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## Preparing FMHC Students For Life After Graduation

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PREPARING  
FMHC STUDENTS  
FOR LIFE AFTER GRADUATION

DESIGN THINKING  
● TO MEET REAL WORLD NEEDS  
FALL 2018

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## Opening Statement

Dear Reader,

The pages you have before you are a complete chronicle of our journey through the design thinking process. We were asked a pressing question: “how can Honors students better prepare for life after graduation?” This question launched a four-month journey, for which we were given the map of the design thinking process. This map was unique in that it told us what terrain we would be navigating, but not how to get to the next destination. Not directly, anyway. Every section of terrain had many paths, and plenty of open space to forge our own.

From the rolling moors of defining, the treacherous ocean of empathizing, and the jagged cliffs of redefining—to the plentiful woodlands of ideating, the uncharted wilderness of prototyping, and finally, the open plains of testing, we wound our way through the problem, and came out on the other side with a solution. Afterwards, we compiled all our newly-forged maps into a portfolio of our innovation. We are proud to share our progress—how we went from standing before a real-world question to creating the concept of a Laker Legend web application.

Thank you for taking the time to explore our journey—perhaps our insights can help you in some exploration of your own.

Sincerely,

Team Think Tank

## Think Tank Design Brief

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### Background

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The Frederik Meijer Honors College (FMHC) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) provides an interdisciplinary approach to the university's general education requirements. Home to roughly 1,700 students, or about 8% of total university enrollment, this elite program boasts an

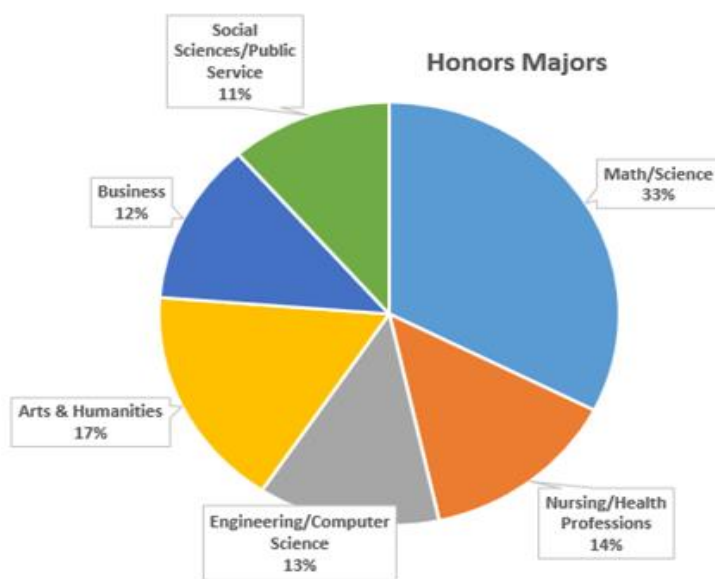


Figure 1: Frederik Meijer Honors College Majors (Gilles, 2018)

average high school GPA and ACT score of 3.93 and 29, respectively (Gilles, 2018).

Honors students come from a wide variety of majors; any student that satisfies the Honors entry requirements can become part of the Honors program (Figure 1). The program supplies a broad education that emphasizes collaboration, critical

thinking, and problem solving. Along with a “sequence” taken the first year at GVSU, Honors students are also required to complete a Junior Seminar and Senior Project. Though the curriculum is not specialized for each major, students will be able to apply the Honors learning method to non-Honors classes.

Along with the impressive statistics about the students who enroll in Honors, achievements that students earn while part of the Honors College are equally impressive. From comprising 50% of the Fellows of GVSU's Cook Leadership Academy, to being recipients of

innumerable scholarships and grants, FMHC students clearly illustrate what it means to be dedicated, tenacious, and

versatile students (Gilles, 2018). Similarly, at 60.7%,

Cohort	GVSU 4-yr	Hon elig 4-yr	Hon 4-yr	GVSU 5-yr	Hon elig 5-yr	Hon 5-yr	GVSU 6-yr	Hon elig 6-yr	Hon 6-yr
2012	~37%	47.0%	60.7%						
2011	35.7%	50.4%	62.6%	~60%	72.4%	81.7%			
2010	34.1%	39.4%	59.7%	60.2%	68.9%	87.3%	~67%	73.9%	90.9%
2009	36.7%	48.0%	65.4%	60.0%	64.9%	85.1%	66.6%	71.7%	87.6%

Honors students have a 23.7%

Figure 2: GVSU Graduation Rate (Chamberlain, 2017)

higher 4-year graduation rate than students who were not eligible for Honors and a 13.7% higher 4-year graduation rate than students who were eligible for Honors, but declined to enroll in the program (Figure 2).

Overall, the Frederik Meijer Honors College provides excellent support for students aiming for a versatile education during their enrollment at GVSU. When the entering class of 2021 was polled, 50% of students reported that the FMHC was “a pivotal or very important reason that they came to GVSU,” and the outstanding facilities, unique curriculum, exceptional faculty, and nurturing environment were the most attractive aspects of the Honors program (Chamberlain, 2017).

Despite the long list of achievements of Honors students reported in the 2017 Annual Report (Chamberlain, 2017) and the 2018 Annual Report (Gilles, 2018) neither report mentions how the FMHC has prepared its students for life after graduation. Similarly, neither aforementioned Annual Report mentions the employment rate or graduate school admittance rate of FMHC alumni. Without tracking successes of Honors students after graduation, FMHC cannot accurately judge how well they prepare Honors students, or Honors students prepare themselves for graduate school or the workforce. Similarly, the broad range of majors enrolled in the Honors College presents a unique challenge for faculty and staff to effectively prepare each individual student for their future after graduating.

Though resources exist on campus to prepare students for life after graduation, the Director of the GVSU Career Center, Troy Farley, reports that Honors students utilize these resources less than the general population of GVSU (Farley, Troy. Personal Interview. 4 Sep. 2018). With almost 1,300 employers participating in events and on-campus interviews sponsored by the GVSU Career Center, it is counterintuitive that Honors students would utilize these resources less than the general GVSU student body (2017 - 2018 Year in Review). Though the FMHC has so clearly supported students during their enrollment in the program, it is evident that there is a gap between the focus on educational attainment through the Honors College as compared to occupational preparation for life after graduation.

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### *Opportunity Statement*

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The underutilization of graduation preparatory resources by Honors students and lack of a specific method to prepare FMHC students for life after graduation provides a unique opportunity for innovation. Employing the design thinking method, *we will design a program or system that effectively prepares FMHC students for life after graduation while simultaneously boosting the college's reputation for graduating students fully prepared for the workforce or graduate school.* This solution will support FMHC students, allowing them to easily define, apply for, and integrate into life after graduation, no matter the destination!

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### *Ecosystem Description*

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Figure 3. is a representation of a stakeholder map of those that could be most impacted by addressing the opportunity. The primary stakeholder of this proposed design challenge is the Frederik Meijer Honors College as a whole (which includes current students), but most directly affects students and faculty of the FMHC.

Other stakeholders include faculty and staff of GVSU and potential employers. Insight from these stakeholders will be beneficial to help better prepare FMHC students for life after graduation, specifically within their careers. Also, alumni can provide us with

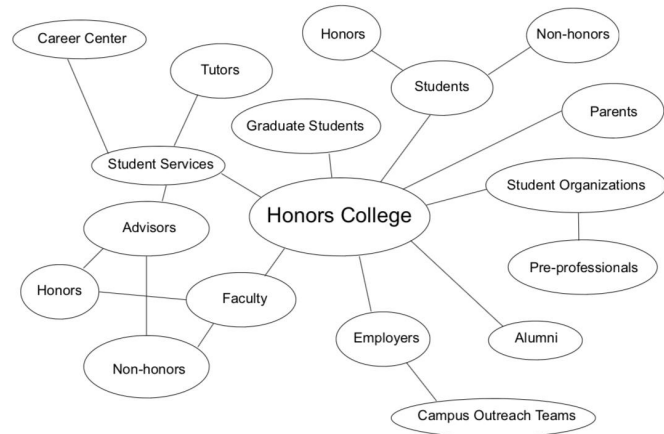


Figure 3: Stakeholder Map

the knowledge of their previous experience in the

Honors College in order to see new opportunities and move forward with their careers. Student Services and student organizations are both stakeholders that help with networking, Student Services being more professional and student organizations being more social. It is our responsibility to understand the needs and motivations of these stakeholders in order to best tailor a solution that addresses the Opportunity Statement.

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### Constraints

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Several constraints will assist in the pace and direction of this proposed project. It will be necessary to empathize, ideate, test, and revise quickly as we will need to complete this project within fifteen weeks. Secondly, our solution must not interfere with the operation of the current GVSU Career Center, or its relationships with employers. The solution must be clear to both Honors students and non-Honors students on how to engage concerning life after college. Lastly,

it must be a solution that is provided through the FMHC without relying on any external colleges or businesses.

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### *Research*

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Primary means of research for this process will include those based on the design thinking method of solving problems. The user-centered design thinking method follows the following iterative process: Define, Empathize, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. The design thinking process allows problem-solvers to truly understand the needs of an end-user. This allows for innovative solutions that should deliver far better outcomes for those that will be using the designed solution. In order to gain empathy with our end-users, we will employ two main methods of research: interviews and secondary research. Throughout the course of this project, 24 interviews will be conducted with the stakeholders as described in the ecosystem. These interviews will allow our design team to fully understand our stakeholders needs by digging deeply into conversation and analyzing what each individual has to say about the FMHC. Our other source of research will be utilizing secondary research, of which we will have 15 citations. This could include researching the Honors programs or other universities or analyzing experiences comparable to FMHC. The coupling of these research methods will grant us excellent insights into possible solutions for better preparing Honors students for life after graduation. These insights will be used to create innovations and develop a final prototype concept. This prototype concept will take into consideration all of the input we have received about the FMHC and generate the next steps the Honors College can take towards better preparing students for graduation.

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### *Outcomes*

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We foresee the Frederik Meijer Honors College providing its students with resources that are utilized to seamlessly transition to life after college. All of the students at FMHC will be able to use their knowledge of what sets them apart from the competition when applying to graduate programs or their desired occupation. This support for its students both during and after their enrollment at FMHC will earn the Honors College recognition throughout the Midwest for going above and beyond in preparing its students for life after college. This stellar reputation for the college, as well as the performance of FMHC graduates, will attract even more students driven by excellence and ambitions to change the world, further building on the quality and accomplishments of FMHC and GVSU!

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## References

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Chamberlain, J. (2017). *Frederik Meijer Honors College Annual Report Executive Summary July 2017*. Frederik Meijer Honors College.

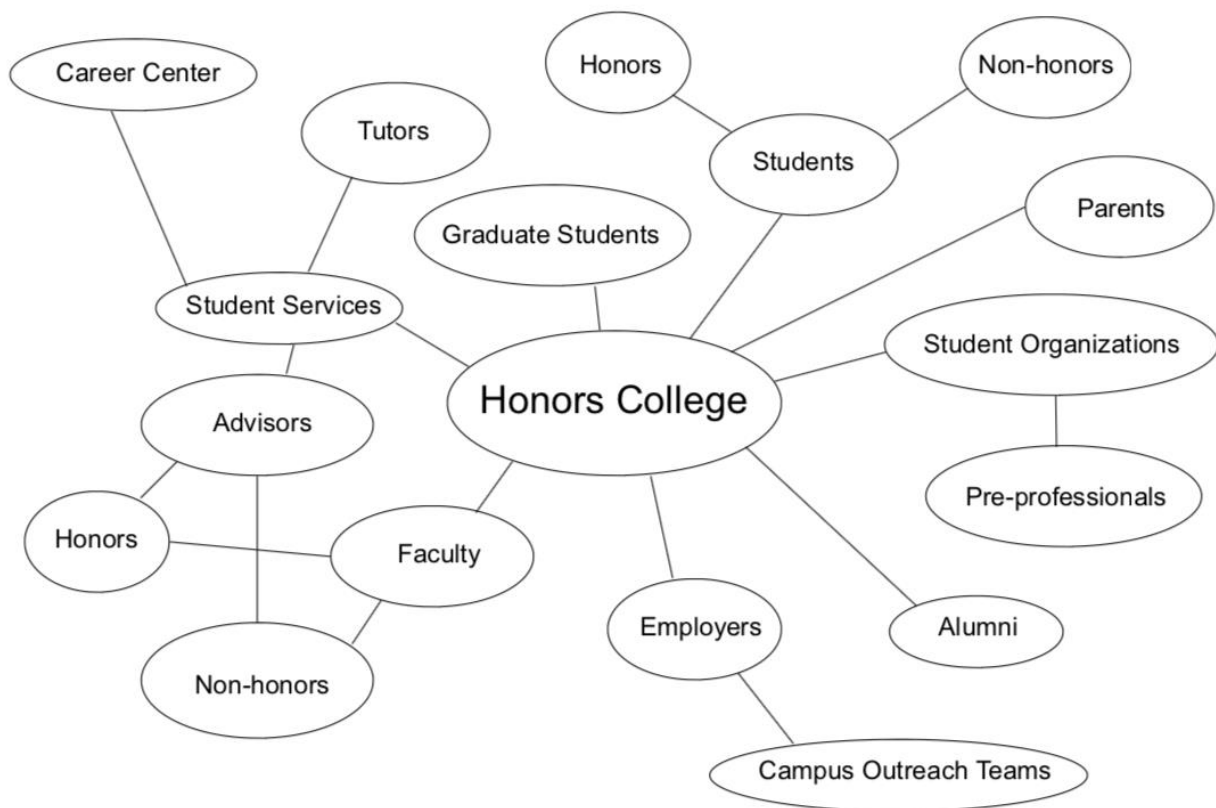
Farley, T. *Personal Interview*. 4 Sep. 2018.

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*2017-2018 Year in Review*. (2018). GVSU Career Center.

## Stakeholder Map

A stakeholder map is vital to the design thinking process because it identifies the most relevant people involved in the outcome of our project, as well as show how they are all connected. We created our map by brainstorming all of the people who have any connection to the students in the Honors College (*Figure 4*). When initiating our research, we interviewed people, on a week to week basis, from a variety of stakeholder groups to obtain their insight on bettering the Honors College student experience. This stakeholder map was utilized weekly as a powerful visual reminder of which groups we interviewed and which we might want to interview next.



*Figure 4: Stakeholder Map*

# Affinity Map

An affinity map is a collection of ideas, opinions, and concerns derived from the stakeholders that we have spoken with. This map is crucial to the design thinking process because it allows us to group this information based on common patterns, or derived insights. Our team created the map by collectively taking note of the most important perceptions that came from any form of research. We used the map to group the insights such that we could derive needs statements that would next drive our innovations. The Affinity Map shown in *Figure 5* is a final version consisting of the groups of insights we derived from dialogues and research bibliographies.

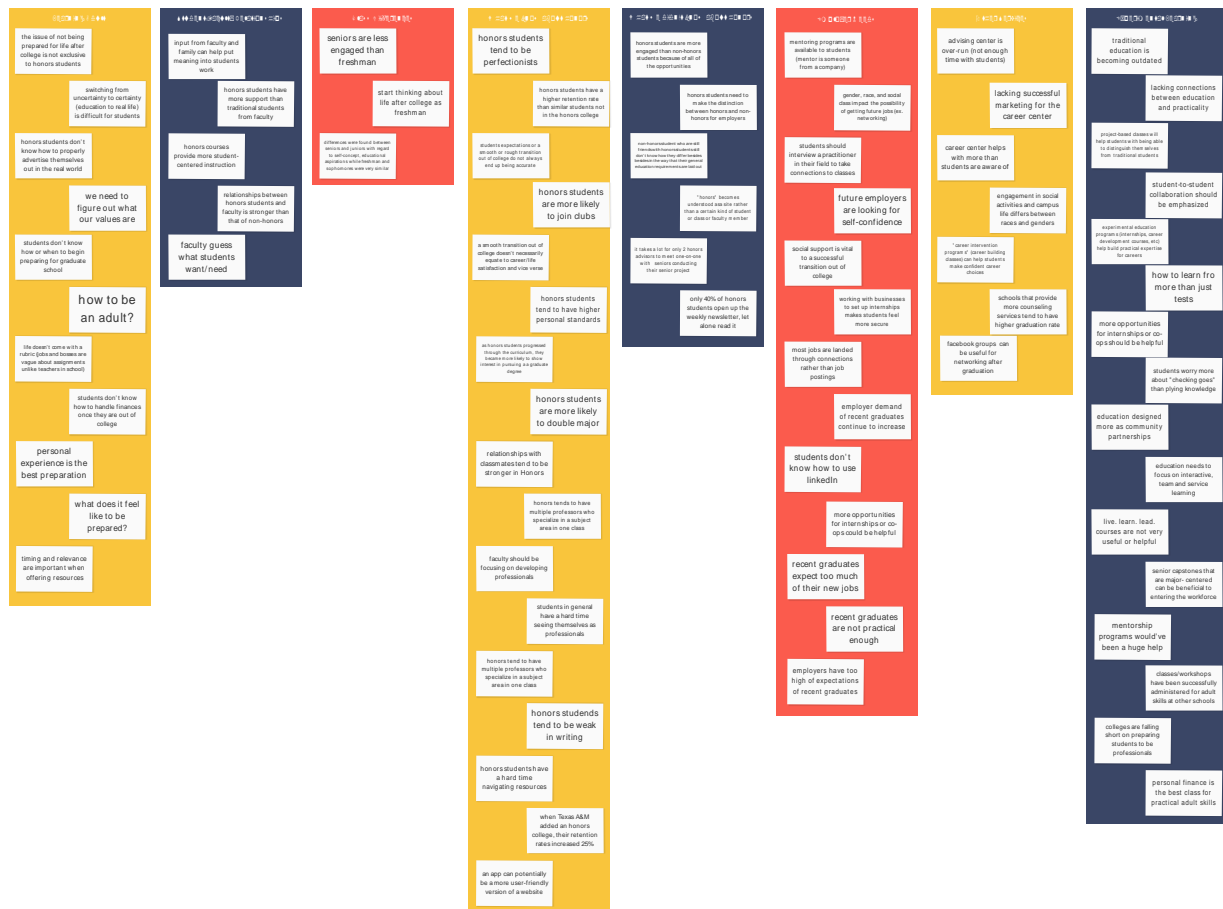


Figure 5. Affinity Map

## Collaborator Debriefs

The purpose of the following three Collaborator Debriefs was to invite some of our stakeholders at different points during our design thinking process. We created small presentations to share with them what we had learned so far, and how we were going to apply it to our innovation. The stakeholders were invited to share their thoughts and insights on the information presented, so we could integrate their input for possible implications or adjustments to our innovation.

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### Collaborator Debrief I

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The first Collaborator Debrief focused on the best insights we had derived from our research. The insights were compiled and presented to six different stakeholders and collaborators, including an Honors Student, an Honors Advisor, the Dean of the Graduate School, and a Brooks College Academic Advisor. Through this process, they were able to validate our insights as well as provide more insight on the next steps.

<b>1. Debrief Preparation</b> <b>Articulating and Revising the Initial Vision</b>	
<b>Design Challenge Debrief</b>	<i>We will design a program or system that effectively prepares FMHC students for life after graduation while simultaneously boosting the college's reputation for graduating students fully prepared for the workforce or graduate school.</i>
<b>Summary Insights</b>	Key Insights: 1. Honors students don't know how to be adults. 2. Honors students are lacking connections between their education and real-world applications. 3. Honors students usually wait too long to prepare for life after college.
<b>Questions for the Collaborators</b>	Questions: 1. How could we help Honors students connect their education to their career? 2. How can we implement something into the Honors curriculum that helps teach Honors students how to do practical adult responsibilities? 3. How can we get Honors students to start preparing earlier?
<b>2. Debrief Feedback</b> <b>Capture What's Meaningful to Advance Effective Innovation</b>	
<b>Instructor</b>	It can be more compelling to have a lower GPA but valuable experience than to have a high GPA and no experience. Students should be able to explain their choices in a way that highlights their experience. To get that experience, they need to broaden their scope beyond the classroom.



