Honors College is a lot smaller than GVSU’s

Connections:
- Incorporate the characteristics of a successful Honors College more into the FMHC
- Provide more backup options to those that may have encountered an obstacle in meeting their requirements
- Investigate major-specific classes and/or advising within the Honors College
Questions/Concerns:

- How are major-specific, individualized Honors Colleges more or less successful than general Honors Colleges?
- How can we ensure that the FMHC is doing its best to give its students a proper foundation for post-graduation?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for including this source in your work:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This source summarizes a lot of relevant research about Honors College Students in America and their experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main argument:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The authors synthesize a wide variety of research regarding Honors College students to provide an overview of the existing literature and of topics that have not been studied much. Overall, they claim that Honors students are not studied as much because they are perceived to be more successful and not needing of help. However, Honors students face the same struggles as other college students (these might even be exacerbated) as well as their own unique challenges which are often overlooked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important ideas:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Academic achievement has only a small, positive correlation with accomplishment in adulthood. Attitudes such as expected success, expected GPA, and expected amount of effort as well as personality traits such as introversion and emotional stability are better predictors of post-graduation success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In terms of personality, Honors students tend to be more independent and non-conforming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Due to multipotentiality (the potential to be successful in multiple fields), Honors students tend to struggle more with indecision and lack of commitment when it comes to choosing a career path.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There are gender differences facing Honors students. Although women are increasingly attending graduate school, they tend to go later in life than men due to starting families. Many women also lower their career aspirations due to expecting to take on a disproportionate amount of the family workload.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Counselors at universities are not trained in issues facing Honors students specifically. This means that Honors students need to actively seek treatment and advocate more strongly for their needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


https://doi.org/10.1177/001698620404800106
Evidence:

- There is a lack of research into what kind of programming is best for Honors students and why.
- A vast majority of Universities do not offer unique counseling or career counseling services to Honors students, and those counselors surveyed did not have any knowledge of unique needs of Honors students.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“Gifted” in this article refers to Honors college students. This is the chosen operational definition because this is the easiest way to distinguish high-achieving college students.

“I recall the view of a high school principal—a kindly, amiable educator—that the very bright, being best able to fend for themselves, were least in need of the care of their teachers. It is as if teaching were a practice of medicine wherein the healthy are of little concern.” -Gilbert

“Research has shown that, after 1 year, Honors freshmen had higher level freshman-year grade-point averages than an equivalent comparison group and other non-Honors college students (Pflaum, Pascarella, & Duby, 1985).

Students find the biggest advantages to enrolling in an Honors College to be challenging and unique class experiences, small class sizes, and the general academic environment (McClung & Stevenson, 1988).

Enrollment in an Honors program is also associated with self-reported positive growth in critical thinking (Tsui, 1999).”

“Once in college, talented undergraduates have many options regarding choice of major and eventual career path. Many of these students may have been told for most of their precollege years that, because of their giftedness, they can do whatever they’d like in terms of professional and personal aspirations.”

Strengths:

Provides many relevant sources and supports all of their claims with articles. These articles will be useful in our research.

Weaknesses:

This article was published in 2004, so some of the information might be outdated. We need to follow up with some of these claims and see what new research has come out.
Connections:

- Honors students prefer more structured career counseling, as well as counseling with someone of the same sex.
- Honors students are more likely to struggle with perfectionism and fear of failure.
- Honors students’ unique career counseling needs include: indecisiveness of major/career, need for identity formation with their chosen vocation, feeling a lack of meaningfulness with their chosen career, feeling pressure from others, and having a need for strong role models in their field.

Questions/Concerns:

- What do other Honors Colleges do for Honors students in terms of career counseling?
- What do counselors at the Career Center know about Honors students and their unique needs?
- What proportion of Honors students seek counseling from the University Counseling Center and how does this differ from the proportion of non-Honors students? (I don’t know if we are able to find out this information.)

Reason for including this source in your work:

This article states that college GPA has little positive impact on the success of an adult post-graduation. The findings of this article are important to our innovation project because, even though the Honors College has a GPA minimum requirement, there are other areas that we should focus on to better prepare students for life after graduation.