	Internships, jobs, and out-of-class opportunities are what make the difference.
<b>Class</b>	HNR 313: Design Thinking to Meet Real-World Needs: It would be helpful if campus resources were made more accessible to Honors students in general, especially lesser-known ones like Money-Smart Lakers. The Honors orientation doesn't do anything to prepare students for thinking about their future career and life after college, so incorporating that would help give Honors students an early start. Finally, the Live, Learn, Lead courses are often irrelevant to the degrees and future careers of Honors students; perhaps their topics could be chosen and designed to be relevant.
<b>Collaborator</b>	<b>Honors Advisor:</b> Students should be intentionally and continuously asking themselves what they are getting out of their classes and the Honors College in general.
<b>Other Stakeholder(s)</b>	<p><b>Dean of The Graduate School:</b> Graduate schools in general are turning toward a more holistic approach for admissions instead of solely academics. Suggested redesigning the Honors orientation to make it more future focused. He also suggested a mandatory class of some sort to get students to think more about what is important to them. The importance of adaptability, flexibility, communication, problem solving, and working with others was also mentioned. Honors students should be thinking about what sets them apart from the beginning.</p> <p><b>Honors student:</b> A disconnect exists between class curriculum and the ability to apply the knowledge learned in classes. The best way to make connections is to gain field experience. He asked how we can get students out of a student mindset and into more of an adult mindset? He stated that soft skills are often more important to employers than education.</p> <p><b>Brooks Academic Advisor:</b> She asked if Honors students face any different barriers than the rest of the GVSU student body. We need to figure out how to get students to do well in their adult responsibilities instead of adding additional curriculum requirements. A potential barrier for Honors students is that they might be less accustomed to being vulnerable than other students. Why do students seek out academic support, but not support for other real-world things (jobs, money management, etc.)? Retrain students to think about their next steps instead of a "shiny" perfect job.</p>

<b>3. Post-Debrief Reflections</b> <b>Integrate the Feedback &amp; Ideate Next Steps</b>	
<b>DIVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>deviate</i> from your team's current insights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The insights we presented affect all students, not just Honors students.</li> <li>2. Part of being an adult is finding resources instead of having resources come to you.</li> <li>3. It is not FMHC's responsibility to tell students what they are getting from Honors.</li> <li>4. Need a better definition of what it means to be an adult.</li> <li>5. Students need to learn how to be an adult on their own instead of having something added to curriculum.</li> </ol>
<b>CONVERGE:</b> How did the feedback <i>align</i> with and enhance the team's current insights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Honors student confirmed that there is a disconnect between curriculum and application.</li> <li>2. Academic advisor confirmed that students wait too long to prepare for life after college.</li> <li>3. Honors student confirmed that students do not know how to "adult."</li> <li>4. Honors students have a hard time explaining what sets them apart.</li> <li>5. There is a lack of real-world application of Honors experience.</li> <li>6. Curriculum isn't the best way to make connections, experience is.</li> </ol>
<b>APPLY:</b> How can you <i>use</i> the feedback provided?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage faculty to have more hands-on experience.</li> <li>2. Consider changing Honor's Orientation.</li> <li>3. Find a way to get Honors students to think more critically about their class choices because class choices can directly impact how prepared students are for the future.</li> <li>4. Examine how we can implement adaptability and flexibility into Honors.</li> </ol>
<b>ACT:</b> What are your next steps?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider interviewing a high school counselor to see what they do to prepare students for college.</li> <li>2. Interview more students to see how they find resources or how to make resources easier to find.</li> <li>3. Interview a counselor or faculty from another Honors College to see how they implement adaptability and flexibility.</li> <li>4. Investigate student class choice to see if they are choosing classes that will help them in their future.</li> </ol>

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*Collaborator Debrief II*

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Collaborator Debrief II focused on our top need statements derived from our many weeks of research and our top five innovations. The stakeholders that attended included an Honors Advisor, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, a Career Center Advisor, and an Honors Student. They provided us input on where our innovations should focus, and which ones stood out to be the strongest. In addition, they gave us advice on how to adjust them to make them the most beneficial to Honors students.

**Debrief Two**

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<b>1. Debrief Preparation Telling the Story</b>	
<b>Design Challenge Debrief</b>	<p>Team Problem Statement: <i>We will design a program or system that effectively prepares FMHC students for life after graduation while simultaneously boosting the college's reputation for graduating students fully prepared for the workforce or graduate school.</i></p> <p>Team Needs Statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors students need to learn adult responsibilities.</li> <li>• Honors Students need to start preparing earlier for life after college.</li> <li>• Honors students need to be aware of their resources.</li> </ul> <p>Team Top 5 Innovations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a class that helps students learn how to accomplish basic adult tasks.</li> <li>• Workshops that teach adult skills that help students throughout their entire Honors experience.</li> <li>• Create a checklist of things students should know how to do by the time they graduate, separate it by age/class. Like MyPath.</li> <li>• Create a mentorship program for Honors students once they have a declared major.</li> <li>• Create a website for Honors students that organizes helpful resources for transitioning out of college.</li> </ul>
<b>Questions for the Collaborators</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does anyone have experience with mentorship programs with students? What worked and what did not work?</li> <li>2. How did you all learn the necessary skills to be an adult and how could that be applied in the Honors College?</li> </ol>

	3. How could we implement a class that would help Honors Students learn about adult responsibilities?
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<b>2. Debrief Feedback</b> <b>Capture What's Meaningful to Advance Effective Innovation</b>	
<b>Instructor</b>	Think of ways to design a mentorship program that aligns with the specific challenges of Honors students. Make sure that innovations match up with needs statements. Timing of education with liberal arts classes is quite important.
<b>Class</b>	<b>HNR 313: Design Thinking to Meet Real-World Needs</b> At Western they did require Honors students to attend a certain number of workshops per semester. Is it possible to give Honors mentors credit for mentoring other Honors students?
<b>Collaborator</b>	<b>Honors Advisor</b> Think about improving what currently exists rather than “recreating the wheel.” “Career Center can pull in way more employers than Honors can.” Liked the idea of having casual meet and greets with potential employers. Consider convincing people of the value of their resources. Consider the timing/relevance of these workshops or events so that they make sense to the students. For instance, would students care about learning to get a mortgage?
<b>Other Stakeholder(s)</b>	<b>Associate Dean of The Graduate School</b> Science courses likely do not list soft skills in Standard Learning Outcomes. Less students contacted advisors once MyPath started being used; most students only come in now if they are having issues with MyPath or deciding which class to take. He liked the idea of the Honors College putting on “adulting” workshops during relevant times of the year and suggested doing 3 per semester. He also mentioned that it could be helpful for employers and graduates to tell students how important soft skills are instead of faculty bringing it up; “maybe it’s not the message, maybe it’s the messenger.” <b>Director of the Honors College</b> Adding mandatory monthly meetings would require either adding credits or kicking people out of the College if they didn’t attend. He liked the idea of creating a checklist for students to use. He didn’t believe that teaching Honors students how to do adult skills would be very helpful as he felt that Honors students would be able to learn the skills on their own. The director felt that faculty should be preparing their students for their professional careers. He also felt that requiring Honors students to attend events for “Honors points” and requiring that they earned a certain number of Honors points each semester was a poor idea. He thought it was a poor idea because he didn’t want to have to police those students and kick them out if they didn’t have the required number of Honors points.

	<p><b>Career Center Advisor</b></p> <p>Part of the issue is that information comes from so many different sources (e.g. different advisors) that students often don't know which ones to listen to, or where to go for specific information. She also thought that no one is ever fully prepared to be an adult, and that it's not something you can really teach. For example, the best mentorships come about by chance and friendship, not by appointed positions. An idea that she brought up a few times was required job shadowing, with the university setting aside designated time for doing so. She wondered what compels different students to go to an event, and what inhibits them.</p> <p><b>Honors Student</b></p> <p>He liked the idea of Honors students having a portfolio to showcase work. He also suggested that GVSU could look into partnering with organizations to teach people about finances.</p>
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<b>3. Post-Debrief Reflections</b> <b>Integrate the Feedback &amp; Ideate Next Steps</b>	
<b>DIVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>deviate</i> from your team's current insights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We should consider improving some of the resources that already exist rather than creating more.</li> <li>2. The best mentors usually arise organically, not in a structured way.</li> <li>3. Most adult responsibilities are learned through experience, not taught.</li> <li>4. One of the lessons in adulting is learning how to find resources.</li> <li>5. Students will most likely only take advantage of a resource when they currently need the resource, so the timing of when the resource is delivered is critical.</li> </ol>
<b>CONVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>align</i> with and enhance the team's current insights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students have a hard time finding resources or don't put effort into finding resources.</li> <li>2. Students don't know what to listen to since information comes from so many different platforms.</li> <li>3. A checklist would be handy to make sure that students are able to gauge how well they are preparing themselves for life after college.</li> <li>4. Workshops would be useful for supplementing adult skills.</li> <li>5. Soft skills are an essential part of learning how to be an adult.</li> </ol>
<b>APPLY:</b> How can you <i>use</i> the feedback provided?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Workshops would likely be more helpful than adding another class to Honors curriculum.</li> <li>2. Coming up with a checklist of skills that students should know how to do would be helpful for Honors students.</li> <li>3. Make sure resources/programs are relevant and introduced during appropriate times.</li> <li>4. Think about how to convince people of the value of resources.</li> </ol>

<b>ACT:</b> What are your next steps?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. When interviewing students, ask them what compels/inhibits them from attending an advertised event on campus.</li><li>2. Describe innovations to students in interviews and ask them which are their favorite ideas.</li><li>3. Find out what resources students find valuable and what makes them valuable</li><li>4. Brainstorm a checklist of adult/soft skills for Honors students to learn.</li></ol>
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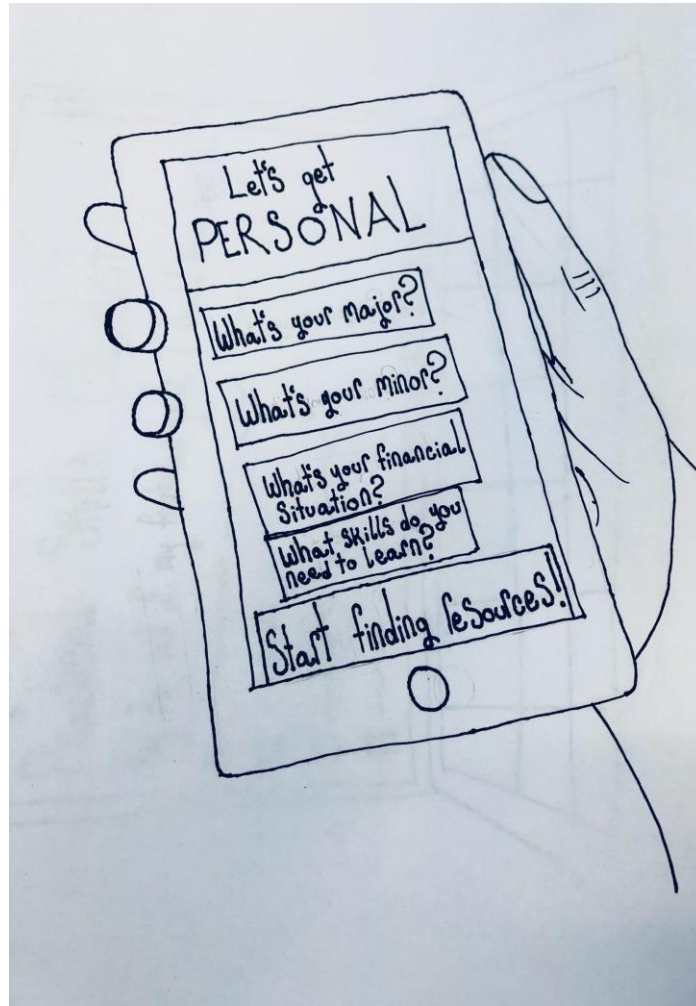
### Collaborator Debrief III

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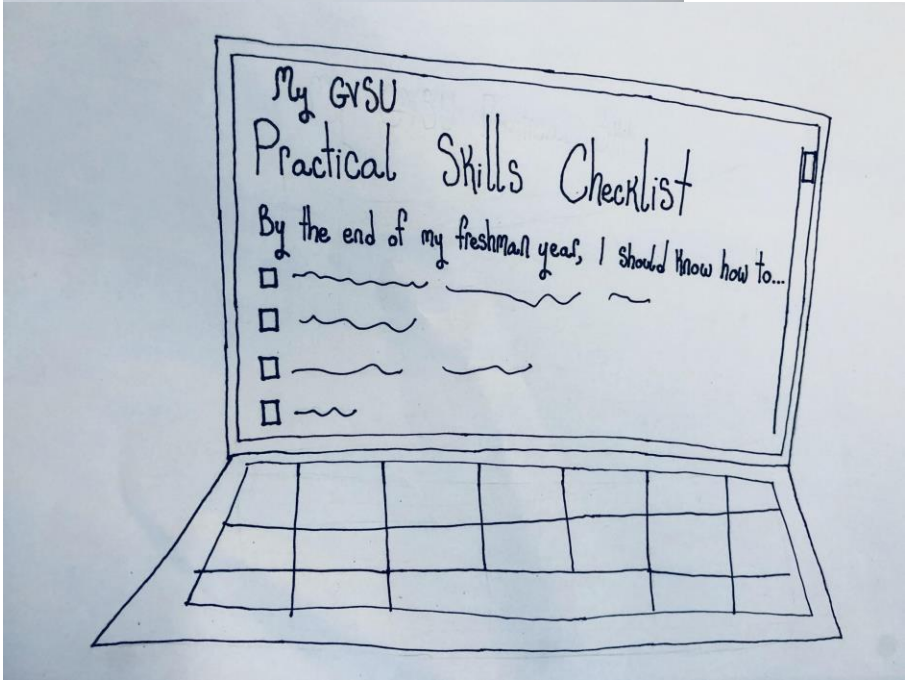
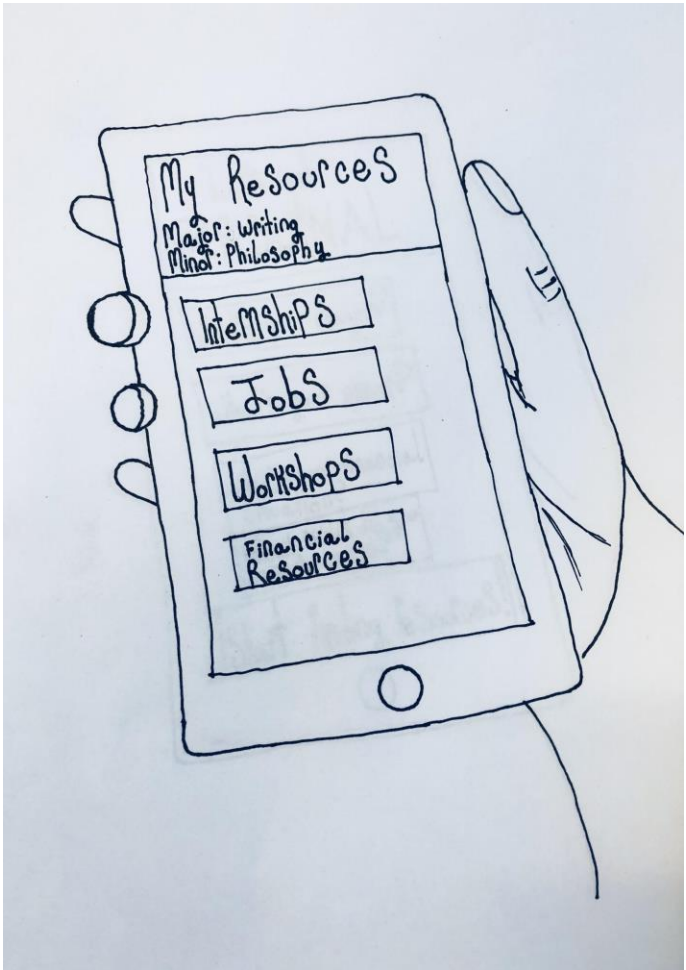
Collaborator Debrief III focused on our top two innovations. The stakeholders that attended included an Honors Advisor, an Honors Student, a Brooks College Academic Advisor, the Director of Community Engagement, and the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. They provided our team with pros and cons of each of our top two prototypes, which helped us with the development of our final prototype.

1. Debrief Preparation Envisioning the Future	
<b>Design Challenge Debrief</b>	<p><b>Team Problem Statement:</b> <i>In order to prepare FMHC students for life after graduation we will design a system that effectively communicates campus resources in a user-friendly manner.</i></p> <p><b>Top two prototype concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Resource Reference App</li><li>● Know How: Life Skills Checklist</li></ul>

Summary  
Illustration







<p><b>Questions for the Collaborators</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which of these innovations do you see being most useful to students? Why?</li> <li>2. How could we format the checklist to encourage students to utilize it?</li> <li>3. What do you like about the current plan for the app? What can be changed?</li> </ol>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Debrief Feedback</b>  <b>Capture What's Meaningful to Advance your Prototypes</b></p>	
<p><b>Instructor</b></p>	<p>The university has already determined that investing in student's "adult skills" is necessary with the existence of Money Smart Lakers. Think about potential partnerships that can be made with companies to help run the app. The personalized aspect of the app is helpful for students to filter out the information they need.</p>
<p><b>Class</b></p>	<p><b>HNR 313: Design Thinking to Meet Real-World Needs</b>          Make sure the app is helpful enough that people actually want to download it onto their phones. Also consider who will continually manage and update the app.</p>
<p><b>Collaborator</b></p>	<p><b>Honors Advisor-</b> She didn't exactly buy the idea that teaching adult skills is the responsibility of the Honors College. That being said, she did appreciate that our innovations allowed the responsibility to be shared by the students and the faculty, rather than just resting on the faculty. She did not like the idea of a discussion board because that would require having a designated person monitoring the board.</p>
<p><b>Other Stakeholder(s)</b></p>	<p><b>Honors student-</b> She really liked the idea of having a checklist because coming into college, a lot of people don't know where to start in regard to adult skills. She also thought that it would be helpful to add a discussion board aspect to the app because younger students may want to reach out to older students for advice about classes.</p>

**Brooks Academic Advisor-** The checklist could be integrated into our app. The app is really interesting to her because they have talked with other advisors about creating an application that would be used across the whole university. The big questions that they have pondered is will students use it?

**Director of Community Engagement -** The idea of having the checklist or an app on your phone is a good idea because of convenience and it's where we keep much of our lives. The problem that arose is the idea of funding for the app and whether or not it would be a huge expense. When something needs funding, the idea of corruption arises and making sure we don't overload the app with unnecessary advertisements is a big thing to focus on. He pointed out that the costs that are associated with these prototypes allows for the possibility of corruption.

**Associate Dean of The Graduate School-** Resources in an app for phones is useful since technology is such a big part of today's society. He also asked how we know who will use the app and who will manage it.

<b>Post-Debrief Reflections</b> <b>Integrate the Feedback &amp; Decide on Your Best Solution</b>	
<b>DIVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>deviate</i> from your team's current insights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students would like to be able to reach out to older students for advice about courses.</li> <li>2. Students may not be willing to download an app.</li> <li>3. Maintenance of the app could prove to be problematic.</li> <li>4. The app has the potential to become corrupt if not funded properly.</li> <li>5. Is it the Honors College's responsibility to teach students these skills?</li> </ol>
<b>CONVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>align</i> with and enhance the team's current insights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The idea of having resources on our phones is good because it is easily accessible.</li> <li>2. Students have information overload so notifications that are tailored to their interests would be helpful.</li> <li>3. A checklist would be helpful because an overwhelming number of students don't know how to do adult skills.</li> </ol>

	<p>4. It would be helpful to have a resource that's easily accessible through technology, but also connects students back to in-person resources.</p> <p>5. GVSU is already considering the idea of creating an application that would provide resources for students.</p>
<p><b>APPLY:</b> How can you <i>use</i> the feedback provided?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We could think about possible partnerships?</li> <li>2. We could consider adding a discussion board aspect to the app.</li> <li>3. We could have the checklist on the app.</li> <li>4. Think of a way to make sure everyone sees pertinent information along with their personalized interests in the app (i.e. checking resumes etc.)</li> </ol>
<p><b>ACT:</b> What are your next steps?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create some type of survey that determines whether students will actually download and make use of the app.</li> <li>2. Integrate the checklist into the app for our final innovation.</li> <li>3. Start researching who would be the best option for building the app.</li> <li>4. Get in contact with nursing advisor who started one of the existing GVSU apps.</li> </ol>

## Top Five Innovations

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### *Life Skills Class*

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Students often enter life after college without the knowledge and skills to complete basic adult tasks. Incorporating a class into the curriculum for students would enable them to become more capable of performing these tasks on their own and would reduce their stress in the future. Learning these tasks throughout college will also better prepare students for encounters they could have in their future careers. Students would be required to attend this class regularly, as seen in *Figure 6*. It would consist of learning basic personal finance, how to find appropriate housing, mock interviews, resume building, and how to prepare for the workplace. The sections that would be related to basic personal finance will focus on how to manage checks and checkbooks, loans, mortgages, taxes, savings accounts, how to build credit, etc. Mock interviews and resume building will be very helpful not only with a graduating student's first job, but all their career opportunities down the road. Preparing for the workplace will range from how to dress, all the way to how to introduce yourself appropriately and behave in various work settings. All of these skills and tasks need to be learned at some point, whether it be before they are actually needed, or after college as people encounter situations that require them. This class would be optional but would still count as credit, allowing students who find learning these skills helpful and value the opportunity to take it and have it count towards credit for graduation. The class will be very beneficial since it will meet on a regular schedule, keeping students engaged and on track with what they are learning.



*Figure 6. Students attending Honors class*

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### *Practical Life Skills Workshop*

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One of our top five innovations is the implementation of workshops to help teach students practical adult skills. There are already workshops being held on all sorts of topics, some of which touch on practical skills. However, the goal of this innovation would be to run workshops *dedicated* to adult skills, perhaps only one or two skills per workshop (*Figure 7*). Such skills could include how to do taxes, how to find suitable housing, how loans work (especially car loans), a hands-on workshop about interviews, a workshop about networking, and maybe even a workshop that teaches students the subtle tips that will set them apart as a young professional. Workshops could be held a few times a month for a couple of hours each. It would even be a good idea to repeat certain workshops throughout the year, so that students have multiple chances to fit a workshop into their schedule, or just get more practice.

This innovation overlaps with one of our other innovations, a class dedicated to teaching practical adult skills. The difference is that a class would be on a regularly scheduled basis like all other classes, while a workshop series would have a more relaxed and spaced-out schedule. The benefit of a workshop over a class would be that it allows students to learn practical adult skills without having to dedicate a class slot to them. However, this would also mean that not every student who needs to learn these skills would make use of the workshop, and thus, it might not impact as many students.



*Figure 7. Student attending one of the workshops*

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### *Checklist of Life Skills*

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For one of our top 5 innovations, our team decided that it would be helpful to add a checklist that would show a set of skills that all students need to have accomplished by graduation and it would be separated by college class (i.e. freshman, sophomore). Since our Honors students have identified that they like to be able to list off their skills, they can use the

list to measure their growth across their years of undergraduate work. Our research has shown that Honors students don't know how to differentiate themselves through their Honors experience, so the checklist of skills they have learned, in addition to the curriculum, will make it easier for them to discuss what they have learned, possibly in an interview. This checklist could be incorporated into Mypath, or some other online database, so that as each year passes, students can see the checkmark to know which tasks they have accomplished, and which ones they have yet to learn (*Figure 8*). It is a good idea to connect this checklist to Mypath so that if many students, for instance, have not checked off "I can build credit" but did check off "I learn how to spend money wisely", then a workshop could be offered on credit-building that semester, since it is in demand according to the checklist.

This innovation overlaps with the possible innovation of creating workshops. This is because if an Honors sophomore looks on his/her checklist on Mypath and realizes that they still don't know how to build credit or manage their credit card, then they could attend a credit-building workshop. The workshops that are offered could be based on the current results of the checklist. A few months into the school year, it should be required that everyone updates their checklist. There could be a quick 5 question proficiency test about the specific topic on the checklist. If the student passes (4/5 correct answers), then they receive a checkmark for that task. From there, input will be gathered to determine what workshops are in high demand to fulfill the student's requirements. If another university department or organization, such as MoneySmart Lakers, is offering a workshop about a specific topic, then the online database could provide more details or even a link to possible resources to learn more about that topic.





*Figure 8. Checklist of life skills*

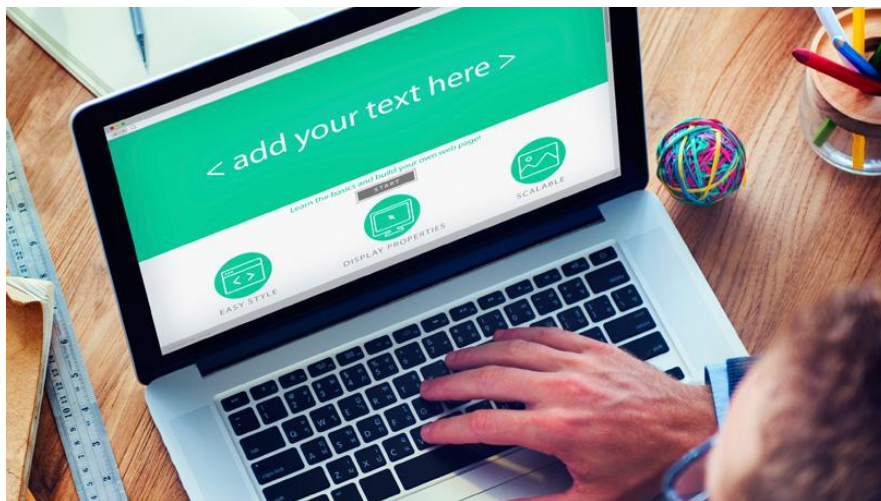
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*Campus Resource Website*

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When our team integrated learnings from our interviews and research, we heard loudly and clearly that students do not like to take time to chase down resources. Because of this we have made creating a centralized website for Honors students one of our top five innovations (*Figure 9*). We believe that having all of the resources available in one place would help students to be able to quickly and easily access the resources that they need. Students would be able to create appointments on the website as well as have a categorized list of all of the resources that the Honors College offers. This would help Honors students find the resources they need because it would remove two barriers for them. It would help to remove the barrier of not having enough time because going on a website requires less time than going to a meeting. In addition, it would remove the barrier of having to create time in their schedule to physically be at an office because they will be able to access the resources on the go, via their cell phone. The website would need to be personalized so that students could enter their interests and it would show them the resources that were the most relevant to them. This would be important because otherwise

students would be overwhelmed with resources and wouldn't pay as much attention to them. We believe that the Honors College website and GVSU's websites in general don't display resources well and are difficult to navigate. Being able to customize it according to the student's interests would make it much easier to navigate and make students much more likely to use it. Students are more used to accomplishing items online so this will fit the mold of what they are most likely to use.



*Figure 9. Honors website dedicated to resources*

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### *Honors Mentorship Program*

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One of our top 5 innovations is to create a mentorship program for Honors students once they have a declared major (*Figure 10*). This will provide students with an opportunity to discuss with older peers their goals, struggles, and just have a friend to rely on if they have questions or concerns during college. Since they are meeting with a peer, and not an adult, it will be a less formal meeting and students will be encouraged to be more open and see their mentor as a friend.

By incorporating a student's major into the mentorship program, students will be able to have a more personalized experience and be able to relate more to someone who has similar career goals and who has taken the same classes as they have. Students will have someone that can offer them guidance and assistance as they dive deeper into their major and adulthood, and be able to have a role model who can advise them on certain aspects of life. The mentorship program would begin during freshman year, and would continue on until the student graduates. They would set aside a certain period of time to catch up, discuss the students life, and make sure everything is going well. If things are not going well, the student could get direction from the mentor on helpful resources. We believe with a good match of student-mentor, this innovation would provide a rewarding, fulfilling experience.



*Figure 10. Honors student meeting with mentor*

## Top Two Innovations

After coming up with our top 5 innovations, we narrowed it down to our final top 2. We were able to do this through feedback from Collaborator Debrief 3, further dialogues with stakeholders, and through collaborating as a group and discussing which of our innovations best captured what Honors College students most desired. Our group chose innovations that offered guidance to students and gave them easy access to resources available to them as they transition from college. Since the topic related to us personally as well, we were able to narrow it down to the final 2 prototype concepts with ease.

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### *Know How: A Checklist of Life Skills*

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After reviewing interviews and secondary research, gaining feedback through Collaborator Debriefs, and analyzing our top five innovations, our team decided that a checklist to help Honors students with learning adult skills would be one of the two most beneficial innovations. We believe this innovation will help address the unmet need Honors students face of not knowing how to do basic adult tasks. The checklist will list many different adult skills that students should know how to do before graduation and will separate these skills by college class (i.e. freshmen, sophomore, etc.). The purpose of separating these skills is so that students are presented the suggested skills at times when it may be relevant, and it helps to make sure that the

checklist is broken down into manageable chunks. There are many basic life skills that will be included in this checklist including knowing how to file taxes, creating and building a resume, knowing how to apply for and finance a loan, finding housing, building credit, and creating a budget. In order for Honors students to “check off” each item on the list, a short proficiency test will be connected to each skill. If students do not pass the proficiency test or do not know how to accomplish each skill, a link will be sent that allows students to connect with a resource on campus that can

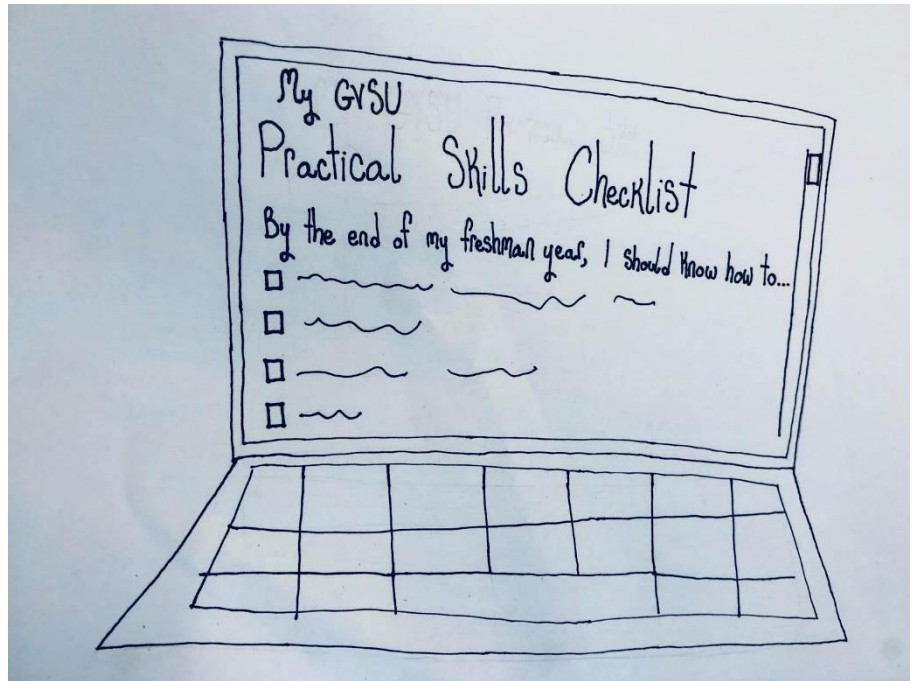


Figure 11: Practical Skills Checklist

help them learn how the skill. For example, if a student does not know how to create and manage a budget, there will be a link that connects them with MoneySmart Lakers to help them learn from a knowledgeable resource on campus. Though completing this checklist will not be mandatory for graduation, we have heard from students in interviews that they will use it. From Collaborator Debriefs, we have heard that students do not get the help they need until it is too late, so through this checklist prototype concept, we aim to connect Honors students with specific people or resources before it's too late. This makes it so that students can receive help from people on campus that would love to help them. The resource links could also help students connect with workshops or other resources on campus that will help them learn. Overall, the aim

of this prototype concept is to help Honors students learn practical life skills and utilize resources available to them while they are a student at GVSU so that their transition out of college is focused and smooth (*Figure 11*).

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*Resource Reference: An App for Campus Resources*

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Our research shows that students are often not aware of resources that are offered. We consistently found that students felt like they could use help in a certain area and we would later find out from our own research or from feedback from faculty or administration that the resource they desired was provided by Grand Valley. After examining these sentiments shared by Honors students in the interviews and integrating with feedback from Honors College faculty and administration, we decided that a mobile application would be useful. The application will focus on notifications that are relevant and curated to student interests and will allow students to customize the timing of their notifications.

Many of our interviews focused on how Grand Valley could help students with the different lessons they have to learn as they transition to independence. Some examples of these lessons are establishing a budget, filing taxes, paying student loans, completing a mortgage application, and establishing good credit. The students that we interviewed repeatedly said that they felt like they were lacking knowledge in these areas. Coincidentally, administrators of services that may address these needs at GVSU mentioned that their organization was having a really hard time spreading the word about the services they offer. For example, MoneySmart Lakers already offers some of these services but very few students know about it. We believe that by displaying relevant resources in an easy to use app on the mobile device that students use

the most throughout the day (phone) that students are more likely to take the time to learn about and use the resources already available.

We also received input from students that they are suffering from information overload. Honors College faculty and administration stated that Honors College students don't look at the weekly Honors Newsletter which contains information that could be helpful to Honors students. One of our interviewees suggested that we customize the notifications so that they address only what a particular student is interested in. We know from other customizable apps that this is a very solid solution to the issue of information overload. To achieve this, we would have the student fill out a survey when they download the app which asks for their interests, major, and more.

Lastly, to combat information overload we want to have the user select the level of engagement, particularly the number of notifications students receive. When the app is first installed it will ask the student when they would like to receive notifications and how often they would like to receive them. By allowing the student to customize the notifications the application will align with student engagement in topic, content, and most importantly attentiveness.

We believe that the combination of customized notifications that are tailored to the student's interests and curated resources that are displayed in a user-friendly manner will make an app is incredibly useful for GVSU Honor's students. This mobile application will help to bridge the divide between students that desire resources and the GVSU services that want to help students. (*Figure 12*)

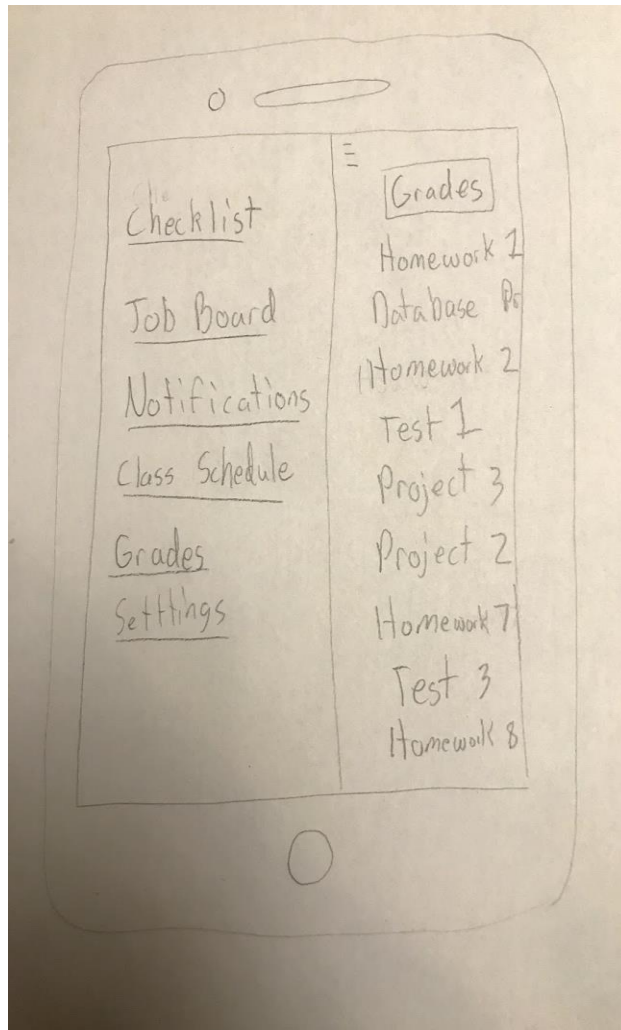


Figure 12: Resource Reference App



## TOP PROTOTYPE CONCEPT

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### *Laker Legend Mobile Application*

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Our research shows that students are often not aware of “transitioning” resources that are offered at Grand Valley. We consistently found that students felt like they could use help and we would later find out from our own research or from feedback from faculty or administration that the resource they desired was provided by Grand Valley. After examining these sentiments shared by Honors students in the interviews, and integrating with feedback from Honors College faculty and administration, we decided that a comprehensive, resource-finding phone application would be useful. The application will be curated to student interests, and customizable, i.e. only send notifications that are relevant and chosen by students. In addition, the app will have a checklist of “life after GVSU” skills that graduated students recommend that soon-to-graduate students learn.

Many of our interviews focused on how students could best learn “life after GVSU” lessons as they transition to independence. Some examples of these lessons are filing taxes, budgeting to pay off student loans, and establishing credit. The students that we interviewed repeatedly said that they felt like they were lacking knowledge in these areas. Coincidentally, administrators of services that may address these needs at GVSU mentioned that their organization was having a really hard time spreading the word about the services they offer. For example, MoneySmart Lakers already offers some of these services but very few students know about it. We believe that by having a checklist in the app, students will more easily recognize what they need to learn, and that having a link to the relevant resources will make it much easier for students to find support to learn the skills they need.

Students will be told about the app during their initial meetings with their RA's in student housing. Many students told us that when they arrived on campus, they were shown a lot of resources in a short period of time and often ended up not being able to remember the details of what they had been told. Telling students about the app when they meet their RA's, typically on their first or second day of living at GVSU, will provide students with a useful resource at the time when it will be most memorable and useful to them. We believe that it would be a success if it reached one thousand downloads in the first year as it will initially only be for the Honors College. This would show that it is worthwhile to continue developing and maintaining the application.

In addition, we received input from students that they are suffering from information overload. Honors College faculty and administration stated that Honors College students don't look at the weekly Honors newsletter which contains much information that could be helpful to Honors students. One of our interviewees suggested that we customize the notifications so that they address only what a particular student is interested in. We know from other customizable apps that this is a very solid solution to the issue of information overload. To achieve this, we would have the student fill out a survey when downloading the app that asks for their interests, major, and more.

Lastly, to combat information overload we want to have the user select the level of engagement, particularly the number of notifications they receive. When the app is first installed it will ask the student when they would like to receive notifications and how often they would like to receive them. By allowing the student to customize the notifications the application will align with student engagement in topic, content, and most importantly attentiveness.

The app's main goal is to provide students an easy way to see the skills that are recommended they learn, as well as make it easy for them to find and access resources. The app would connect students with GVSU services simply by providing links to the existing websites. For example, the app may send a notification that the student should sign up for classes for the fall semester and include a link to the webpage where they can schedule an appointment to meet with their advisor. This is beneficial to both parties because helping students find GVSU services and resources using websites that already exist will minimize any additional burdens on the GVSU services staff while at the same time helping to spread the word about their services to students that may need their help.

The data from the app, such as the demographics of students that use the app the most, will be the property of GVSU and can be utilized by the developers to improve the app. The data analytics would help the developers determine where the app is lacking in information as well as what areas of the app are the most used by students.

We believe that the combination of customized notifications that are tailored to the student's interests, and curated resources that are displayed in a user-friendly manner, will make an app an incredibly useful tool for GVSU Honor's students. This mobile application will help to bridge the divide between students that desire resources and the GVSU services that want to help students (*Figure 13*).



Figure 13: Laker Legend App



# Laker Legend

Team Think Tank

For our introduction we asked the audience if they had ever felt lost. We suggested that they may have felt lost when they attended their first faculty meeting at GVSU or they started their first semester of classes at GVSU.



A video of our work throughout the semester was shown.

## Key Points

- Problem Statement
- Insights
- Storyboard
- Implementation



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Key presentation points were outlined.

## Our Problem Statement

*How can the Frederik Meijer Honors College better prepare Honors students for life after graduation?*



*In order to prepare FMHC students for life after graduation we will design a system that effectively communicates campus resources in a user-friendly manner.*

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The transition from class to team problem statements was re-emphasized.



## Insights from Research & Interviews

- Honors Students:
  - Have information overload
  - Desire lessons on independent living
  - Juggle many commitments
- Campus Resources:
  - Struggle with marketing
  - Receive less traffic than desired



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Key insights were outlined: students get too much irrelevant information and campus resources do not receive the foot traffic desired.

## New and Confused



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Jenna is a new student at GVSU and feels overwhelmed by the amount of information thrown at her in her first few days at school.