Main argument:

The GPA of a college student is not a predetermining factor of adult achievement post-graduation. This is in respect to many different areas of “success” such as income, feeling self-achieved, and career promotions.

Important ideas:

- Disproves the idea of 90% of other research studies claiming that GPA has a significant impact on later success
- College GPA has very little correlation in adult achievement
- Simply attending college has an impact on adult achievement
- There are many different ways a person can be deemed “successful”

Evidence:

- “The average correlation between grade average and a composite success criterion was .18, a small effect” (281).
- “Correlations between grade average and eight other criteria of adult achievement were also small, ranging from .09 to .20” (281).
- “Correlational effects were larger in military settings and for studies conducted prior to 1950” (281).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
"The results presented in this paper may be somewhat discouraging to those placing great importance on grades and their predictive value" (292).

"It seems that how well a student does in college relates only marginally with success in a career" (292).

“The focus of this synthesis was on occupational achievement, a somewhat limited definition of adult success. Few studies have investigated relationships concerning other criteria of life success, such as marital and family happiness, involvement in the community, etc.” (292).

**Strengths:**

Eight different success criteria are studied: income, job performance ratings (self, supervisor, peer), income, promotions, satisfaction, eminence, and graduate degree.

**Weaknesses:**

Article only focuses on adult success regarding occupation.

**Connections:**

- Emphasizes idea that post-grad success isn’t determined by how “well” one does in school, but what they do to prepare for post-grad life.
- Our innovation focuses on non-academic preparation.
- Honors College to focus less on GPA and more on well-rounding students with life skills.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Do students put too much emphasis on how well they are performing in class (grade wise)?
- What can the Honors College do to prepare students for life after college (without focusing on the HC GPA requirement)?

Reason for including this source in your work:

This article contains valuable global perspective as to what a career service center at a university should do for their students. Although this is for a school in Taiwan, its career related ideas are applicable anywhere.

Main argument:

The main purpose of this article is to find the most important services a career center should provide. After identifying these, the services are ranked by employers and students to see the most important ones. The rankings are analyzed relative to demographic and data is shown on each tasks importance in each demographic.

Important ideas:

- University’s need students to have good post-graduation plans to look more marketable.
- Colleges need to minimize the gap between school learning/knowledge and practical application.
- Career services need to expand on site job training opportunities.
- Career services needs to be dynamic on their offerings; listen to current students and watch the ever changing job market.

Evidence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Job Service</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Personal Aptitude</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Development Suggestions</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Latest Career Assessment</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Job Market Trend Information</td>
<td>0.085</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Professional Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand Opportunities for On-Site Training</td>
<td>0.168</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpen Résumé and Job Searching Skills</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpen Job Interview Skills</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Solid School-Business Relationships</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold Job Fairs and Career Expositions</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table given on page 4 of pdf document of article.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“Self Directed management plan or personal development plan” (1) – created to help students build a successful future career plan.”

“Currently, most career services staff are those majoring in general physiology or psychological counseling; however, career services relying mainly on non-professionals or psychological counseling systems often cannot accomplish the missions of job services” (2). – raises the question of how interdisciplinary the GVSU Career Center is.

“The research results indicated that, in general, expanding opportunities for on-site or intern training are the most important job service task universities should perform” (3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Real data</td>
<td>- No implementation plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Graduates perspective as well as students</td>
<td>- Small data pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perspective</td>
<td>- Not adequate explanation as to why the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ranked wants/needs are ranked the way they are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connections:

- The data found in this article helps show current employers perspectives on this issue of post-graduation preparedness
- Insights into a global problem surrounding university career services
- A few ways the career center can improve is provided

Questions/Concerns:

- What are the qualifications necessary to be hired as a career service counselor? Background/education?
- Does our career center not only focus on right out of college careers but also successful future career development?
**RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY 8**

|---|

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

I included this source in my work, because I felt it had a direct correlation to our mission statement and goal. They are comparing and contrasting Honors students from non-Honors students relative to how three distinct things rank. I believe this is important in our work, because it will help Honors students distinguish how they are set apart from non-Honors students. I also believe this will help set up some of the background information for our research, as it proves that Honors colleges typically tend to be beneficial for students that decide to enter the program.