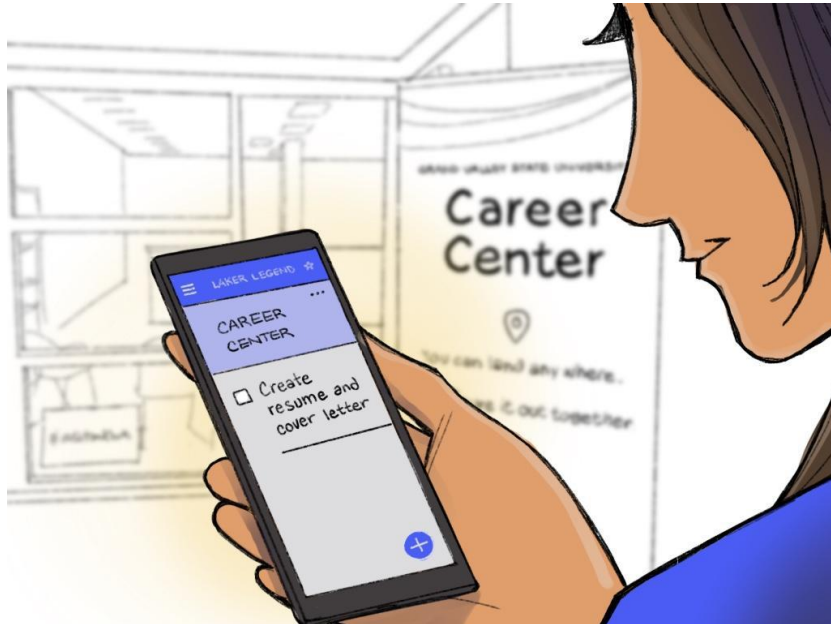
## Discovery



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The app could be introduced at the welcome meeting with the Honors College RA's. It would ask you questions so that it was able to customize its notification timing and the information it pushes to the student.

## Finding Resources



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Jenna uses the app to find resources such as the Career Center. Here the app shows that she should create a resume and cover letter, and that the Career Center could help her with that.

## Getting Involved



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Jenna used the app checklist to find out that she should become a part of the pre-nursing association. The app had all of the information she needed to find the meeting and encouraged her to attend.

## The Interview



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After working on life skills identified on the app and getting involved with campus activities that the app informed her of, Jenna was able to confidently apply and interview for the job of her dreams.

## Landing the Job



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Jenna used the tools in the app to learn how to apply for car insurance and land her job. The tools in the app helped her prepare for what she would need to know as she became independent.

## Benefits

- Helps students prepare for life after graduation
- One centralized source for all resources
- Personalized resource notifications
- GVSU resources will receive more traffic



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The app will benefit both students and the on-campus GVSU resources as students would have less information overload, and GVSU resources will be able to more effectively and efficiently reach students.



## Call to Action

- The benefits outweigh the costs of development
- Many on campus resources already have a marketing budget
- Easy access to helpful resources
- Join us in implementing it!



**WE NEED YOUR  
HELP!**

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Since the app will benefit both students and the on-campus GVSU resources, we believe it should be implemented as soon as possible. There are opportunities to offset expense of app development through community partnerships. We just need a great development team. Please join us as we move forward with this innovation!



Any questions or comments? We'd love to hear!

Video Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hh0gyWG1uQ>

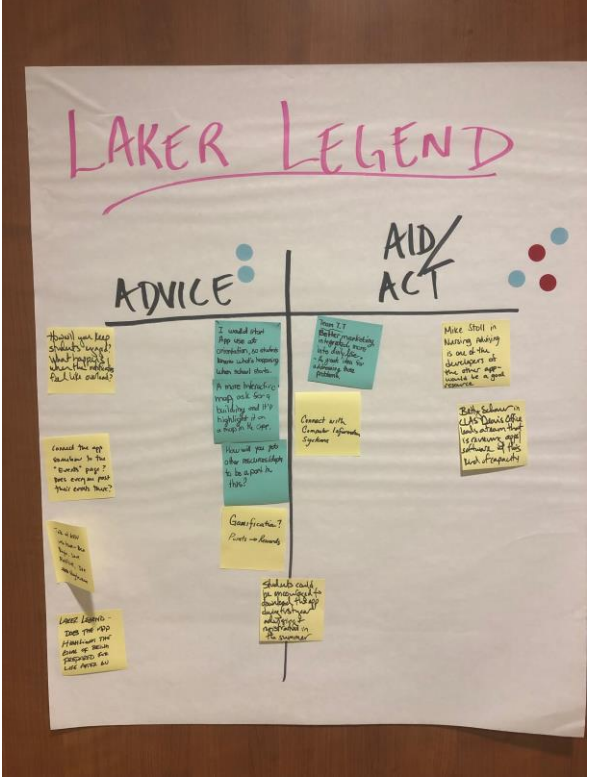


## Innovation Symposium Debrief

<b>Call to Action</b> <b>Envisioning the Future</b>	
<b>Brief Description of How Your Presentation was Received</b>	The attendees of the innovation symposium seemed interested in our final prototype, but were extremely hesitant about the initial costs of developing the app.
<b>What was the Teams Specific Call-to-Action</b>	We asked that the collaborators put aside their concerns about the start-up costs and focus on the benefits of the app. We also asked them to prototype the app in the Honors College and get support from resources on campus.
<b>Attendee Questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Who will manage the app?</li> <li>2. How will the app not just become another layer of noise?</li> <li>3. Since it is so expensive upfront, is there a way to test the concept of the app prior to implementing it?</li> </ol>

<b>Innovation Symposium Feedback</b> <b>Capture What's Meaningful to Advance your Innovation</b>	
<b>Verbal Feedback</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendees were worried that it might turn into another layer of noise.</li> <li>2. The initial start-up cost is a big hurdle to overcome without proving that students would use it.</li> <li>3. An attendee said that they liked the idea of having businesses pay to host workshops for students when the students rated the businesses' workshops and businesses were required to maintain a certain average rating in order to host another workshop.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Written Feedback</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start app use at orientation, so students know what's happening when school starts.</li> <li>2. How will you keep the students engaged?</li> <li>3. Gamification: points and rewards.</li> <li>4. Connect the app to the "Events" page.</li> <li>5. A more interactive map, ask for a building and it'll highlight it on a map in the app.</li> </ol>
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<p><b>Visual Feedback</b></p>	 <p>The image shows a hand-drawn diagram on a white sheet of paper titled "LAKER LEGEND" in pink. The diagram is divided into two main sections by a vertical line: "ADVICE" on the left and "AID/ACT" on the right. There are several sticky notes attached to the diagram, each containing handwritten text. The sticky notes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ADVICE Section:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"How will you keep students engaged? What if they don't use the app?"</li> <li>"Connect the app somehow to the 'Events' page? Does anyone post their events there?"</li> <li>"Can we have a map that shows the location of buildings?"</li> <li>"LAKER LEGEND: Does the app highlight the time of each event? For LAKER APPS?"</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>AID/ACT Section:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"I would like the app use all computers, so make them work properly when used there." (Note: This note is partially overlapping the vertical line)</li> <li>"How will you get other recommendations to be a part in this?"</li> <li>"Gamification? Points and Rewards"</li> <li>"Students could be encouraged to download the app during orientation and use it on the app."</li> <li>"Connect with Grand Valley's system"</li> <li>"How will you get other recommendations to be a part in this?"</li> <li>"Mike Still is having a meeting with one of the developers of the app. Maybe he can be a good resource."</li> <li>"Bobby Schuman in CLM's Office looks at how that is a resource, app of the book of research."</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Post-Symposium Reflections**  
**Integrate the Feedback & Offer Final Recommendations**

<p><b>DIVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>deviate</i> from your team's current recommendations?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The app could be another layer on noise for students.</li> <li>2. Some stakeholders weren't sure that our recommendations for funding would be adequate.</li> <li>3. The app might decline in usage the further along a student is in college.</li> <li>4. Grand Valley may have a hard time implementing all of our ideas into the app.</li> </ol>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. More consideration should be given to who decides what goes on the checklist.</li> </ol>
<p><b>CONVERGE:</b> How did the feedback provided <i>align</i> with and enhance the team’s innovation?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The app would be helpful for students to organize campus resources.</li> <li>2. The app could be helpful for more than just Honors students.</li> <li>3. Hiring businesses to run workshops in exchange for free advertising through the app is a good business model.</li> <li>4. There is an opportunity for students to get involved in development and maintenance of the app.</li> <li>5. App would create more traffic for underutilized campus resources.</li> </ol>
<p><b>SYNTHESIZE:</b> How can others <i>use</i> the feedback provided?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider adding to the app an interactive map that would highlight the building you are looking for.</li> <li>2. Do a test run to see how many downloads the app would get.</li> <li>3. Consider partnering with businesses to provide services in exchange for advertising on the app.</li> <li>4. Consider rewarding students for completing all checklist points.</li> </ol>
<p><b>RECOMMEND:</b> What next steps does your team recommend to stakeholders?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Realize that the benefits outweigh the costs of development.</li> <li>2. Talk with resources on campus to find a way to pay for development.</li> <li>3. Find an app developer to partner with.</li> <li>4. Apply for funding from GVSU.</li> <li>5. Survey students to determine how many would likely use the app.</li> </ol>

## Appendix A

### Dialogue Scripts

#### Dialogue 1

Stakeholder Group: FMHC alumnus
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>Understand how the Honors College prepared this alumnus for graduate school. To hear from someone who has gone through their entire Honors experience and can reflect on that experience and what they would have changed.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>We aim to design a solution that is helpful for all FMHC students in preparing them for life after graduation, whatever that looks like for each individual student.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This interviewee provided good feedback about resources that they found helpful (CLAS advising). She felt that the Honors courses were really the only things that might have helped prepare her a little bit more for graduate school because of the extra writing requirements. She didn't know what to expect from grad school and didn't learn until orientation. A seminar or something similar was suggested for a possible new program to help prepare students for the transition from college to graduate school. Overall, she felt like FMHC had helped her prepare in minor ways and not in any real, direct way.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She felt that the Honors College didn't really set her apart very much.</li> <li>• The reading assignment situation was too lax compared to real life.</li> <li>• Honors advisors don't really know much about student' future paths.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell me a little bit about yourself as a GVSU alumni.</b>  <i>"I'm a grad student now, so I'm actually still at Grand Valley. I'm a physical therapy student. My major was clinical exercise science."</i></p> <p><b>As an Honors alumnus, how would you articulate what you think sets you apart from the rest of the GVSU student body?</b>  <i>"I think just kind of going into college, I knew what was happening. Like, I knew that the Honors College existed and I had the opportunity to apply for it. A lot of people that</i></p>

*came in who were probably at the same caliber as I was as a student didn't know the Honors College existed or didn't know they had to apply by a certain time. By the time they got in here, it was too late to apply. I know a lot of people know about it but there were a lot of kids that were the same level student as I was that just didn't know about it. Obviously, there are some students that maybe wouldn't have done Honors, but there were definitely some that had known about it but didn't. So, I didn't feel too set apart because a lot of people that I talked to that didn't even know the Honors College existed prior to me saying it."*

**How did you hear about the Honors College?**

*"My sister was in the Honors College at Grand Valley three years ahead of me."*

**Can you describe some of the campus resources that you used in your time at GVSU?**

*"I used the rec center a lot. I used a lot of the printing and computer labs to work at between classes. I didn't use the library, I'm not a library studier, so I never really studied at the library. I would eat at campus and study in the eating areas or I would study at a computer, but I never studied, per se, at the library, actually."*

**What resources did you use to prepare you for graduate school or for even applying to graduate school?**

*"I used the advising office, the Honors advising office right as a freshman to make sure I was hitting all of my requirements right at the beginning. I also used the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. I went and met with them at least once a year just to make sure all of my application classes and pre-req's were hit for grad school and that my undergrad degree was all lined up."*

**How do you think the Honors College helped you when applying to graduate school?**

*"It helped because the Honors College had more of a writing requirement so instead of taking just one writing class, each of my classes, I think my junior seminar and freshman sequence and I think my senior sequence included more writing than a typical undergrad would have which I think is kind of big for grad school because the GRE is based a lot on writing and reading ability and obviously grad schools require a lot of writing for research and stuff like that."*

**What resources did you use within the Honors College besides class?**

*"I used the computer labs every so often."*

**What can you tell me about the transition period between graduating with your undergraduate degree and graduate school?**

*"I kind of didn't really know what to expect. My last semester of undergrad was just an internship, so I was away from classes for a little bit. I was actually out in the field actually practicing in my area per se and then I knew I was going right back into the heart of classes so it was a little stressful over the summer just thinking about having no classes then going back to a full-time schedule and actually being prepared for content"*



*that is a lot harder. So, it was a little stressful thinking about the big change it was going to be after having that semester of internship.”*

**What do you think the Honors College could have done to help you better prepare or help make you more aware of what to expect?**

*“I mean honestly, I don’t think the Honors College did a ton for grad school towards my specific program. Obviously, they prepared me with writing and stuff like that, but I don’t think they did much else. They didn’t really know where I was going or what I was doing after. So, I mean I guess they did what they could; they gave me classes that were tough that would be as close to as comparable, at least the expectations and stuff like that. I think they’re so different, like the requirements in Honors College versus what I was actually going to be doing in grad school that I don’t know that there would be a ton that they could’ve done.”*

**Tell me about a campus service that does not currently exist that you think would have been helpful to prepare for the transition.**

*“I know they have a lot of programs to set you up for grad school; they have grad school fairs and internship fairs and stuff like that. I actually don’t know because I didn’t look too much but I’m sure if they did prep classes, just like an hour meeting of how expectations change for grad school, that probably would’ve been helpful, but as an undergrad, I don’t know that I would’ve gone to something like that. I would’ve been like ‘oh yeah, I don’t need to go to that, I’ll figure it out.’ I guess I would say just like a seminar on how expectations change but I don’t know how many students actually go from undergrad to grad school that it would actually be worth it. Undergrads don’t actually care, they just figure it out later.”*

**What improvements do you think could be made to existing services that help with the transition period?**

*“When I went to the advising center, I don’t know how it works exactly, like the CLAS, I had a different person every time. They never scheduled me with the same person, so that was kind of odd. I knew they probably wouldn’t remember me because it was only once a year, so it’s not like it made a huge difference, but it was kind of tough to explain what I was doing every time. I know the Honors does because it used to be Robyn but she retired, so I actually haven’t been in the Honors office since then, but I know when I went to the Honors office for help, it was always the same person.”*

**What were some of your concerns when you were preparing to graduate?**

*“The wasn’t a ton because I was on my internship, but it was a little stressful because I was away from Grand Valley, so trying to coordinate everything and making sure I had everything set for graduation and had all of the requirements, it was hard because I wasn’t on this side of the state for that whole semester. I was worried that I was going to miss something or not meet a deadline of some form because I wasn’t in the area.”*

**How do you think being an Honors alumnus has helped you since graduation?**

*“I think it would probably be getting into grad school. Obviously, Honors looks better on an application, so I think that definitely helped with any application that I filled out. Plus,*

*the classes helped, I really loved my junior seminar, the Holocaust class. I still talk about it long after graduation because I just liked the class so much. It was so interesting; I want to read more books about that time period. I don't know if that is really answering your question, but that one class has definitely affected me after graduation."*

**What service, event, or people do you think were most helpful in preparing for graduation?**

*"I guess the CLAS was really helpful just to make sure I had everything I needed. But then, obviously, the grad professors were really helpful in telling me what I needed before and how to prepare and what to expect. We had an orientation and they told us that we needed to buckle down because it would be a lot harder, but that was the professors in the grad program. In undergrad, I would say the advisors that made sure my schedule was constantly lined up for what it had to be for my future."*

**Do you think the transition is different for non-Honors students than it is for Honors students?**

*"I don't think so. I didn't carry a ton with me. Obviously, the course expectation like I said earlier maybe prepared me a little bit more than another person. But if you're just in a different degree they have higher expectations too so like biomedical science will have higher expectations than other degrees, but there are definitely some that have a little bit stricter and higher expectations. So, I think I think that whether you're in Honors or just have a harder degree, expectations are higher. I could've gotten that in other degrees, but Honors definitely pushed me as though I was in a harder degree."*

**What was your biggest issue with Honors in the way that it prepared you or its lack of preparation?**

*"I think the only thing I would say, the freshman sequence, the two semesters, it was kind of a lot of the same topic. I took Food for Thought and I don't think there was that much information, but a full year of one class was kind of a lot, especially when other classes just run one semester. I think it was kind of an odd way to bring a freshman into college because that's not really the way the rest of your classes are going to be like; it kind of threw me off."*

**What do you think the Honors College could do to improve that?**

*"It's so hard because you have to pick a sequence before you come. It's your summer and you just graduated high school and you're so excited to go to college and you just have to pick a sequence all of the sudden and then you have it for a full year, so if you don't like it, you're stuck. One of them even goes two years, which is a very long time. I think they should maybe do one of the other classes before you do your sequence. Maybe do a sophomore sequence so you have more time to think about it. You would have a better idea of what you're signing up for, for a full year. Versus just randomly picking one that sounds cool to you, especially since a lot of kids that come to college don't even know what they want to be when they grow up and that affects the sequence. I don't know how they would make that work out."*

**What did you expect from the Honors College in the way they prepare students for life after graduation that they did not meet?**

*“So, a lot is based on the student being proactive, so a lot of the classes required just a ton of reading, and a lot of students didn’t do it and were able to get away with it. A lot of the readings ended up being in-class discussions so you could just kind of wing it in discussion. You definitely can’t do that in grad school or after you graduate, so they’re pretty lax on that. They did tests and other little things, but it was mostly participation. Not that participation is bad, because you definitely need it later on, but you could just wing it most of the time. I don’t know how they could regulate that though.”*

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

*“I don’t think there’s anything. I guess if I had to say something, it would be about course selection options. The selections were really good. I think it was more well-rounded than what I could’ve gotten outside of the Honors College.”*

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

Yes, phone or in person.

More connections this stakeholder provided:

- Someone that took a more difficult sequence
- Addie Ingles

Possible next-steps:

- Interview someone who took a more challenging sequence.
- Interview a CLAS advisor.
- Interview an Honors advisor.

Dialogue 2

Stakeholder Group: Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Female
Primary Goal of this Opportunity:  The goal was to gain insight on how a senior Honors College student feels about transitioning to life after college and whether they think Honors had an impact on this.
How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?  Since our goal is to prepare Honors students for life after college, hearing about how he/she could have been better prepared through the Honors College is beneficial to our research.
Summary of Research:  This Honors student is prepared to start her journey and dive into her field using all the knowledge she acquired throughout her time at Grand Valley. Due to the difficult curriculum and her internship experience, she feels ready to start her job. This being said, she is anxious when it comes to the everyday skills she will be encountering for the first time, such as knowing what is considered appropriate clothing for her workplace, where to go about buying these clothes, how to budget her money, etc. She mentioned how she thought it would be helpful to require students to learn about the financials after college prior to graduating in order to help with better overall awareness. She also thought it would be helpful for FMHC to host more appealing events for students throughout their four years in order to keep students engaged and comfortable in the Honors environment.
Important insights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Honors College allows students to excel in a unique environment and stretches their way of thinking, preparing them for upper-level courses</li><li>• The Honors College struggles to fully engage students throughout their four years in the program</li><li>• Most helpful thing to prepare for transition were professors that interviewee personally networked with (not through Honors College)</li></ul>

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.**

*“I’m a senior, I’m double majoring in Public and Non-profit administration, I’m in the Honors College, I’m president of Pals student mentors, an organization that mentors at risk youth in the Grand Rapids area and I do a lot of work and I have an internship.”*

**As an Honors student, how would you articulate what you think sets you apart from the rest of the student body?**

*“I think that we tend to work a lot harder in classes, we work differently. We’re more willing to think outside the box and we put extra effort into everything. It’s always nice when you sit next to someone in a Gen-Ed class and they’re in the Honors College. I tend to find they work a lot harder.”*

**Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?**

*“The Student Life Office. Financial aid and I are really close. I’ve gone to the Career Center for my classes. I’ve gone to the Counseling Center here. I like them. I thought the Counseling Center was really nice, your first time is free and it’s so close. It was nice to have that instead of having to go somewhere far. The career center went over my resume and in the next couple weeks I’m doing a mock interview. They go over your cover letter too. They prepare you.”*

**How has the Honors College helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn’t, how has it not been helpful?**

*“Especially freshman year I think your courses kind of prepare you for what your upper level courses might be like because they’re a little challenging. I’ve produced some good research papers I can use for applying to jobs and such. A lot of the professors make good references too and they’re good for networking. They know a lot of people and are well respected in the community. I liked Urbanism because I know and understand the city [Grand Rapids] better because of that class.”*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*“I feel really confident but just because I’m ready to be done with classes and take everything that we’ve learned and actually put it into practice. Also, I think having an internship has prepared me for what that future job actually looks like and has made me feel confident that I’m going into the right field.”*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn’t exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*“Maybe the Career Center does this, but I struggled to find clothes for the workplace. I had to ask around and figure out where to go shopping and what to wear at those places. Not everywhere is just business, especially the non-profit world is super casual but you can’t wear jeans so I struggled to figure out what’s appropriate and what’s not and from there it’s really hard to afford that as a college kid. They should start better*

*preparing people and have them start building a wardrobe. It would be cool if they had a resale shop where people could donate old work clothes and students could buy them for cheap”*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college? In what ways do you think the Honors College could help you with this?**

*“I think the most is money. Yesterday I was sitting there trying to find an apartment for next year and trying to figure out how much you can actually afford. I have a monthly budget and stuff but I think it’s scary because after you graduate, you’re going to have your loan fees eventually and whatever else your parents might be paying for now that they’re going to cut you off from. I know I’ll learn my job and learn how to balance working full time, but the financial side is the scary thing. I think I get most confused about loans. Each loan has a different interest rate and stuff. I think a crash course in financials after college would be helpful.”*

**What reasons can you think of that being an Honors student is helpful for life after college?**

*“I did think it taught me how to think of things in a weird way. A lot of classes expect you to think outside of the box and stretch your thinking. You have to think about and analyze questions in classes here. I’ve noticed in other classes I do that too now. It just taught you how to think differently than other classes and I’m sure that’ll carry forth in work.”*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*“The people who’ve helped me most are just the professors I’ve clicked with. I can name 3 or 4 professors that I’ve actually clicked with in my schooling so I think probably just different professors and networking. I’d say maybe a couple Honors professors impacted me.”*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students outside the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*“I think a lot of them aren’t really preparing, and I don’t know if that’s because I’m in the Honors College and they’re not. They’re still kind of denying the reality that we graduate soon but I do think that a lot of the other friends I have in the Honors College seem to be trying to prepare more. The friends I’m thinking of that aren’t really caring or preparing aren’t in the Honors College.”*

**What is your biggest issue with the Honors College in preparing you for after college?**

*“I feel like after your junior seminar I didn’t feel that connected with them. I had 2 science courses and my junior seminar was online and for my senior project my advisor is a writing professor not an Honors professor. I feel like they don’t really stick with you that much. I’d say they need to keep connecting with us more like things we have to attend.”*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that the Honors College could make to address that issue?**

*“I think they do a couple events, but I think having more events or a welcome back event. Offer free food, that would get me there, but if it was like the whole junior or senior class coming together on different days, that would be fun. I would go to see some of the people I haven’t seen in a while and mingle. Provide food and talk about what’s coming up senior year. I think they do little info sessions but make it more of a social event and maybe they have added stuff there. More of like a fun thing, not too academic.”*

**How could the Honors College help you prepare more?**

*“I feel like they could do a lot of what the Career Center does. I feel like people would be more comfortable going to the Honors College since it’s a smaller niche of people. Having those opportunities like looking at resumes, mock interviews. Just do some of the stuff the Career Center does.”*

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

She did not have any questions.

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

Yes. Phone call or text.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Senior Honors student
- Honors Professor
- Career Center

Possible next-steps:

- Contact connections
- Interview additional Honors Colleges

Dialogue 3

Stakeholder Group: Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>Get a sense of how Honors College students respond to our interview questions.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It fulfills our goal of interviewing Honors students to get their input on how the Honors College could help them transition to life after college.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This Honors student feels confident in the academic world of the Honors College, but not in the practical adult skills that she'll need to transition out of college. These skills are things like practical finance, housing, and networking. There is a lack between Honors education and how to interact socially and professionally with the world. Further, a disconnect exists between our Honors education and what we can do with it after school. There is a missing sense of community in the Honors College, a missing social support. She has zero confidence for the transition out of college. She said she doesn't feel like an adult.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social supports are lacking.</li> <li>• Honors College excels at learning environment, but not necessarily adult environment.</li> <li>• Its practical skills that are the issue, not academics.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.</b></p> <p><i>"I am a writing major, and I am in my junior year. I was undecided freshman year and then I picked the major in the winter of sophomore year. So, I'm pretty new to the program, but I did the Honors sequences here, and those were really helpful."</i></p> <p><b>As an Honors student, how would you articulate what you think sets you apart from the rest of the student body?</b></p> <p><i>"Oddly enough, I feel like the living quarters are a big part of what makes the Honors College the Honors College. I mean, it's definitely a more academic atmosphere versus</i></p>



*social, there's less parties, it's dead silent all the time, which great for studying, and I don't know, it's like you live in a library, there's more opportunity to do homework wherever you need to. So, I think it's more of a supportive academic environment than traditional living centers. Class-wise, I noticed that the classes that you take through the Honors College, or the Honors sections of courses, they're either more hands on, or they make an effort to branch out into other disciplines, which is better for remembering and understanding and learning in general, to cross different borders."*

**Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?**

*"I've been to the writing center, I've gone to office hours in different buildings, but I haven't gone to office hours in the Honors College. And it was helpful that the offices were in the building. I've been to the counseling center, which was helpful. I haven't been to financial aid, I should probably do that. Other than that, I don't think I've used any of the other services. Okay, the library, if that counts as a service."*

**How has the Honors College helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not been helpful?**

*"Well their newsletters are always chock full of opportunities and, I don't know, student initiative is what makes that kind of stuff happen. Or just initiative of the person. So, while there's support and opportunities made available and communicated to you, there isn't really a requirement for you to do all of these things, all of these job things and graduate school stuff. Which is part of the independence of the person, as a student in university, trying to make their own decisions for stuff. But personally, the major roadblock for doing the research on jobs and internships and study abroad stuff is just because you're taking so many credits already, and I guess it's just a lot to try to add more stuff to your plate when you don't really know what your plate is doing."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*"I'm terrified. How confident? Zero confidence. I mean, I've been to talks recently for like stuff in the writing major, and there's always questions about how to publish and how do you revise your manuscripts and everything, but one of the things that they always start out saying is how naive and headstrong and confident they were when they were in college. And it's just like, I don't see that or feel that way. If anything, I'm just so overwhelmed by the possibilities of everything that I feel like I'm not doing anything or getting anything done, I'm just kind of wandering in circles. I mean, housing scares me a lot, and jobs. I don't feel like an adult. But I don't know if that's, I don't think that's an Honors College thing, I think that's just a young-person anxiety."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*"Well, let's see. Campus Services, they help you with internships that can lead to jobs, and they can give you resources on job searching, they have job fairs and those kinds of things. But to my knowledge there isn't a "how do you find somewhere to live after you're not a student" office. Which, while I understand that that's not really the university's area, it's an alumni area, so I guess housing placement defers until after*

*you're out of school? And maybe the classes that everyone was supposed to take in high school that they cut, like "how to do taxes," and "what is finance," "what is money," and "how to not be stupid." So, housing, taxes, and uh, transportation. Because they always say "you don't need a car here, just ride the Rapid!" Which is a horrible idea. But I don't know, I guess it's more of a "how to navigate the world," which isn't exactly something that you can condense into a class. It has never been done. It's an innovation, so let's go."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"I guess supporting myself of course, but it always comes back to the environment thing for me, because if I don't have somewhere to go after school, I'll just go back home, and there's not really opportunities where I come from. Anyway, there's not really civilization where I live, so it could be hard to get out in the job market. So, I would want to try to live somewhere habitable out here. I don't know, it's an environment shift, it's a worry on support, and there's always that expectation of like, after you're out of school, you have a job, and then you have the job for a very long time, and hopefully you move up, and that's your life. But I don't really know what I want yet."*

**In what ways do you think the Honors College could help you with this?**

*"Well there's the idea of the alumni housing placement, and stuff. Um, let's see, the campus already does job fairs and stuff, and of course Niemeyer like supports "yeah, you should go to the different majors' fairs and all those Study Abroad fairs and everything." I think as an institution the Honors College is doing a very fine job of making an environment for students to learn, but there are some people who would prefer to live in the Honors College all four years, and a lot of the times that can't happen just because they run out of spaces to house the seniors and the freshmen, and they expect the seniors to go find somewhere else. But in doing so, you lose a major advantage of being an honors student and living in the building, which was the academic environment and privacy. So, more housing."*

**What reasons can you think of that being an Honors student is helpful for life after college?**

*"Oh, I was actually thinking of this last night with the study abroad stuff. I wrote my way into the Honors College, with that essay we had to do in the beginning and the interviews and stuff. So, there was the essay and the ACT score and the interview, but mostly the essay is what gets you the scholarship money. So, I don't know, it was empowering to think that I wrote myself in here, and for something like study abroad or the next step in whatever I'm doing, I can write myself into that as well. So, class-wise, the professors treat Honors students differently, it's like we've already... being Honors kids, we've already proved ourselves, so they don't need to test us on whether or not you're a good student, because obviously you're a good student because you're in the Honors College. So, there's a higher standard, and I think we're treated with more respect, by even gen ed Professors when they're teaching the Honors sections of the gen eds. There's definitely an element of respect."*

**Do you think that respect will carry beyond college?**

*“Probably not. But in respecting us as we’re growing, it creates a new standard for us, and we won’t stop until we find somewhere else that meets that standard, so it’s more like a social expectation, where “yes, I deserve to be treated a certain way because I can perform these certain things,” so I guess it would be a motivation to reach farther.”*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*“My sister, because the way that her program and her major and her internship worked out, she has a place to live still [Me: “Was she in the Honors College?”] She was in the Honors College. She was an Honors and computer science alum. She’s living in off-campus housing right now. Like, in student housing because she’s with someone who’s in the master’s program, so he’s still a student, but the way that her internship worked, she stayed with the company through the summer using GV’s housing, so that was already taken care of for her, which was great. But she stayed with the company, they offered her a job eventually, and now she’s like, I don’t know, she has real job with real benefits and that’s pretty soon after college. Like, I remember when my dad was telling me about trying to find a job after college, he was out for, like, a year and a half, looking for jobs, and he just lived at home with his dad. And, I don’t know, he said that it felt hopeless until someday he just worked. But the way that her internship and her first job and her next job lined up, it all just worked out for her, so it’d be great if I could find something like that.”*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students outside the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*“Well, I know that our social lives are different. And I think there are advantages and disadvantages to being able to have this kind of privacy in the housing place for Niemeyer, because other people who do not have this kind of calm, studious environment, they have to deal with all the craziness and the noise and the constant change and the conflict of living with other people all the time, so when they have to be social and network, it’s easier for them, just because they’ve been forced to live through that kind of stuff for years. And the Honors College kids, who had been more focused on academics and less on socializing and networking, I think there might be a disconnect there, which is kind of difficult to place.”*

**What is your biggest issue with the Honors College in preparing you for after college?**

*“While I understand that we are expected as students, as older students, to have a certain kind of independence, I feel like I’ve been forgotten by, I don’t know if it’s staff, or just professors, or people who work here. Sometimes it feels like it’s just a living center and not a community. Sometimes I feel like... I’m not saying the RA’s should do more, but I feel like there should be a position separate from RA’s that are dedicated to helping students, I don’t know, find things with more personal questions. So, like more of a direct advice thing, like, I don’t know, floor advisors or something, instead of RA’s. Because while they’re in charge of like, social stuff and things, it’d be good to have someone else who was more of an academic or networking support to help make sure that each student,*

*if they want to reach out, will be met with all the things that they need, all the answers that they're looking for."*

**So, do you think someone in this position would be another student? Or a member of the faculty? Or both?**

*"I think it would best be either like a student internship position or a faculty member. Or actually, we have class advisors that live in the office--well, they don't live there, but you know what I mean. If there were more people like that expanded into the more personal communication with students, I feel like that is probably what I'm trying to describe. More personal academics and networking things, so not just classes. Or maybe there could be like a plan for networking, like: "by this time you should know at least four professors that don't hate you," and stuff like that. "Joining this many or trying this many organizations." Like social planning. Us nerds need that kind of help."*

Stakeholder response to "what is the one thing I didn't ask you that you think I should have?"

She couldn't think of anything.

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

Yes. Text/call.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Ana (honors student in the room next to hers)
- Alumni (suggestion)
- RA's

Possible next-steps:

- Contact Niemeyer RA's.
- Contact Ana.
- Modify script to eliminate redundant questions.

Dialogue 4

Stakeholder Group: Parent of Honors student
Estimated Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 <u>x</u> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal was to learn how parents thought the Frederik Meijer Honors College was preparing their son or daughter for life after college. The other main goal was to learn what could be improved.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It reflects well on our team’s problem statement because we are trying to learn more about what could be improved in the transition to life after college for Honors students, and this interview is used to learn more about that.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This parent felt that the Honors College had done a good job preparing his student academically, but he felt that they could do a better job providing students with networking opportunities. He felt that having alumni come and talk to students at a barbeque or something similar would be beneficial professionally and socially to students. The father thought that the more demanding curriculum and the camaraderie among students is what was the most helpful to his son while attending the Honors College. He felt strongly that students needed to recognize that success should be achieved personally and not just professionally. His definition of success was centered around having solid relationships and enjoying what you did in your career.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Honors College could improve the resources they offer to students by hosting social events with alumni.</li> <li>• Learning to define success as being centered more on relationships and less on how much money you are making is important for graduates.</li> <li>• Making foreign (preferably in the Southern Hemisphere) internships required would be beneficial to the students as they would recognize that success can take on different forms.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>What students do you currently know that are attending the Frederik Meijer Honors College? How do you know them?</b>  <i>“Just you, you’re my son”</i></p>

**How did you initially hear about the Frederik Meijer Honors College?**

*“Through my son. He was excited about the dorms they had and had heard that he could earn another scholarship if he was a part of the Honors College. He was the one who noticed it and decided to apply.”*

**How involved were you in your son/daughter’s decision on which college to attend?**

*“Somewhat. I left the decision to him and if he wanted my input, I gave it to him. I wouldn’t say I was extremely involved but he knew that I cared about his process and that I wanted to support him in it. That’s tough because I don’t want to say I wasn’t involved but in reality, it was his decision and came down to what he decided.”*

**What do you think sets Honors College graduates apart from other graduates?**

*“More demanding curriculum and more camaraderie among students. I think having a difficult curriculum helps to have them learn how juggle things better.”*

**How well do you believe that the Honors College has prepared your son/daughter for life after their time at GVSU and why?**

*“I think it’s probably done a good job just because it has required more and requires you to expect more from yourself. And in life sometimes you can get by with a little bit of effort, but if you put in more effort, you’re able to achieve much more than if you just put in the minimum amount of effort. How come? Well I guess it’s because it pushes him and I think that learning to consistently put in a lot of effort is a good skill to develop in life.”*

**How well do you believe your son/daughter has been prepared for life after college in comparison to other college students that you know of that are attending a different college?**

*“Well I guess I don’t know, I don’t have a comparison to draw from. I don’t know other kids and what they are pursuing so it’d be hard to make a comparison.”*

**How do you think it compares to what you experienced?**

*“I think it’s fairly comparable because I was in James Madison which was a fairly rigorous program and it taught me how to reason and it taught me how to multitask. I think the thing that’s different is that you’re getting really what is a more marketable degree. I was going to become a lawyer but I didn’t finish that out at the time. I got an economics degree instead. Your Computer Science degree will be more marketable when looking for jobs which is a bonus. And also, how to work with a team because you’re writing papers together and doing analysis together.”*

**What frustrations, if any, has your son/daughter voiced about how well the Honors College has prepared them for life after college?**

*“I don’t think there was enough social stuff in the Honors dorms. I think that was partly because everybody there is, well, pretty dedicated to their schooling. But in life you do social things as well as school work and it isn’t all about school and it isn’t all about grades and in life it isn’t all about your work success. So, I’d say that having more social functions at the dorms instead of having to go to other places for social functions would be a benefit. Maybe that’s just part of the beast, I mean, you’re dealing with kids who are*

*driven. But the Honors College could help that by hosting Friday night cookouts or times where you're meeting with other mentors or other people who have graduated. And that's the thing that I think would be really helpful is more interaction between former Honors College alumni and the undergrad, where you can kind of see how people have used their degree to get a job and you know what kind of jobs they've been getting and giving you an opportunity to network. It might add a little perspective for those that might feel like what they're doing doesn't matter or something similar. Adding perspective almost always helps to clarify the situation and give guidance. Especially when the situation is challenging."*

What are you most concerned about for your son/daughter as they transition to life after college?

*"Defining success correctly. I think in today's world it's too easy to be pushed to define success by what others define it as and not what it should be. It should be that you're happy and are surrounded by those you love. Everyone is focused on just getting that job and getting that salary when that's not all that matters, and I think people lose sight of that. College graduates need to recognize that they should also be focused on making sure that they enjoy the job they get out of school."*

**What do you believe has been the most helpful resource for your son/daughter in their transition and why?**

*"The library because I believe you probably spend a fair amount of time there. You ask us these questions but it's not like we're right there watching what you do. It's not like we're keyed in to what resources you're using now. But I know that you're often in there and it's a nice facility so I'd say the library. I think it's important to have a nice place to study at so that people are able to enjoy themselves while they study. Studying can be tough but if you're in a crappy place it just makes it that much worse, I'd say. So yeah, I'd say that library was the most helpful to him. It being recently built is definitely a bonus as well."*

**What do you believe is the biggest challenge facing graduates after they have graduated from the Frederik Meijer Honors College?**

*"Hmmm I was going to say paying off debt but I don't know that they all have that much debt. I guess finding their niche and figuring out what their strengths are and playing to those strengths. You know because some people will be really good at interpersonal stuff and some people will be good at sales and some people will be good at mechanical stuff. It's just a question of what your passion is. If you follow your passion and work hard at it, you'll find success. Even if it's not in the stereotypical way you'll find success because you're doing what you love. So, I guess finding your passion is what I'd say."*

**What do you think that the Honors College could change to better help students transition to life after college?**

*"I think more interaction with alumni because do they do much in the way of internships?"*

**Yes, I mean we have a bunch of opportunities to do them.**

*“Is it required?”*

**Depends on your course.**

*“I think that overseas internships and heck, even local internships would be helpful. I would make a requirement that the Honors College would have its students do an overseas internship at a company somewhere and preferably a country in the southern hemisphere because it will be more different from here. I mean, it’d be somewhat different, but France and England aren’t all that different from here. Going to the southern hemisphere would redefine your definition of success.”*

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

*“I think it would’ve been beneficial to ask me what I thought success was. I think a lot of people have different views on what makes a life “successful.” I’m sure that if someone only wanted their child to go on to excel at Harvard their responses would have been different than mine because they had a different goal.”*

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

Yes. They’d like to be contacted via a phone call.