**Main argument:**

The purpose of the article is to study the academic achievements, academic self-concepts, and aspirations of college students enrolled in an Honors College and those who are not. Grade point average, academic self-concepts, and educational achievements are all compared. It is found that Honors College students score higher in academic self-concepts and achievement. There were no significant differences found in aspirations between the two groups of students.

**Important ideas:**

- Not all gifted students were in the Honors College. (294 total “gifted students” sampled, 46 of those were considered gifted non-Honors)
- Results indicate that Honors students were scoring higher for academic achievement and academic self-concepts.
- Selectivity in universities is incredibly important when it comes to Honors students success.
- Relative Deprivation, BFLPE, and Environmental Process Theory are all research factors that helped the author to set a basis for how they would begin their research process.
- This research was primarily done to inform high schools about how Honors college students can set themselves apart from Non-Honors students. It was also done to help students make the decision of joining Honors.
Evidence:

The tables are really beneficial in the results section of the research. One example that backs up the author’s argument is using various research to introduce new concepts and ideas as to how they put their research together. Researchers such as Davis, Wheeler, Marsh & Parker, were incredibly useful to the background information of their study. For example, “In controlling for scholastic aptitude, Davis found a difference in students’ grade point averages depending on the selectivity of the institution they attended.”

Another example that backs up the author is the researchers and information used to define the results and the discussion of these results. For example, “Students’ scores on the SATs are the main determinant of eligibility to participate in the Honors program at this institution, similar to most Honors programs in the United States. (Digby, 1999)”

These two examples really show that the author performed their research.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “The study of institutional and programmatic selectivity is in line with studying college influence, therefore, as the selectivity of a particular environment could affect students’ academic achievement, academic self-concept, and aspirations.”
- “In making career decisions and developing future aspirations, Davis believed students are likely to take into account their own judgment of their academic abilities. Thus, if their grade point average is low, their aspirations are likely to be lower than they would be if their grade point average were high.” Davis 1966
- “Results from this study suggest that gifted college students who are enrolled in an Honors program have higher academic achievement and higher academic self-concepts, than gifted college students not enrolled in an Honors program, even after controlling for SAT scores.”
- ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) was used to determine the difference between Honors and Non-Honors students. This measured academic achievement, academic self-concept, and aspirations.
- Relative deprivation, BFLPE, and Environmental Press Theory are all large parts of the research. These things helped give the researcher background information and ultimately helped researchers figure out how to perform the study. They did not entirely replicate the study past researchers did, however. (Davis, 1996) (Marsh & Parker, 1984) (Thistlewaite & Wheeler, 1966)
- “This study will not replicate the theory of relative deprivation, the BFLPE, or the environmental press theory in entirety but will provide support, or the lack thereof, for the relationships underlying each theory.”
- “The term selectivity means the average academic ability of a college or university’s entering freshman class (Astin & Henson, 1971) and is usually regarded as the best single measure of institutional prestige (Karabel & Astin, 1975), such that the most prestigious schools are often the most selective.”
**Strengths:**
- Sufficient amount of sources
- Organized sections
- Proper APA formatting
- Clear and efficient in getting information across
- Could be used to prove that Honors colleges typically are beneficial for students
- Can be used to describe background information for our research
- Written from someone at a university
- Tables and charts are easy to understand
- Materials and methods used to perform the study were relevant to the topic

**Weaknesses:**
- Sample size (uneven group segments)
- Limited to generalization, because the institution is limited
- Use of SAT tests are used to get into college, however the SAT is known to have bias against African Americans and Americans from low socioeconomic backgrounds and women
- Grading is subjective in different classes, so it can vary
- Some Self-Reported SAT scores, which could differ from actual scores
- Most in the study were freshman or sophomores
- Pre-enrollment characteristics were not taken into account

**Connections:**
- This resource can help to give us background information when we are explaining Honors students and how Honors colleges typically help students succeed.
- This resource provides evidence as to what areas are different between Honors college students versus Non-Honors college students. This will help Honors college students identify what sets them apart from Non-Honors students.
- This research provides a lot of beneficially resources and information that we could potentially use to further our research and eventually solve the issue of how to help Honors college students prepare for post-graduation

**Questions/Concerns:**
- How do we make sure we are getting the best and most accurate information during our research?
- How do we make sure we are utilizing our subjects time and gaining the most we can from valuable face-to-face interactions?
- What proper materials will we use during our research?