For Dialogue: Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student 1
- Honors Student 2
- Honors Parent

Possible next-steps:

- Contact Honors Students
- Interview Honors College professor
- Revise the interview to ask what their definition of success is



Dialogue 5

Stakeholder Group/Location: Parent of Honors student
Estimated Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 <u>  x  </u> 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>Learn more about how parents of Honors students are affected by any changes. They are listed as a stakeholder, but we are unsure of how they will be affected. They may also have good suggestions for possible changes to FMHC.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>We are trying to satisfy needs of all stakeholders at some level. This will help us better understand the needs of parents of Honors students and how they are affected by FMHC.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This parent felt that their student was better prepared for life after graduating but seemed to struggle to explain why. It seems like being an Honors student in general just makes students look better to possible employers, even if they are unable to articulate why Honors students are different. Overall, this parent did not know a great deal about FMHC and relied mostly on assumptions to answer questions. It is the team’s conclusion that parents of Honors students may not be the best stakeholders to interview since they do not know as much or experience as much about the Honors College as other stakeholder groups.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They suggested that FMHC offer more co-ops or internships.</li> <li>• They learned the most about FMHC at orientation.</li> <li>• Noted that college students in general have a great opportunity to network while in school.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>What student(s) do you know that are currently attending FMHC and how do you know them?</b>  <i>“My son and several of his classmates. There is also a young man from our church that just started going there. GVSU is very popular around this area so we have a lot of kids from around here going there.”</i></p> <p><b>How did you initially hear about FMHC?</b>  <i>“I think we did some online research at first and learned about it there, but really learned more during the orientation.”</i></p> <p><b>How involved were you in your child’s decision on what college to attend?</b></p>

*"I think very involved; we looked at a few other campuses and both left there knowing that this is where he was going to go."*

**What do you think sets Honors College graduates apart from other graduates?**

*"I think they have to strive much more to earn the grades that they get. The bar is set a little higher for them to extend themselves beyond their comfort zones and maybe reach a little bit farther. Most of the kids going there are looking at higher-achieving positions in the workforce and the Honors College on a resume speaks volumes."*

**How well do you believe the Honors College has prepared your child for life after their time at GVSU?**

*"I think it is doing a good job. I do think my son works very hard at getting the grades he does. Without the Honors College, maybe he wouldn't be set apart from some of the other students there. There is always room for improvement, of course, but I think for the most part, they are preparing students well."*

**How do you believe your child has been prepared for life after college in comparison to non-Honors students?**

*"I think being in the Honors College makes a big difference. It's kind of like in high school with the top ten. You can tell which students are the higher achievers and the ones that want to go farther with their careers. I think the Honors College pushes you to do that. My son is no different in that. He has jumped with both feet in and is looking for a very goal-oriented career and I think the Honors College has helped push him in that direction."*

**What frustrations, if any, has your child voiced about how well FMHC is preparing them for life after graduation?**

*"I don't believe there have been any frustrations. I know there are professors that probably relate to the students better as in any learning organization. I don't see any frustrations, maybe just some room for improvement."*

**What are you most concerned about for your child as they transition from college to life after graduation?**

*"Student debt. Finding the right job for his skill set. I think the whole college scene, if you will, is a great place for networking with other students and things of that nature. I think it's a higher achieving student that also wants to network with professors in a way that is going to help them further their career. I think when you get out into the real world, you don't have the same closely-knit friends like in college, so networking and friendships you build for both personal benefit and career advancement are important. It's good to network with people that are not just your age and at the same level in school."*

**What do you believe has been the most helpful resource for your child in the beginning of their transition to life after graduation?**

*“One is that there are students there that he knew prior to going there. We had a good friend that had graduated from there. We know people who live in the area who have offered to host him. I think knowing friends and family gives him a sense of security.”*

**What do you believe is the biggest challenge that graduates of FMHC face when leaving college?**

*“Just finding their way after college. I think the Honors College is going to better prepare them for life after than students who do not attend the Honors College. It all depends on what your goals are and what type of career path you are looking at. There are many careers that don’t really require anything like Honors.”*

**What do you think the Honors College could do to better help students transition to life after graduation?**

*“I think getting more job-oriented training. I’m dating myself a little, but back in high school we did a thing called co-op where you worked a job and got paid very little, but you were getting graded on your performance at that job. I think if they could do some more outreach into areas that students are interested in, whatever it is, I think it would help students to see if that’s where they truly want to be.”*

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

Stakeholder couldn’t really think of any other questions that would have been helpful to ask.

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

Yes. Phone or in person would be acceptable.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Advisors
- Honors Faculty
- More Honors Alumni

Possible next-steps:

- Interview more stakeholders that have more direct involvement with FMHC.
- See if other stakeholders suggest internships or co-ops.
- Dig deep to understand what exactly sets Honors students apart.

Dialogue 6

Stakeholder Group: FMHC Alumnus
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>Begin to empathize with someone who has completed their Honors experience. It will be helpful to talk with someone who can reflect upon their entire time in the Honors college as well as someone who has experience transitioning into the workforce.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>We will be able to hear from former Honors students about what they think the Honors College could have done to better prepare them for life after graduation.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This person felt as though the Honors College really did not provide very much to them. They did not feel as though their Honors courses were intellectually stimulating and did not feel that FMHC provided much (or anything) to prepare them to enter the workforce. They did say that Honors courses did a good job at approaching discourse, but still did not feel like FMHC did much else than that. They suggested changing the curriculum to be more challenging to Honors students and making Honors professors do more to encourage intrinsic motivation. Another suggestion was to better inform students about financial decisions following graduation and how to best manage their money. To them, the advisors and professors specifically in their major department were far more useful and knowledgeable than Honors advisors.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors curriculum was not challenging enough.</li> <li>• Most Honors courses were irrelevant and un-impactful to their overall education.</li> <li>• The Honors College did nothing to help them transition to the workforce.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell me a little bit about yourself as a Grand Valley Alumnus</b></p> <p><i>“So, I got my bachelor’s in four years. I was in the Honors College and I studied statistics and I minored in data science and mathematics. I came in with 14 credits because of AP and dual enrollment at Lansing Community College and, I don’t know, I stayed in Niemeyer for my freshman year and that was a good time. Now I’m graduated and I’m working at Dow Chemical as a data engineer. I’m on a track to do predictive analytics in the advanced analytics department at Dow Chemical next year.”</i></p> <p><b>As an Honors alumnus, how would you articulate what you think sets you apart from the rest of the general GVSU student body?</b></p>

*“To me, the people in Honors, it’s not that they really tried harder, I think it was a matter of them being more confident. To me, people who are in the Honors College they didn’t seem to stress as much as the people did who weren’t in the Honors College about things. Other than that, they stressed about not getting A’s but even then, I don’t know, maybe the best way to put it, would be that me and other people in the Honors College, we expected A’s and if we didn’t get A’s, that was pretty weird and we didn’t like that, we didn’t like that feeling. But, at the same time, I don’t think that Honors students were smarter or even worked harder necessarily; I know I didn’t work harder. I do know that we had higher expectations of ourselves and we were more confident, at least that’s my view.”*

**How do you think the Honors College helped you with your transition into the workforce?**

*“I don’t think it did very much except maybe one thing; I think it made me dig a little bit deeper when it comes to issues about the humanities. I guess the Honors College forced my mind to think a in a little bit more of an ethical format. I can remember times in classes, even outside of humanity based classes, like my science class in which various types of conflict would arise whether it be in the class setting or just in a discussion[ary] setting where we’d talk about something political going on or a human right or something like that because I think the Honors professors attempted to encourage friendly discourse and friendly conversation that was maybe a little bit more in depth into some deeper topics. I don’t know if I said that to the best of my ability, but...”*

**How do you think talking more in depth about things has been beneficial; can you elaborate on that a little bit?**

*“Sure, so the more that we deal with the important issues of life concerning human beings, specifically when it comes to ethics, the more we consider peoples’ feelings and the more we consider peoples’ trains of thought and why they came to certain conclusions. For example, Dow is again and again ranked when it comes to inclusion and diversity and environmental benefits to the world, arguably the most powerful chemical company in the world. It’s done more for the environment than most companies, like 99.9% of companies. It goes to show why these ethical manager and directors in particular will come to specific conclusions when it comes to certain decisions. They take into consideration the ethics of things when it comes to big corporations, because it’s successful. If I were in a small business that wasn’t that successful, I can guarantee I could locate one or two things where the ethics are just not in place, if that makes sense. Basically, what I’m saying is that you can’t have a successful business without contemplating the more personable and ethical issues. You have to address those and you have to do it in a very thoughtful manner without dogma. So, I don’t know, otherwise your business fails. You can fail as a person if you don’t recognize these things. For example, at Dow, we had to take subliminal bias training where we had to take these tests to try to recognize if we have accidental biases that we don’t even recognize, like unconscious biases and how to address those. Not to just say that biases are bad, but things we can work with rather than [\_\_\_\_\_] say you have this bias and how do you work with being against anti equality, so stuff like that.”*

**Switching gears a little bit, can you describe some of the campus resources that you used during your time at GVSU?**

*"I would say I primarily used, um, I was in Mackinac all the time for statistics, math, data science, so I used Manitou Hall and the library there all the time. I was there quite often, I was there far more than anywhere else. It was nice that I could just walk right to my class after or what have you because my classes were all right next door in Mackinac. I would say the most significant [resources] were my professors in my department. Whether it was for consulting or just wanting to have a conversation about my field or about homework or whatever, the professors in my department, the statistics department, are arguably the greatest educators I've ever come to know and some of the greatest people I've ever come to know when it comes to their desire for people like me to learn and grow."*

**What can you tell me about the resources that the Honors College provided that you used?**

*"Once or twice I went in my freshman year to make sure that things were situated so that I would be able to graduate, other than that, I wasn't interested."*

**What can you tell me about some of the concerns that you had during your preparation for graduating and entering the workforce?**

*"I didn't have any. I landed my job in October of my senior year so I had enough time to prepare myself mentally. Dow did a great job of continuously contacting me to make sure that I was feeling okay. I don't think there was anything that I was really nervous about."*

**What was the biggest issue you have with the Honors College in the way it prepared you, or its lack of preparation for your transition to life after graduation?**

*"My Live. Learn. Lead was a joke, the biggest joke of all time. I couldn't believe that it was even a class. I took Aging and Saging and I expected so much more from her because she was a highly accredited and very smart, respectable woman and I appreciated her a lot: very nice. At the same time, it was the easiest class ever; there was really nothing you had to do to get an A other than show your face. I probably could've gone in total three times and gotten a B maybe a B+, heck, potentially an A. The most we ever had to do was a five-page, double-spaced essay that was to summarize your experience of the class; what did you learn from it? That was our exam! That was our entire exam! It was very intellectually dissatisfying. Everything in that class I could've learned in a ten-minute TED talk. Almost everyone else came to that conclusion as well. But at the time I was a sophomore or freshman, I forget, and it's not like I want any more on my plate if I don't have to have it. It's not like I'm going to say 'Hey, Dr. Toot, can you give me more to do?' When it comes to my other classes, I think they did well. I think I would say that Honors wasn't challenging, I didn't feel challenged at all during my entire Honors College experience. I know some people did, I know some people had freshman courses in the Honors College or junior seminar or Live. Learn. Lead. that was quite challenging, but I didn't. I had quite easy classes, I even remember during a course, there was a lot of reading and you didn't even have to do the reading to get an A. But, no, I didn't really feel challenged. It felt like I wasn't intrinsically motivated. I think that was something they were trying to grasp in the Honors College. There was one class, the Honors Human*

*Body in Motion that I felt did the best job at pushing us. That was Dr... what's his last name... I think it was Brad... it starts with an A, but he was fantastic. Other than that, I mean, the Honors College.... I remember taking a regular gen ed outside the Honors College in my senior year when I had a brief stint of thinking about becoming a surgeon, so I'm like, okay, let's see how I do in bio and chem and those were way harder than any of the classes I had taken in Honors, for sure."*

**Going along with that, what do you think the Honors College could do to help fix that? To help make it more challenging or intellectually stimulating?**

*"I would have loved if the professors put more thought into curriculum rather than just being like 'oh hey, this is what I want to do today. This is what I want to study today. This is what I want to talk about today.' But rather, have a set curriculum that is more in depth and I think that's something that they might be pushing to. I think that my freshman sequence did a good job at holding that curriculum, but even then, I don't think that they put that much effort into it. I remember our exam at the end of the first semester was supposed to be a presentation and we ran out of time, so people couldn't do their presentations, like how were they graded? There were certain things that we ended up talking about that were just not... it just didn't feel relevant, it honestly just shouldn't have been in the curriculum. I remember at the end of Urbanism, we had to learn how to calculate R values and how to understand air pressure or temperature or things like that, that were so irrelevant to the types of topics we were talking about. I would like for the curriculum to be more organized within the Honors College by the professors and for the professors not to come in empty handed, but rather have set curriculums and find better ways to encourage intrinsic motivation. Something that I like that Dr. Hiskes did in Theory of Human Rights, which was my junior seminar was that he put a set of topics that you could choose from, like utilitarianism. He basically said 'read these articles concerning utilitarianism, read these chapters, do your own personal studying on it, however that might look and then write a paper.' That encouraged me to think a lot more. There were specific points that he really wanted us to grasp, but beyond that, I can kind of take control of that and be the entrepreneur of my own paper. But I wasn't left empty-handed; it wasn't so vague as the exam that we had in my Live. Learn. Lead. that said to write five pages on what you learned. But yeah, curriculum, encourage intrinsic motivation, and difficulty, at least for my classes, and I'm not that smart of a guy, I'm telling you that straight-up."*

**Could you tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think might have been helpful in your transition from college to the workforce?**

*"Maybe budgeting classes that are just freely available to college students that could be thrown into part of our tuition. Maybe some quick twenty-minute videos that help you learn how to invest, or something like that. One thing I do notice in a lot of my coworkers, especially those new to the workforce, is that many people don't know how to create a budget and they kind of just wing it."*

Stakeholder response to "what is the one thing I didn't ask you that you think I should have?"

*“I love that question! I’m surprised that you never asked me any questions concerning my living space, like Niemeyer. I feel like that could be an entire conversation in and of itself. Concerning that, I don’t know exactly what I’d want to bring forward, but maybe questions about how was your social life freshman year, because I know that some people struggled with that living at Niemeyer since it’s closed rather than open. Also, questions concerning the best study habits. That would’ve been a good type of question to ask.”*

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

Yes, he would like to be contacted via telephone if needed.

More connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors alumnus
- Honors faculty

Possible next-steps:

- Interview more FMHC alumni to learn about ways they could have been helped in their transition.
- Talk to FMHC faculty about ways to better prepare and engage FMHC students.
- Talk to current FMHC students to learn how they feel about their own preparation for graduation and post-graduate life.



Dialogue 7

Stakeholder Group: Honors Advisor
Estimated Age: __ 18-30 _x_ 30-40 ___ 40-50 __ 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal of this interview is to discuss with an Honors Advisor what makes Honors students stand out, what is the process like in terms of advising for aiding in the transition of Honors students to the real world and get ideas for how to improve the process.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>This interview is changing how we view our potential prototype. We need to consider interviewing more people involved in the Honors College than we had previously thought. This includes someone from the disability resource center, the office of fellowships, the counseling center, a clinician, and the office of undergraduate research. There are more aspects to the graduation process that we need to consider.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This interview provided a lot of insight on what goes on behind the scenes of the process of graduation and transitioning to the real world. The interview also brought to light that when we are designing our prototype, we should take into consideration the mental health of the Honors students and decide from there if we should invest more money into the counseling center. We should also look into how to better market the Honors College's services, events, and workshops. Lastly, we touched base on how to advertise what it means to be an Honors Student out in the real world.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It takes a lot for the two Honors advisors to meet one on one with seniors conducting their senior project</li> <li>• Only 40% of the Honors College opens the weekly newsletter, let alone reads it</li> <li>• Honors Students don't know how to properly advertise themselves out in the world</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Describe what you do at the Honors College. When did you start working here?</b>  <i>"My position is technically academic and enrichment advisor. And I Started in January of 2016. So, I've been here for about 2 years."</i></p> <p><b>What differences do you see in graduating seniors who are in the Honors program compared to those students who are not in the Honors program?</b></p>

*“I actually don't spend a lot of time with folks that are not in the Honors program. Most of my work, like 97% of it is with Honors student exclusively. The only time that I work with non-Honors students during summer orientation and like miscellaneous student mentoring that I might do through the university on my own time.”*

**Why do you think that students choose to be a part of the Honors College?**

*“I think that a lot of students do choose to be a part of the Honors College because they are interested in learning with other folks that are interested in learning. So, the idea of just getting the knowledge on all cool things, but with other folks that are interested in that process. And I think something cool happens when all the students are engaged and are all-in together, good things happen. It's like in high school “Yeah my AP classes are different- everyone is in it to win it”- I wonder if Honors is like that. I think there are also a fair number of students who join because it will “look good” on their resume and they want to utilize the system to distinguish themselves in that process.”*

**What are some of the resources that the Honors College offers to better prepare Honors students for life after college?**

*“We have smaller class sizes, so first year students can have relationships with a faculty member right in their first year, and that faculty member follows them right in that first year and really gets to know them. And we find in research that students who have access to a faculty member, especially very early on have a much higher persistence rates, graduation rates than a peer who does not have that connection with a faculty member. And that means also that these students in the sea of 25,000 people here with hundreds and hundreds of faculty members, the fact that they have a connection with at least one person that knows their ability in classes, that can speak to who they are and their character, also transfers into their later years when they need a recommendation, for instance, because their sequence professors can really speak to who they are and their quality as a scholar. So, I would say our faculty is a primary resource and that structure of really frontloading the first year of Honors is really key. I think too that we have about like 1,500 Honors students but there are two Honors advisors for 1,700 students, which seems like a lot of students per advisor. But it's a much higher ratio than other places in the university. So, the job that I have is a lot different than some of our advising peers. We have the ability to be in relationships with students in a little bit of a different capacity because we are more of a community here and because we actually have more time in our schedules to meet with people. We don't have this calendar that is “Go! Go! Go!” that many of our advising colleagues and peers do. So, we actually do have the capacity to follow up with students when they're, for instance, struggling in classes. We do have the capacity to contact students individually to talk to their professors, particularly when students are struggling. And our approach is one that is resource based, so we're not often the ones solving the problem, but we're the ones saying “Have you thought about this resource? Or that one?” So, we're a one stop shop resource guide to like saying these are the people you can go out to. But I do think that is kind of an asset that Honors students have that others don't. The third piece is that Honors students are always looking for ways to expand their possibilities and one of them is through Study Abroad and we of course we have a close relationship with study abroad. But we have a particularly close relationship with the office of fellowships, so the folks that help*

students get funding sometimes for different opportunities that is often very competitive. And that office particularly is really awesome at reading people's essays ahead of time and helping them be really competitive for these particular grants and scholarships that are very competitive. And so, this is a resource that is actually open to all students at Grand Valley, it just happens to be housed here in this office suite. And we are in close communication with them, so we can recommend students that are really great for some of these opportunities. So, for me that comes down to relationships and community building."

**What are some common problems that Honors students come to you with?**

"Well there's two kinds of problems that I deal with, with Honors students. One is that "life is big and adulting is hard" stuff, and that's anything from "I'm a perfectionist, I didn't get the A" or "I'm on academic probation" or "I'm feeling really crappy about myself" and as a result everything else is going downhill. So, we'll couch that under mental health/wellness of an Honors student in general and their capacity to rise to the occasion, just like needing support, and particularly finding resources on campus, and sometimes being talked into those resources. So, a good part of my job is about that, and that's like a really large contributing factor to why an Honors student doesn't excel at certain times, because they're not feeling great internally. The other piece of Honors stuff is trying to decipher My Path and figuring out what does that mean for an Honors student and actually we recommend that they shouldn't try to figure it out themselves, they should visit an Honors advisor on a semi regular basis, we say once every semester, especially for freshman year students just to start getting to know us. I think it's absolutely crucial for Honors students to see an advisor because My Path is confusing, and things actually don't transfer over completely well in the system and there are mistakes in the computer system. And so, a lot of our conversations with students is helping them decipher what actually do you have left in Honors, how do you go about doing that in an efficient way but also a meaningful way, and oh oops there was a mistake and so this is what that means for you. So, when students don't visit us and it's like the eleventh hour, a semester away from graduation for instance, and they still don't have a U.S. Diversity credit, or they really never did take that art course, or I thought this theatre course was going to count for that, not it doesn't this is what you have to do. That's when we're trying to figure out what you have to do, what are your next possibilities and coming up with a crisis game plan. The third piece is trying to help Honors students figure out what senior project is. And there are certain times in the year where its one student after the other saying the same thing over and over again. Even when we have workshops, for instance, about what the senior project is, people can always come to them, they don't pay attention to the announcements and they didn't know that there were workshops. And so, we have a large percentage of our time getting in meetings about the senior project."