Reason for including this source in your work:
This source analyzes the roles and benefits that parents and families contribute to the education of post-secondary students.

Main argument:
This article contends that families and parents play a rather supportive role in the college journey of the student. Also, it does not undermine the importance of non-parental family figures. Instead, it defines family more broadly (e.g. grandparents, single-parent households, same-sex parents, etc.) as to include students from all walks of life more equally, rather than solely reinforce the norm of two opposite-sex parents.

Important ideas:
- Limiting terminology to ‘parents’ decreases the full range of responses to questions about educational support.
- Focusing on parents neglects the wide array of support available through extended families, families of differing socioeconomic status, dual-language families, etc.
- Student demographics are changing. Students aged 25 years and older are growing faster than students aged 24 and under, and the amount of people who identify as students of color is increasing as well.
- The supporting role of parents and families in the lives of their students contributes to multi-faceted growth of the students.

Evidence:
“Recent literature on parental involvement and its implications for college access and enrollment has placed a large emphasis on decoding the impact of parental support and expectations on the college enrollment of their children. This research also argues that parental involvement in early years is vital, as children begin to form college-going aspirations at early elementary ages,” (Harper & Kiyama, 31).
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“Parents’ support, in the form of providing a nurturing and supportive relationship, is related to growth in students’ social competence, self-esteem, cognition, and grade point averages.” (Harper & Kiyama, 28)

“Although research has found that underrepresented students might experience low academic expectations from teachers (Martinez, 2003), higher levels of parental support are associated with higher educational aspirations for low-income youth, which have the potential for translating into higher rates of college enrollment.” (Harper & Kiyama, 31)

“Research suggests inviting families to orientation programs can facilitate family support for underrepresented students … For example, some orientation programs offer special-interest breakout sessions for underrepresented or first-generation groups of students and families.” (Harper & Kiyama, 34)

Strengths:  
Discusses the important role that family and parents play in the academic success of the students they send to college.

Weaknesses:  
Bounces back and forth between ‘parent’ and ‘family’ terminology frequently, often making them seem interchangeable - though they state the distinction within the article. This just seems a little confusing.

Connections:
- Relates entirely to parents and family, which is one of the key stakeholders in the stakeholder map
- Talks about why family is important to college success, which might also translate to student success in post-graduation life
- Suggests that parents and families that are involved with their students tend to foster growth and more academic success in post-secondary education

Questions/Concerns:
- How important is the role of our parents and families in assisting us in life after graduation?
- Does parental/familial involvement earlier in life make students more likely to seek academic challenges such as enrolling in the Honors College?

**Reason for including this source in your work:**
After our first collaborator debrief, I thought that investigating soft skills that employers are looking for in candidates would be beneficial for our research.

**Main argument:**
Through a study, researchers have found that in today’s job market, employers are looking to hire employees who possess both strong hard skills and strong soft skills.

**Important ideas:**
- Soft skills are lifelong and continuously develop not only in one’s career, but personal life as well.
- People skills are a core component of soft skills
- The most important soft skills deemed by business executives are integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic.
- One’s hard skills and soft skills must complement each other in order to be successful.

**Evidence:**
- In one study, it was found that 75% of long-term job success is dependent on people skills whereas 25% is related to technical skills
- The main study conducted in this article incorporated both college students and real business executives to find the top 10 soft skills.
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- “The shift from an industrial economy to an information society and an office economy means that many jobs now place an emphasis on integrity, communication, and flexibility”
- “Communication, or the lack thereof, has been the reason for many tragedies and disasters that have taken place within the financial industry, health care, and the wider environment in recent years”
- “Preparing students with soft skills could make the difference in whether they find, and keep, the job for which they earned a degree”
- “Soft skills can be included into the curriculum easily by spreading the content throughout the semester:
  1. Introduce students to basic people skills so they understand how to get along with people.
  2. Segue to teaching essential customer service skills.
  3. Foster student understanding by facilitating a problem-solving discussion based on real-life situations.
  4. Have students demonstrate the people skills they have learned using role-play exercises in a mock business setting.”