**Among these common problems, which ones has the Honors College been unable to help with, and how do you think they could be more helpful?**

"There's nothing that we're not able to help with. We're finding solutions to some of these things, there are things that are totally out of our control. Like for instance, the way the computer system that works with My Path works. And we're always trying to

*troubleshoot with records, with the computer folks to figure out how to make certain classes count as blank and blank within the system. It's out of our control but it also means there is constant conversation around it to come up with new solutions. Eventually the curriculum will change and will have a whole new set of problems sometimes still related to the same thing. It's just the way it is. There are other things like the senior project: it's not totally efficient to meet with one student after the other after the other on an individual basis to talk about the same thing over and over again, the senior project. It's not efficient but we'll continue to do it until we find another way to do it. And hopefully with the new curriculum find a place for that. It is what it is for the time being and that also means we continue to offer workshops knowing that people will show up. The mental health piece to it is really intriguing to me because I think that students face pressure, and this is not to just Honors students, and stress and trying to cope with reality is hard. We're finding that for instance, our counseling department here is very inundated with students needing help, that need conversations, that need therapy. And they don't have enough resources to hire more clinicians, so they're at capacity, their bubbling over. And so actually I would love to see more funding going towards student wellness in general, and I would love to see more workshops about how staff and faculty can continue to advocate and be with students who are in times of stress of varying levels. And what does that look like to be a mental health first responder. I think that would be great, but right now I just talk to the students that come to my office and have an actual desire expressed in conversation. And that's as far as I can go at the moment."*

**How do you feel that the Honors College advertises all of its resources enough to the students?**

*"Well that's a great question! We have a small number of students, in the sense that it is not 25,000. We have students that are engaged or have the access to engagement, first years especially. They're in it for their first year, they're like sponges, they're soaking up information and there are ways for us to get information out. At the very least we could have their faculty make an announcement. But at the end of the day, we rely heavily on the Tuesday newsletter to say "These are your opportunities, these are the possibilities, these are the workshops, the open advising hours, the whatever big things are coming up. Here it is, it's up to you to take advantage of it." And we know from click rates, the reports that come back to us, large percentages, not 100% of people are opening that. I think it's like 40%, I would guess some of our students are just opening the email, let alone reading it. And that's a problem. And there are bulletin boards up the wazoo and there are emails, there are ways to estimate information, but people are not getting it, or people are not paying attention. So, for us, we're always trying to figure out how do you get people to pay attention to you? How many times can you actually say this is going to be great until people actually are like yeah this IS going to be great. So yeah, if folks were to come and say we have some great ideas and would like to offer that in terms of your marketing for instance, I'd be all about that personally."*

**What resources at GVSU would you like to see tailored for Honors Students?**

*"What's interesting is that everyone at Grand Valley is engaged in the process of liberal education. So, everyone takes gen eds and liberal education means a great deal. We actually find in the job field that the concept of liberal education (gen eds) the skills*

*gained from these non-major classes are actually really important life skill things. However, we know that Honors students have a hard time articulating what Honors has meant to them. You took some Honors classes, what does that mean? Honors students have a hard time integrating Honors into their life, like “what does this mean later? what skills did I gain? how did I grow? Who did I become because of these classes and experiences?” That to me is particularly troubling, not because it’s necessarily a bad thing, but because It’s an untapped resource within people, internally. It is the inability to be able to say “I have grown because of x, y, z.” Its poor marketing in terms of Honors because when you can actually articulate because you are a better person, a better learner, a better scholar because of say these three classes but you don't say that out in the world, we’ve missed an opportunity. But also, if you don’t articulate that for yourself, you don’t even realize where that new knowledge came from so that you can multiply that experience later on in your life. So, if we’re not helping Honors students connect the dots to where they got this from, this learning process, I think we’re doing a dis-service. I would love to start thinking about new opportunities ways to do that, and that is in partnership with the Career Center, for instance. Who are you as a potential employee and where did you get that stuff from? How do you talk about Honors and your resumes so that I really show the kind of person/learner/scholar that you are? How do you say more than I just studied abroad, but that I gained X, Y, and Z skills? That’s the part that we’re just not doing.”*

**For what you know now, if you were an Honors student, what resources do you think Honors students should be asking for to help transition from GVSU?**

*“When I was a college student and I was transitioning out into the real world, I relied heavily on my college mentors to spend time with me in my resume and like help me figure that stuff out. They’re also the people that I would come back to reflect with, so I was still relying on my mentors in some way to have conversations with after because I hadn’t yet developed those mentoring relationships out in the real world yet and I still needed somebody to talk with. So, I was really fortunate that I had of lot of mentors really in sectors of my life that I could come back to say I went and did this, and I saw this, I was really intrigued by that, so that was an asset to me. I think there are Honors students that are doing that to an extent, but I’m pretty sure that’s a rarity. And I don't know if Honors students have that access, not to say that faculty members here wouldn’t be open to that but I’m not sure that Honors students see themselves as relationally connected to their faculty even after they graduate, or even relationally connected to the Honors College after they graduate. So, I think in preparing young, new professionals out into the working world, I can think of tips and tricks and things that would be great to know, and at the same time I’m not sure I would’ve paid attention to all that coming out of school since I was so overwhelmed with a new transition that I don’t know how I functioned sometimes. It's tricky and stressful sometimes.”*

**Can you share a story or two about some of the students you have mentored/supported?**

*“I can think of a couple of students who I met later on in their college years, who were really conscientious students who were already in thinking about life after college while they were here, which meant that they were asking really good questions when they were*

here and they were starting to engage with the professional working world even while they were still here. Which meant that they could totally use their resources physically here on campus and were pursuing. So, they had Graduate school options, working options and parallel process so that they could get all the support while they were here and that was really good and it served them well to be in an atmosphere that is still supportive knowing that life outside of these confines is not always like that. Students I find that thought about it ahead of time and thinking about and actively working on things ahead of time was good; I have the capacity to do that. I'm sure it added to their stress load while they were actively trying to do finals and projects and things like that. I'd be curious to see what it would look like for them not to do that, if they would land on their feet. There are always people who land on their feet, and Honor students are at the tops of those lists, so I worry less about Honors students in that way. However, I also work with a lot of undergrad students, that are younger, who need more support while in their first couple of years, as opposed to their second couple of years. That's not always the case, but I'm curious to see what is going to happen to these students. There are always some that need a little extra support, and they're already finding places that they can find that in the working world like with internships or whatever. So, they're doing really great and at the same time, they're not always going to have another "me," they have to find another "me" out there in the world. How do you create conversations that help folks figure out how you find mentors and encouraging people out there to support you, because it's not always going to go well?"

**Can you describe what you think future employers are looking for?**

"I think of a lot of things. One thing that we find in chatting with folks, is that they are looking for folks that are critical thinkers, and we hear that all the time like what that means. But really, they're looking for folks who can think from multiple perspectives and weigh out options, and work with a team in such a way so they are incorporating different options and perspectives so they're not just getting one slice of the story but like multiple pieces of that. A student who knows that they are missing information and are looking to find that information is a really good student and employee. Also, students that have strong communication skills. You're not just satisfied with this answer that was really easy to get and obtain. I think to that students who have really good communication skills both verbally and written communication is good, and I cannot stress that enough. Not everyone is going to be great at both of them, but you want folks to really have an understanding/appreciation for all of the ways that one communicates and really capitalize on what they're good at and to learn from and work on the stuff that they need more area working on. So a student who says yeah I'm great at written communication, I did great in my sequence, but starts the email so a student who says yeah I'm great at written communication, I did great in my sequence, but starts the email "Hey" and speaks in sort of an emoji language in the email and never finalizes the email by saying "thank you" or even putting their name down, that's problematic for lots of reasons. So, I think there's a lot of room to bring folks down to earth in that process. I think too, and this will be my final piece, students who can figure out how to ask for help and do that often, because we don't have the answers to most things in life. So as a result, have the approach of a learner and for that to be a lifelong process and to be able to ask for help along the way, are people I think will encourage community, they'll encourage

*relationships in their lives, and they'll also encourage people to ask that same question, how can you help me or I need help. And that self-advocacy behavior will go much further in your whole entire life, not just in your working life. Students who can ask for help now are going to be much better off later on if they can do that out in their world outside of college."*

**Can you describe any experience in helping students apply to graduate school?**

*"Mostly I end up writing recommendations for students for graduate school or like internships and things like that, so I do that a little bit. I'm also like cognizant of the fact that most students don't know like what that process is, and many times they are getting that from their other advisors. They're meeting with their class adviser in real life and being like "oh this is the process for medical school" for instance. But other students might be like first generation college students and might have no clue that oh you might have to take the GRE or have heard of it but don't know what it means. So, some of the conversations I have with students is about process-oriented stuff, like how to get your ducks in a row here now so it starts incrementally working toward things so that you have a game plan when you graduate. That is an incremental year by year process of thought and consideration and letters and tests and interviews and saving money that takes some time. You can do that at warp speed when you're a junior, but it doesn't have to be that way, you can start it early on too. A good amount of my time is starting those conversations to keep that present in people's minds."*

**Who else should we talk to about their experience with the Honors College?**

*"Susan Mendoza who works with the office of undergraduate research. She teaches in the Honors College, she teaches a Live. Learn. Lead. and she sees a lot of Honors students on a daily basis because they are trying to engage in research opportunities on campus. She knows what it takes for those students to do really well. There's a slice of people who are Honors students that engage in the office of disability resources, and Shante Witcher is the director. It might be neat to talk to her about resources that they offer to students that are registered with them who are receiving services through them. I think it would be interesting for you to have a conversation with someone in counseling/mental health to understand and grapple with what does it look like to be as a clinician, to sit with an Honors student, for instance, who is ready to graduate or in the process of graduation and the anxieties that come up in conversation, generally speaking, not to say I work with this person and blah blah blah. But to say speaking these are the kinds of anxieties, worries, apprehension or excitement and joys that come up for students as they prepare to graduate and move on. I think that would be a neat conversation. I don't have a particular clinician in mind though for you to talk to. Elizabeth Lambert in the office of fellowships. She spends a lot of time with Honors students, reading their essays and things like that to get ready for these pretty competitive scholarships and grants. Some of those extend past graduation as well and are for the purpose of people going on to graduate school etc. or civil service and things like that."*

Stakeholder response to "what is the one thing I didn't ask you that you think I should have?"

*“Not that you should’ve asked me this or not, but I’m thinking about the fact that like folks who are Honors students have these needs and I don’t know that they’re necessarily making the connection “Oh I am an Honors Student and \_\_\_\_.” sometimes they don’t even articulate themselves as Honor students out in the world. So, there is that thing going on, and I think its identity based because they don’t even realize they are part of this community, that is what it is. So, when your question is poised to us... well what about Honors students as they’re prepared to graduate, in some ways were like they’re students, who are Honors students. And then the larger question is should we provide additional thoughts, services, programs, workshops because they’re Honors students, or the other side of the coin is: is the university not doing that enough for students in general, not just Honors students? So, it is like an interesting question to sit with, “Should Honors students get extra, special, different services related to their graduation and planning?” Or do they get exactly what others at the university get? It also makes me think about graduating; who were the people that were a part of that process? Like okay so, it's everything from the people you don't know about below the iceberg, below the water at the university: records and people that audit and advisors like me who are making sure people are ready to graduate people like Robyn who are adding them on to lists, student workers who are putting lists into other lists. All of these little details that happened to actually get someone to graduate. But then there are people above the surface of the water actively saying out in the world you’re graduating soon you need to start thinking about X, Y and Z. And that’s everybody from professors to research organizers to study abroad people to all the individuals who have more than just one conversation with students but have multiple conversations with students. Do they even know what services even exist at the university? Do they even know where you should go to ask about X, Y and Z when you’re ready to go into the world? I think everybody naturally says the Career Center. Do they even know what the services are at the Career Center? It just makes me have like a ton of wonderings about like that process; what does it mean to transition well? What does it mean to think about a student holistically and who they are out in the world and who are they going to become out in the world and helping them mentally, spiritually, ethically, academically think about that and themselves in all those different ways? But if we were to say yes that Honors students should get additional/extra/special services from Honors about the process of transitioning into the real world, one might say that we should be/could be working with x, y, and z more closely and intentionally. Are we doing that? Is there a question there? Probably.”*

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

Yes, we are allowed to contact the stakeholder in the future if needed, preferably by email.



Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Professor of a Live. Learn. Lead. Section
- Director of the Office of Disability Resources
- Director of the Office of Fellowships
- A clinician that deals head on with the mental health aspect of the Honors Student experience

Possible next-steps:

- Get in contact with leaders in student services
- Look into the how the mental health aspect can play a role in our project
- Think about ways to better advertise the resources that FMHC has to offer

Dialogue 8

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors, Non-GVSU student
Estimated Age: <u>  x  </u> 20-30 <u>    </u> 30-40 <u>    </u> 40-50 <u>    </u> 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal was to learn more about how GRCC prepared its students for life after college. I also wanted to learn what improvements she thought could be made to help students prepare for life after college.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It gives us more details on what we can learn from how other colleges prepare their students, especially freshmen.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The interviewee is a freshman at GRCC and hasn't utilized many of the on-campus resources. I thought that it was interesting to see what a freshman was thinking about for graduation or if they were thinking about graduation at all. The interviewee wasn't thinking much about graduation and the subject of graduation preparation seemed like a funny topic to her. She said that GRCC didn't advertise its services very well and that they could improve in that regard. The interviewee felt that having someone contact you six months into your freshmen year to make sure that you were on track would be helpful. In addition, she felt that GRCC's work with area hospitals was helpful for her getting a job after college and getting a job after college was her biggest worry for graduation. The interviewee felt that the location of GRCC was especially helpful for the nursing program because the hospitals were so close to the campus.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee felt that it would be useful to have someone follow up on her halfway through the year.</li> <li>• The interviewee also felt that the internship program with area hospitals was useful for her getting a job after college.</li> <li>• The interviewee viewed the GRCC's close proximity to the hospitals as an asset as it allowed GRCC to work closely with the hospitals</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GRCC.</b>  <i>"I'm taking classes, my professors are really nice. They're like smaller classes and so if I need help it's easier to get that. It's kind of like high school almost."</i></p>

**Why do you say it's almost like high school?**

*"Well because it's smaller class sizes and yeah pretty much just that."*

**Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GRCC so far?**

*"The library there's this lady who will help you source things and I'm not good at that so she'll help me source. I mean like citing materials."*

**Are there any other resources that you've made use of, specifically for preparing you for when you graduate?**

*"I've gone to academic advising a couple times I guess."*

**How has GRCC helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not been helpful?**

*"They have like job opportunities there and there are always flyers up so if someone needs a job they can get one."*

**Have you ever called on those?**

*"No."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*"I feel like once I get my RN I should be good because I can get a stable job and provide for myself financially, so I hope it works out."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*"I'm not sure."*

**What about general services?**

*"No, I haven't thought of any."*

**What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*"I think I need to know more about the services that GRCC has to make a good answer to that."*

**So, it sounds like getting the word out about the services would be useful?**

*"Yes."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"Getting a job."*

**Anything else?**

*"I think that's about it."*

**In what ways do you think GRCC could help you with this?**

*“Like for the nursing programs and stuff you can get like easy internships to Mercy and Spectrum because they’re next door neighbors and you have to get there anyways and the nursing programs gives you opportunities to volunteer in those hospitals so that you have experience beforehand.”*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*“I’m in a CLS class and so everyone has to take it. So, it’s like a college learning study, so like the goal of it is to have a career plan so that you’re not wasting your time in college so you know what you’re doing when you’re out.”*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students in the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*“I don’t know I don’t really talk to a bunch of people. I just study and go to class.”*

**What is your biggest issue with GRCC in preparing you for after college?**

*“I don’t know.”*

**Would it be fair to say that your biggest issue would be that you don't know about all of their services?**

*“Yeah, there you go.”*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that GRCC could make to address that issue?**

*“Let’s see, I feel like for orientation they could they have like sheets and stuff but no one touches base afterwards so I feel like if later on throughout your freshman year, if someone touches base again so that if you have other stuff you’re supposed to go to so that info is fresh.”*

**How could GRCC help you prepare more?**

*“Well they have people that they can reach out to for internships but I feel like communication as a whole they could improve on so that people are more aware of those events so that they can access those resources.”*

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

*“I’m not sure. I think you asked a lot of good questions.”*

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

Yes, they want to be texted

For Dialogue: Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors student
- Director of Career Center
- GRCC Administrator

Possible next-steps:

- Learn more about how community colleges prepare their students for transitioning to life after attending the community college.
- Interview more students that don't attend an Honor's College to learn more about their experiences.
- Interview Honors Professor to hear how well he believes the Frederik Meijer Honor's College prepares its students and what they believe could be improved.

Dialogue 9

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors Student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Under 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal is to learn more about what resources non-Honor's College students have found helpful and what they feel is lacking currently at GVSU.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It helps us to learn more about what resources are lacking for students at GVSU. It will especially help us determine how GVSU could improve in helping the students after they graduate.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The student said that they didn't use the Grand Valley resources much. He didn't rely much on Grand Valley to help him find a job after college but instead relied on consistently networking with others to find a job. They did feel that their professors had been the most valuable resource as their professors had encouraged them to try different paths. They felt that it would be useful to have a class that students could take that taught them how to manage bills and other finances. Additionally, they mentioned that they found the Grand Valley classrooms dreary and dark. Lastly, the GVSU student thought that Honor's College students differentiated themselves by working harder.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A class focuses on personal finances would be helpful.</li> <li>• They felt that Honor's students separated themselves by working harder.</li> <li>• Professor's give valuable input on helping students choose between paths.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.</b>  <i>"As a student I go to class, I come home, I study at home and at the library. I have four classes. Grand Valley is a good school."</i></p> <p><b>Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?</b>  <i>"The Student Services Center, the math tutor lab, and academic counseling. I go to Starbucks a lot and some other food court areas in between classes."</i></p> <p><b>How has GVSU helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not been helpful?</b></p>

*"I'd say it's not affected either way because I'm not trying to get a job or internship per say from Grand Valley, just like doing it on my own."*

**Why aren't you looking through Grand Valley for jobs after college?**

*"Because I just didn't go to the internship program. I know other people who can help me get jobs and I already have too many jobs as it is."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*"Very confident because I'm responsible. I'm just confident that I know what to do and I can pay bills on time. I can find a house. I can go grocery shopping."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*"Maybe instead of a service it'd be more like a class that could be a gen ed or something and you could take that class instead of something else and they could teach you about bills and adult life. Because I don't know if like a service desk people would go to that but I think if it was a class that people would go to it, and then you're able to get credit for it."*

**What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*"Make the rooms more cheerful and less dreary and dark."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"What area I'm going to live in, how big of a house I can afford, and to not go overboard with like spending my money."*

**In what ways do you think GVSU could help you with this?**

*"No ways, I just have to stop being a big baller."*

**What do you think is the difference between the regular college and the Honors College?**

*"I don't know. The Honors College is for smart kids. You work harder or something? I don't know."*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"Professors."*

**How have they been helpful?**

*"Just like giving you tips like saying stuff like hey this is what you need to do. You should try this, you should look into this."*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students in the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*“They work a lot more and they study a lot more and they’re more focused on their studies and less on drinking and smoking.”*

**What is your biggest issue with GVSU in preparing you for after college?**

*“That’s just the classes that I don’t need. To take the nonsense classes. I don’t like classes that aren’t going to benefit me. Something like Math 110.”*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that GVSU could make to address that issue?**

*“I mean I can tell you my idea. So, my idea is to have students choose the classes they want and then go from there. Which sounds bad but you kind of know what I’m talking about. So, I’d take like accounting 110 and then pair that with the legal environment for business. Then I wouldn’t have to take art classes and everything else. It should be about learning and not about getting a piece of paper for a degree.”*

**How could GVSU help you prepare more?**

*“I don’t think there’s anything more they could do it’s just like self-motivation. Actually, one idea is to have a napping zone in the library.”*

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

*“You should have asked me why I decided not to go into the Honor’s College. I think that could have some useful information for your project.”*

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

Yes, via text

For Dialogue: Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student
- Non-Honors Student
- Non-Honors Faculty

Possible next-steps:

- Add “Did you apply to the Honor’s College? Why did you decide not to apply to the Honor’s College?” to our dialogue script.
- Add “Would you find a personal finances class helpful?” to all scripts for students.
- Contact Non-Honors faculty for an interview



Dialogue 10

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors Student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal is to learn more about what services students use to help them prepare for life after college as well as to learn how they view Honor's students.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It will help us to better understand how Grand Valley prepares non-Honor's students for life after college. In addition, it will give us their view on what separates Honor's students from non-Honor's students.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>They felt that the Career Center had been the most useful resource that they have used. They didn't apply to the Honor's College because the essays were intimidating, and they didn't feel like they would be accepted. They had a desire for a class that went over cover letters and resumes so that students would be able to walk into their classes feeling more confident. In addition, they utilized a lot of the tutoring resources. However, they felt that Grand Valley didn't prepare them well for the creative side of marketing; they mentioned that a class focusing on how to use Adobe products would be a useful class for them.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A class focusing on making creative could be helpful for Marketing majors.</li> <li>• The tutoring centers were utilized a lot by this student.</li> <li>• They didn't apply to the Honor's College because they didn't think they would be accepted.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.</b>  <i>"Oh boy. Well I am going to school for Marketing and Business Management, double majoring. I hope to be able to graduate from Grand Valley within four years. I am a sophomore this semester but come next semester I'll be a junior, and as a student here I strive for all A's and B's in my classes as well as hoping to get some internship opportunities."</i></p> <p><b>Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?</b>  <i>"I've made use of multiple different tutoring centers such as the math and science center. Also, just tutoring, like having tutoring sessions with an actual tutor and the writing center."</i></p>

**How has GVSU helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not been helpful?**

*"It has helped a lot. I have been able to get employers to look at me and take me as a serious candidate for positions that I've applied to now and positions that I'll apply to in the future."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*"Pretty confident, I feel like Grand Valley has given me all the resources that I needed to be successful in my career, or in my path. Umm okay, so it's made me confident that I'll do good in whatever career that I end up in."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*"I wish that Grand Valley just had like a service for all majors that they would help like create a resume and a cover letter that people can make to feel confident of their abilities when they're interviewing for jobs that have to do with what they went to school for."*

**What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*"I think that they should have tutoring and stuff on the weekends rather than just so then like on the weekdays and later on the nights for students that have a job during the day and then take night classes. So, make tutoring available to all students, honestly that may already exist I'm not sure."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"Being able to get a career that I know I deserve with the knowledge that I have."*

**In what ways do you think GVSU could help you with this?**

*"I think GVSU could help me with this by recommending me to different employers and recommending different employers to me that they think I'll be a good fit working with."*

**What do you think is the difference between the regular college and the Honors College?**

*"Regular college, I feel like you have to take more prerequisites that really don't relate to your major. Honor's College you don't have to take as many pre-requisites so you're able to get right into your major faster."*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"The Career Fair because it allows me to get up and talk to people that I don't know about professional careers and just get to know them and have them get to know me within a short period of time."*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students in the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*"I actually don't know."*

**Did you apply to the Honor's College? If not, why not?**

*"I did not because the essays intimidated me. I didn't think I was going to get in."*

**What is your biggest issue with GVSU in preparing you for after college?**

*"My biggest issue is that with me going to school for marketing I just feel like they're not really providing me with the creative side of marketing such as like teaching me how to use Adobe products."*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that GVSU could make to address that issue?**

*"Require people that are going to school for marketing and the like to take classes that have to do with creative design."*

**How could GVSU help you prepare more?**

*"By offering classes that have to do with creative design so that I'm more confident when I go to use the different software that is out there."*

Stakeholder response to "what is the one thing I didn't ask you that you think I should have?"