Strengths:
- Fairly recent (2012), so applicable to today’s college students
- Provides a list of soft skills that should be developed in college to be successful afterwards
- Echoes what has been said by guests in class

Weaknesses:
- The study was focused on business students, so students studying health care, education, or other areas may differ in qualities
- Evidence is based off of one study so external validity may not be strong

Connections:
- The soft skills discussed in this article would give students in the FMHC a great advantage in their search for a career or graduate school.
- Soft skills carry on throughout life, so an individual that possesses strong soft skills is highly likely to be successful in their personal life as well.
- Developing these soft skills in college would help the “social awkwardness” of many of the FMHC students.
Questions/Concerns:
  ● How can we incorporate the application of soft skills into the FMHC experience?
  ● What are the most important soft skills needed to be improved upon for the FMHC students in particular?

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

As we continue to research and move closer to generating ideas for innovations, it is interesting to see what suggestions are being made to improve college career counseling and advising services across the country. While we may not use the exact idea for our innovations, it is important to see why this curriculum recommendation is made and what is important for college students’ development.

**Main argument:**

In the 1990s, the Citadel Honors Program implemented a mandatory college course plan for Honors students dedicated to self-reflection and career-planning. This should be implemented in other colleges because a good way to keep preparing for post-graduation life in students’ minds is to make it a requirement. For example, freshmen in the course are assigned with creating a self-development plan, including creating a plan for each semester and summer for career-valuable experiences, exploring out-of-classroom opportunities, and using self-assessment tools. The first year is a group course, and from each year onward, the course is a one-on-one tutorial consisting of meetings with the students’ mentor.

**Important ideas:**

- The National Academic Advising Association and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Association both recommend that academic advising aid more in decision-making and career planning by gauging students’ interests. It should be more integrative and make students reflect more on their educational experience and provide an intellectually challenging experience for the student.
- Combining or creating a stronger link between academic advising and career advising would help students synthesize their academic and nonacademic experiences to their long-term goals and values.
- The five goals of a personal and professional development class is: to hone a student’s knowledge of their profession, to verify that the profession is a good choice for them given their aptitudes and interests, to assess the best methods for achieving professional success, to develop faculty contacts, and improve each student’s research, writing, and discussion skills.
- Four year plan/what an advisor should talk about with their mentee:
  a. Freshman year: student should get to know at least one faculty member in their major; be informed of experiential learning opportunities (study abroad, research, etc.), discuss intended major, aptitudes, and career goals; consider a “plan b” option.
  b. Sophomore year: Transition from considering career plans to learning more about that profession by reaching out to someone they know in the field or researching. Then develop an experiential plan, such as internship, volunteering, study abroad, or undergraduate research, which will provide experience and knowledge base.
  c. Junior year: Reflect on current career plans and reach out to relevant faculty, read faculty publications, and continue research in their major. Plan for their summer opportunities, consider scholarship opportunities for graduate school, create a list of graduate school options, and research employers.
  d. Senior year: Similar to junior year, focused on prospective employers and graduate schools. Learn how to write applications for grad school and scholarships, resumes, personal statements, admissions essays, as well as interview preparation.

- The Citadel Honors College is relatively small, so to implement this program for a larger school, an idea is to have sophomores and juniors meet both in groups based on major and career goals and one-on-one with their mentors.

Evidence:

The author uses anecdotal evidence from Honors students who reflected on their experience with the program, as well as recommendations for career advising from the National Academic Advising Association and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Association.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

Two quotes from Citadel Honors students who went through the personal and professional development course requirements:

“… These meetings and papers have allowed me to flesh out my ideas, identify what is important to me, and then find options that fit my values.” (p. 54)

“[The director] sent me various articles and journals that taught me more about my accounting profession than any accounting class had thus far. In all, it was very helpful to have a mentor who was geared towards helping me individually. [The director] was very persistent in pushing me to develop myself over the course of my college career.” (p. 55)
“From the moment students first arrive on campus, the goal is to motivate them to determine, investigate, and plan for their potential career. Students need the guidance of a mentor who acts as part academic advisor, part career counselor, part professor, part devil’s advocate, and part cheerleader. The resources provided by NACE, including individual skill assessments, sample course descriptions, and articles on career readiness planning, support a mentor’s efforts.” (p. 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides an example of what another Honors College is doing to better prepare its students for post-graduation life.</td>
<td>This is only one example from a small college, and they do not have quantitative data to back up their claims.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connections:**

- Developing a close, long-term connection to an advisor is important for students to guide their reflections, and connect to resources and opportunities.
- Bridging the gap between academic advising and career counseling can synthesize a student’s academic and nonacademic experiences and help them as a whole person.
- Making self-reflection and post-graduation planning a requirement is a good way to get students preparing for post-graduation life.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we get Honors students to reflect on their values and future more?
- How can we get Honors students to interact with the Career Center advisors more?
- Is there a way we can bring career advising to the classroom like Citadel Honors College does?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for including this source in your work:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This article discusses the importance of “soft-skills” in a workplace, and the millennial lack thereof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main argument:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This article argues that there is a strong gap in soft-skills in the newest incoming workforce. The author believes that although young employees have heightened technical skills the non-conforming attitude of new employees hurts more than it helps in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important ideas:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| - Young employees lack professionalism and critical thinking skills.  
- A culture of “customization” leads to the idea that individual accommodation is normal.  
- Electronic communication hinders in-person communication skillset.  
- “Teaching to the test” is too common in our education system.  
- Millennials think like customers. |
| **Evidence:** |
| Millennials are not accustomed to interactions with peers who are not “roughly their own age, in relationships of their own choosing, refereed constantly, and engaging with them in a parallel conversation through social media”.  
Soft skills are “regulations of the self”. |
| **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:** |
| “You have to get those second-wave Millennials to care enough about the soft skills that you turn on their self-building drive and they focus on mastering the missing skills”. |
“In contrast, coworker relationships are primary in the working world, involve a high degree of interdependency in pursuit of concrete goals, and carry high stakes”.

“Unfortunately, it is rare that schools teach students to assemble and evaluate evidence, construct competing arguments, and understand multiple sides in a debate, let alone untangle seeming inconsistencies and wrestle with complexity. In college, university, and graduate school, those learning the technical skills are likely to persist in “learning for the test.” Those being schooled in the liberal arts often err to the other end of the spectrum, becoming convinced that “all styles are equally valid,” so they have difficulty vetting information for its legitimacy, use value, and broader implications”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes specific sought after soft-skills.</td>
<td>Extremely harsh and bias opinion on millennials and the newly employed in general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written towards hiring managers (although this gives a unique insight).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Connections:**

- Hiring managers believe millennials need to learn soft-skills of professionalism, critical thinking, and followership—how can this be done?
- How can FMHC lessen the “teach for the test” curriculum?
- Students need to have personal drive to go above and beyond to learn soft-skills.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Learning soft-skills is based on self-discipline.
- Will it even be possible to rewire the FMHC curriculum to not teach for the test? Not to mention, Honors Students still have to take certain Gen-Ed courses.
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
This source is a study, written using a lot of evidence from Grand Valley State University student retention statistics, as well as comparing that to the national average to get a sense for the institution’s performance. Being specifically based around the issues facing sophomore retention rate, it could give us clues as to why students are leaving after their second academic year, and why it is important to keep those students enrolled.

Main argument:
Many institutions are being held accountable by state legislators, community members, and institutions themselves to keep up retention and graduation rates. As a result, many college administrators are trying their best to maintain high retention and graduation rates, in an effort to avoid defunding. Arguably the most ignored class at any university is the sophomore (second-year) class; by focusing on only getting students from their first-year to second-year, universities may be merely delaying the attrition of those students, rather than keeping them until graduation.

Important ideas:
- First-year retention rates could be worthless if students are not committed through their second academic year
- If sophomores are not successful, the university is not successful
- Defines the term “sophomore slump,” a multidimensional phenomenon that can begin as early as the second semester of a student’s college career
- Discusses the design of a program that would provide services to that enhance academic success, as well as improve retention and graduation rates

Evidence:
“Tinto (1975) expanded upon the first retention theory developed in 1970 by William Spady. According to Spady, the quality of social conditions and social interactions for each student will affect their chances of persistence (Tinto, 1975). In other words, if a student does not get acclimated into the social system of a college, it will lead to a lack of commitment and an increased chance of dropping out.” (Stoll, 13-14).

“Due to the unknown factors of the sophomore slump, Kennedy and Upcraft (2010) redefined it as:

“A multidimensional phenomenon which can begin as early as the second semester of college and includes one or more of the following: academic deficiencies (low GPA, poor academic progress), academic disengagement (low motivation, limited faculty interaction), dissatisfaction with the collegiate experience, major and career indecision, and developmental confusion (identity, spirituality, personal values and beliefs, life purpose’(p.39).” (Stoll, 18).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“Many studies pertaining to sophomore students discussed the fact that sophomores have received very little attention in research literature (Graunke & Woosley, 2005); (Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008); (Juillerat, 2000); (Vuong, Brown-Welty, & Tracz, 2010). While sophomore students have received little attention in the literature and research, the sophomore year also tends to be the point at which institutions provide the least amount of support to its students (Graunke & Woosley, 2005).” (Stoll, 19).

“Sophomores have been unable to conquer the variety of challenges associated with the second year of college, resulting in the phenomenon known as the sophomore slump (Graunke & Woosley, 2005). Juillerat (2000) argued that sophomores may have needs that are different from other students and these needs are being overlooked by many institutions.” (Stoll, 19).

“Sophomores may continue to become distant from the university community and participate in more social activities than being actively involved in their own learning (Graunke & Woosley, 2005). Allen et al. (2008) revealed that social connectedness and commitment to the institution had direct effects on whether or not students persisted.” (Stoll, 21).

Strengths:

Addresses problems associated with second-year students and their retention rate for their sophomore year and on. Provides reasons for why second-year

Weaknesses:

This project does not attempt to discover the needs of second-year students at GVSU via a survey or other means of data collection. It also does not compare which academic resource (academic advising,
students might be likely to leave before their third year.  
career counseling, or tutoring) has the most notable impact on sophomore retention rates and academic success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connections:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provides insight as to why second-year students might struggle to stay in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discusses potential solutions to combat the “sophomore slump”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analyzes retention theories that attempt to explain the reasons students drop out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions/Concerns:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How can we use this study to make a change that retains the interest of our students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are Honors students more likely to face the “sophomore slump” than their non-Honors peers?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Citation:** Gilfillan-Bierlein, S. (2007). *A descriptive study of relevant issues influencing the internship program coordination at Grand Valley State University*

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

This source explains how internships can be better enhanced to help students for life in the workforce and ultimately post-graduation. This is incredibly beneficial to our research as it relates to our topic of helping GVSU Honors students for life after graduation. We want the students at GVSU to be ready for life in the real world, and internships are crucial to that process.

**Main argument:**

The main idea and purpose of this journal is to explore how internship programs at Grand Valley State University might be improved to help current students, graduates, employers, etc. Research confirmed that employers, students, faculty members, etc. place a high value on internships and gaining experience for the area the student plans on going into. There is more work to be done when it comes to getting the word out about internship opportunities and putting together a set list of procedures for the internship process.

**Important ideas:**

- Grade point average has a lot to do with getting a job and employers are becoming more selective during the hiring process.
- Internships can help students develop immediate skills which enhance academic performance, time management skills, communication, self-discipline, heightened initiative, and overall better self-concept. It also increases GPA for those students (Knouse 1999).
- College internships are one way to essentially bridge the gap between the academic setting and post-graduation employment.
- Knowing how to work with diverse cultures is especially important in and outside of the classroom/workplace.
- Students involved in internships and experiential learning are able to better solidify their career goals.
- “Employers want to focus more on sophomore and juniors so they have time to make class/major adjustments and fine-tune their career goals.”
Evidence:

Kolb’s Theory of Experiential learning is one of adult development and is a learning cycle. It includes four steps: Concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

Of 24% of students at GVSU who completed an internship, 96% would recommend an internship to other students. These students also commented on a need to improve the internship process and communication.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“According to Theorist Robert Maynard Hutchins, learning at the college level should not have vocational aim (Hutchins, 1936). He believed that if we want to educate our students for freedom, we must educate them in liberal arts and in the great books (Hutchins, 1943.)

“In keeping with the newly developed attitudes towards experimental learning, and the changing employment hiring needs, GVSU has developed some well-structured professional programs in which there is a built-in internship or practicum component.”

“A streamlined and collaborative relationship between these colleges and the Career Services administrators needs to be in place in order to provide students with consistent and reliable experiential education or internship opportunities that will benefit their future career development.”

Goal one: “to explore the argument that experiential education/internships are necessary components in developing and preparing the post-secondary student for their working world beyond higher education.”

Goal two: “examine how collaborative efforts between the academic faculty and student affairs professionals, along with the prospective employers, may assist in this process of combining student academic success with career development.”

Surveys were sent to students, faculty, and employers.

- Only 34% of faculty at GVSU recognized the value and need for internships

- 85% of students surveyed disagreed that they would be able to easily secure a professional position upon graduation with-out having any career related experience.

- 44% of students said they could not take unpaid internships, because they didn’t have time and couldn’t afford it.
- One student suggests tuition could be lowered for internship credit.
- 71% of faculty agree that students should take unpaid internships
- 80% of faculty respondents state that most students do not know the process for acquiring an internship!!!
- When students were asking about visiting Career Services, 80% responded “no.”
- Hour seminar for how to be a better intern 70% agreed (students).
- Further research should focus on assessment and effectiveness of Career Center, improve communication levels between students, faculty, and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Appropriate appendices</td>
<td>- Using quantitative survey information gathered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- For GVSU specifically</td>
<td>- Changes in economic employment hiring trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relates to helping GVSU students excel and gives an example of how we can better market GVSU students (internships)</td>
<td>- Summary feedback was summarized, rather than split up, so now recommendations are used for the Career Services at GVSU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Associated with the Career Center at GVSU</td>
<td>- Broad nature of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Thorough and clear sections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Well organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Engaging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connections:
- Internships are huge deal when it comes to experience for one’s particular field.
- Maybe we should be implementing internships to help GVSU Honors students for post-graduation.
- Perhaps having someone solely dedicated to internship coordination at GVSU would also be beneficial to Honors students.
- Perhaps GVSU can implement workshops for how to be a better intern for Honor students.

Questions/Concerns:
- How can we come up with innovations for our project?
- Are there any more GVSU research bibliographies that would make sense to include in our research?
- Could we potentially interview Suzanne Gilfillan-Bierlein?

Reason for including this source in your work:

One of our possible solutions is creating a more holistic and combined advising center. This article gives insight how to do so and how it works.

Main argument:

One of the most important concerns for a university is getting students into a major they enjoy and will stay in, and graduating/successfully finding a career. By transforming underutilized space to a combination space of academic help centers specifically for science majors, students will succeed more effectively.

Important ideas:

- Science specific success center – not just general
- A collaboration space between professors, advisors, and students
- Utilization of innovative technology to better the experience in advising

Evidence:

There is a section on how planning well helps students reinforce their goals. In culminated advising/help center students will see their future, plan for it, and be more motivated to follow it.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“collaborative educational network that promotes excellence” – referring to their advising center. It is an exciting rebrand of the boring “student advising.”
“[the success center has] allowed staff and faculty to combine their efforts to ensure enhanced performance and achieve success in [all] areas” – combining makes everything more streamline.

“Students thrive when they have an "academic destination in mind," and, with proper advising, students can follow a course they find interesting” – So important!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Similar to one of our solution ideas</td>
<td>- Only tested in one college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Detailed account of what a collaborative advising center would look like.</td>
<td>- Not very much hard data to prove statements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connections:

- It is important that Honors students stay on track and stay motivated; advising is helpful for both of those things.
- Online advising utilizing innovative technology – creates easier access to advisors
- A space with all types of advising in one area

Questions/Concerns:

- How plausible would it be for Honors to have a space where all types of advising was present?
- Could this type of advising center be useful for an interdisciplinary program such as Honors?