*"You should've asked me what my favorite services here at Grand Valley consist of."*

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

Yes, via text or in person

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student
- Employer
- Career Services

Possible next-steps:

- Add "What is your favorite resource at GVSU to help you prepare for life after college? Why?" to our dialogue script.
- Contact Employer to set up an interview.
- Talk with the group about asking future students where they feel that there is a hole in the curriculum for their major.

Dialogue 11

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors Professor
Estimated Age: ____ 20-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The goal of this interview was to hear a non-Honors professor's perspective on students graduating. Talking to faculty outside of Honors helps gain insight on whether he sees noticeable differences between students who are in Honors and students who are not, and if this impacts life after graduation.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>This interview brought up a way that GVSU helps prepare students for life after graduation that our team has yet to discuss. It will help find ways to improve the resources on campus available to students.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This interview was with a non-Honors professor who mentioned that he is not very informed about the FMHC. This being said, he has helped students transition to life after college in numerous ways while he's been a professor. He believes that their biggest challenges relating to jobs and life after school are that it does not come with a rubric. We do not know how our job will be and bosses will not assign clear projects the way that professors assign papers and tests. This recognition and ability to adapt is something future employers' value, along with confidence. Students should be required to interview someone within their career while in upper-level courses in order to learn and make connections from their class work to real-life situations in the workplace.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are major specific mentoring programs (he helps with Seidman College of Business) where someone from the workplace mentors a student in order to help them make connections and prepare for life after college.</li> <li>• Life does not come with a rubric. Jobs and bosses will be very vague about assignments, whereas professors are very specific so this transition can be difficult for students.</li> <li>• Faculty mentor for all four years every few months rather than different advisors throughout your four years at GVSU.</li> </ul>

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Describe what you do at GVSU. When did you start working here?**

*“I started working here about four years ago. I had just retired and got a little bored since my two daughters had just started college. Since I had always thought about teaching and my wife was a teacher, I knew I’d like it. I couldn’t do high school because the bar is too high and you have to get a certification and my background in business and IT made more sense to teach at a business school. I applied to a few business schools in the area and the people at Grand Valley got to me quicker and so I started teaching as an adjunct. I taught service management, which made sense because I had run a service firm for twenty-five years and then I was offered to teach Concepts of Management. I love finding new ways to get the points across in this class and recently I started teaching Ethics and enjoy that even more!”*

**How are non-Honors faculty educated about the FMHC here at GVSU? What do you personally know about it?**

*“The Honors program here at Grand Valley I know almost nothing about. I am familiar with Honors College because my daughters were considered for their schools and I know of other family friends who are involved with Honors College. As a general rule, my perception is this, that Honors students are counseled and encouraged to take tougher gen-ed classes that will be more difficult, with a higher expectation for both reading and writing. My perception is that they would be more comfortable with taking more discussion classes. But again, let’s go back to the fact that I really do not know what is particularly unique about the Grand Valley Honors program.”*

**What differentiates Honors students from students who are not involved in the FMHC?**

*“Well, I think as they come into my classes I see them as more able to be prepared for discussions. There is an expectation that they do not need as much hand-holding and I do not feel like I have to remind them about due dates. I still have students who are barely scraping their way through classes and need to be more spoon-fed than they should be, which is usually not the case with Honors students.”*

**What are some resources/services that GVSU has to offer on campus that better prepare students for life after college?**

*“I am in charge of a mentoring program this year, Seidman Mentoring Program. This helps students meet with someone from a company to start building connections and get insight on how life will be when you start your career. I like some of the student-led organizations such as AMA, ESSU, CEO club, and the placement office (Career Center). Things like jobs fairs and pre-job fair stuff like resume building and mock interviews are pretty darn important.”*

**What are some common concerns/problems that students come to you with that are related to their transition to life after college?**

*“I just had this conversation yesterday. She is not so much having trouble, but I asked her what in college helped her prepare for where she is now and she said taking a full*

*load and being active in student organizations. She worked and therefore was incredibly well-planned. She did not have a lot of free time and she said that really prepared her for the work she has now because she is used to her own schedule. If you lounge through the four years, I think you will get hit really hard with everything after school.”*

**What do you believe is the biggest challenge graduating students face after college?**

*“For most students, I think they are going to be faced with the fact that work doesn’t come with a rubric. What do I mean by that? There is no “if I do this, I will get 100% and promoted”. It is so rare that you know what it takes, and at what level to perform, to progress and that really sets a lot of people back. You think you did well and don’t get the raise and are confused since there is no rubric and you have to figure it out on your own. Every job, and frankly, every boss is a little different and you need to figure it out. Not only does the job not come with a rubric, neither do the deliverables and assignments. This can catch students off-guard and I think most students will be very anxious because they do not know what is expected of them necessarily. I do not see much creativity in students anymore and I think that is because we drilled that out of you students.”*

**How can major specific classes be geared more towards real-life encounters students will have in their future careers?**

*“Incorporating exercises or activities into class that cause students to encounter situations or problems that they would in the workplace. I make my students in all classes I teach work as teams against each other in order to show them how it will be after school. No job is going to be simple and straightforward and if students realize this before graduating it will help them be more successful.”*

**How can faculty encourage students to make more connections between their academic classes and their practical life?**

*“I don’t think there is a class at the junior and senior level where you shouldn’t be expected to interview a practitioner of what you are doing. So, if you are taking an HR class about benefits, why are you not expected to interview an HR director about how they manage benefits at their locations? You should be to see what they do that can be related back to class.”*

**What is one way GVSU could improve their resources in order to better prepare students for their future?**

*“All of the opportunities from mock interviews, visiting business, or taking additional independent studies. There are so many options for students that it almost seems overwhelming. The academic advising center is over-run. They can’t possibly spend enough time with every student that they need to. Students almost need a faculty mentor, someone who is genuinely concerned and ready to help an individual for their entire four years. They could meet about every two months in order to make students*

*the most successful possible. I am not sure they could do this for all GVSU students but I do believe this is possible with a smaller community, such as the FMHC students.”*

**Can you share a story about a student/students that you have personally mentored/supported near their graduation date?**

*“This was about a year ago. In my classes I got on my high horse about going to the career fair next week. I offered to the entire class if anyone is anxious about going, I will meet with them there and walk around and talk about what it means to interview. Sure enough, two young ladies, I met them over there and they were timid as all get out. I walked them up to an employer I personally knew and let them have a conversation while I walked away. I told them they did great and they felt more comfortable so next I had them go alone and watched. They came back and went to do a few more. It is now a year later and this year they took another one of my classes. They now came to talk to me about graduation and had not signed up to get a mentor yet so I told them to send me emails and I would be their mentor! I am helping them launch, and when they graduate and are getting job offers, I would not be surprised if they came to me and asked for more help and feedback.”*

**Can you describe what you think future employers are looking for?**

*“I think there is a level of self-confidence that you need to have so that you can conduct yourself and not come across as brash because there is a lot you still do not know yet. You should still be confident in what you do though. I think students need to be less concerned about the subject matter expertise. So, what I am saying here is, if you want to be in marketing but you only have one class of that subject, call yourself a marketing person and they will teach you what you need to know. No one person knows enough just from school, so when they get in the job they will need to be taught anyways. As long as you are confident, know how to think on your feet, and ask good questions about what it means to get something right employers will want you. Students should have a sense of where they want to go, even if they realize later on it wasn't the right direction.”*

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

He had none.

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

Yes. Email or office hours.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Non-Honors Professor
- Career Center
- Student involved with mentoring program

Possible next-steps:

- Interview another non-Honors professor to see if they have a different outlook on Honors vs. non-Honors students in major specific classes
- Research the Honors mentoring program that is provided for students
- Talk to more professors to find out if they incorporate real-life application and situations into their courses



Dialogue 12

Stakeholder Group: Non-Honors Student
Estimated Age: <u>  X  </u> 18-30 <u>    </u> 30-40 <u>    </u> 40-50 <u>    </u> 50+
Gender:
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal of this interview is to discuss what preparing for graduation looks like from the perspective of a non-Honors student as well as seek out what they would like to see to help them in preparing for graduation.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>This helps us to reflect on the fact that preparing students for life after graduation is dependent on other factors such as their major and the activities/clubs they are involved in.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>This interview focused a lot on how non-Honors students feel they are being prepared for life after graduation. It was discussed multiple times that the student does not feel nearly prepared for life after graduation (in this case med school) as they should be. They also stated that they don't know how or when to begin preparing for graduate school. They also stated that the academic advisors don't help with this process at all really, and their focus is on getting you through to graduation. Lastly, the student suggested to implement some sort of preparation course for those interested in attending any sort of graduate school.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services like the Career Center are not being advertised enough</li> <li>• Non-Honors students who are friends with Honors students still don't truly know how they differ besides in the ways that their gen eds are laid out</li> <li>• Students don't know how to or when to begin preparing for graduate school</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.</b>  <i>"I am a sophomore and a Biomedical sciences major. I am a member of the pre-med club and attend St. Luke's University Parish weekly."</i></p> <p><b>Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?</b>  <i>"I met with my academic advisor during freshman year multiple times. I recently went to the Career Center to discuss job opportunities for BMS majors. I've also utilized academic support such as the writing center, the chemistry success center, and I got a free tutor. "</i></p>

**How has GVSU helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not been helpful?**

*"Well only being a sophomore, that is an interesting question. I haven't thought much about it, but the university should advertise more when to begin looking into applying to grad school because I am planning to attend graduate school."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*"It is a scary thought. Now that you mention it, should I be preparing this early on for med school? I feel that there is not really that much guidance, like when you attend pre-med meetings as an underclassman, they talk a lot about stuff that does not pertain to you right now, like MCAT study packets. I would prefer talking about making yourself look good on a resume. So, no, I do not feel confidently prepared for life after graduation, considering I don't even know how to begin/when to begin the resume building process or even when I should begin the real-world experience process."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*"I would like to see a course that students interested in graduate school could take early on and it would walk you through the process, so you know what to expect."*

**What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*"Advertisement of all services. Even at freshman orientation, they should give out a literal packet that advertises all of the services. The Career Center should send out email acknowledging to the students that they are there."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"That I won't have the materials and resume that I need to get into med school. And med school is pretty much my only option."*

**In what ways do you think GVSU could help you with this?**

*"Again, help and guide me into ways that I can build my resume and make me into a candidate that med schools would want."*

**What do you think is the difference between the regular college and the Honors College?**

*"I feel that we are pretty similar, but your gen eds are placed for you rather than shoved into your schedule like me. I notice that the courses force you to form more relationships with your peers, the faculty and even go out and talk with more people. So, I would say that you have learn more communication skills within your course."*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"I guess just having friends going into pre-med is truthfully very helpful because we are experiencing the same things and can build our resumes together."*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students in the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*“Well, my roommate is in the Honors College and I don’t think it is necessarily the Honors College, but she has made more connections with people in the nursing program. But also, she has formed close knit relationships with her Honors professors, which means she has options for letters of recommendation.”*

**What is your biggest issue with GVSU in preparing you for after college?**

*“There is a disconnect since the advisors are helping you pass your classes when they should also be helping you prepare for life after college. When I talked to her she threw out a layout of my schedule and when to do what, but she didn’t provide any advice for resume building. Maybe we should have specific advisors for preparing for graduate school.”*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that GVSU could make to address that issue?**

*“It would be great to see advisors specifically to help you prepare for med school and let you know what to be doing and when.”*

**How could GVSU help you prepare more?**

*“They could offer a class for prepping for med school. For people interested in graduate school, have it replace one of their gen eds.”*

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

*“You could ask me if I am interested in being in the Honors College. And if so, why didn’t I apply. And truthfully, I would’ve applied but I had no idea that it existed.”*

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

Yes, the stakeholder will allow us to contact them again in the future, preferably by e-mail.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Career Success Center
- Non-Honors advisor
- Pre-med student in the Honors College

Possible next-steps:

- Continue to find ways to differentiate the Honors difference
- Interview another pre-med major, but in Honors to possibly compare their ways of preparation for life after graduation
- Look to see if other stakeholders suggest improvements in advertising services offered at GVSU or even courses specifically for those interested in graduate school

Dialogue 13

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Professor
Estimated Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 ___X_ 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal was to learn more about what how our interviewee felt that the Honors College could better prepare students for life after college.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It will show us a different point of view on how the Honors College prepares students for life after college. In addition, it will help us to think of new ideas on how to help Honors College students.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>We found that our interviewee thought that motivation and capability were the biggest differences between non-Honors students and Honors students. Our interviewee felt that the best skill that students could learn was to always be open to learning something new. He also felt that the close relationships between students and professors was a strong asset of the Honors College and that it was a unique offering for Honors College students. They expressed that they felt that Honors students should make use of the writing center more as writing was a skill that they thought Honors students were weak in. They thought that students should begin investing in mutual funds and not look at their mutual fund until they were much older.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors students tend to be weak in writing.</li> <li>• The close relationship between Honors College students and their professors is an asset unique to the Honors College.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Describe what you do at the Honors College. When did you start working here?</b>  <i>“I started working here about ten years ago. I believe maybe eleven years ago. I teach courses on national security, counterterrorism, military history, and Live Learn Lead.”</i></p> <p><b>What differences do you see in graduating seniors who are in the Honors program compared to those students who are not in the Honors program?</b>  <i>“Motivation and capability, much greater in the Honors College. Not that that’s always true, but if I were to look at categories there are people who are outside of Honors that excel who just didn’t make it or who didn’t want to come but for the most part they are among the most motivated and most skilled graduates.”</i></p>

**Why do you think that students choose to be a part of the Honors College?**

*“I think, well, based on the data that I’ve seen, they visit Grand Valley and they like the atmosphere and they see a small liberal arts college in the midst of a major university so they can get the benefits of going to a very small school along with a large university.”*

**What are some of the resources that the Honors College offers to better prepare Honors students for life after college?**

*“Well I think the structure of our classes. I could speak to my class and what I try to do is teach students what employers tell us they want. First, I want good interaction skills, personal interaction skills. Second, right along with that people who can work in teams. Third, people who can do their own research and are motivated to find answers. And fourth, people who can solve problems. The last and many the most important, people who can write. If we produce critically thinking people who believe in learning their entire life, employers can train them in the skills they need to have.”*

**What are some common problems that Honors students come to you with?**

*“A lot of times because they’re high achievers they’re highly stressed and I try to create an environment in class where they can continue the high achievement but relieve the stress. In fact, you have to work to fail much like a job. If you state expectations and you support students in those expectations most of the time in Honors, they meet those expectations.”*

**Among these common problems, which ones has the Honors College been unable to help with, and how do you think they could be more helpful?**

*“I think the stress. We have resources on campus and we can direct students there, but the best stress reliever is the close relationship between professor and students. I liken this to when I was in ROTC. I was the company commander for the ranger company. In leading ROTC rangers; you have to motivate people, you had to give them expectations, tell them your expectations, and support them every step of the way. You tell people to do a job but you don’t tell them how to do it if they know how. If they don’t know how you want to create an atmosphere where they will ask you and then you tell them. And you have to lead. I believe in leading from the front. You do the things you ask the personnel to do. The same thing is true with students.”*

**Can you please describe resources available to Honors College students to support resolving these common problems?**

*“Yes, first of all our counselors, they’re just fantastic. Second, our relations outside of the classroom with professors and students that I’ve already mentioned. Third, there are resources on campus. One of the best resources is the writing center. Surprisingly there are a lot of Honor’s students that have trouble writing. The Writing Center is a catalyst to learning. The greatest skill that Honor’s Students struggle the most with is writing.”*

**Do you feel that the Honors College advertises all of its resources enough to the students?**

*“I Believe so.”*

**What resources at GVSU would you like to see tailored for Honors Students?**

*“The ones that we have now.”*

**For what you know now, if you were an Honors student, what resources do you think Honors students should be asking for to help transition from GVSU?**

*“I think they should be taking advantage of the Writing center. I think they should be taking advantage of the library personnel to assist in research and the opportunities they have to become writing mentors and help with research.”*

**Can you share a story or two about some of the students you have mentored/supported?**

*“One of my students when I first came to Honor’s took the terrorism course from me, and in that course, we simulate a Washington DC company with a government contract. We’ve been asked to gather information to give background on a terrorist group. I divide the class into a couple teams. I can’t remember the group he was studying. But we teach them how to gather information, organize the information, how to present it in written form and how to present it in oral form. He was accepted for a joint PHD and MD program in medical research. He wants to be cancer researcher. I heard from him in his second or third year in his studies. And he said we are doing the same thing we did in the terrorism class only we are looking at cancer. That’s what I like about Honors. We are trying to give those skills, transferable skills. And my goodness if we get quantum computing the whole world is going to change. We need to people who have learning skills and the desire to learn. I am completely redoing my military history class and I have studied military history since I was in the eighth grade because I’ve learned new stuff about a battle I’ve known all my life and I’m updating my lecture today. Also, last year I came in and I had this wonderful email from a student. She said she had taken the terrorism class and she was completely fascinated but she took it when she was a senior and she was an accounting major. She wrote to tell me I have just taken a job with the agency with tracking money around the world and handing the money over to law enforcement when it’s dirty. Here was someone who had business and accounting skills who got so intrigued with that process that she wanted to apply to another area.”*

**Can you describe what you think future employers are looking for?**

*“The same things I talked about earlier. I talk to employers a lot but we have people at GV who talk to employers all the time.”*

**Can you describe any experience in helping students apply to graduate school?**

*“That’s just part of the job. Lots of students come in with specific questions. I tend to get the students that want to go into military, federal law enforcement and the military. I happen to know lots of professors and lots of professionals across the country and I can have students start networking with them to start a career.”*

**Who else should we talk to about their experience with the Honors College?**

*“Talk to students.”*

**What is a good financial skill that students need to develop?**

*“They need to develop budgeting, they need to develop fiscal discipline because ten to fifteen percent of your take home pay should be set aside of your paycheck. Put it into a good mutual fund, don’t look at where your mutual fund is but people should just let it grow. Get books. There are plenty of good guide books. If you use a financial advisor, use a paid financial advisor because it’s risky if they’re free. If you do individual stocks make sure you research the company. I do a few individual stocks but most of mine are in stock funds and bonds. Know the fundamentals of the company, the history of their dividends, if you want a safe investment you want to go with a company who has a solid track record. An example right now- Campbell Soup tried to diversify and they were really good at soup. They made hundreds of millions of dollars. They started an organic foods division. They started doing other stuff in food production and as of today they are losing money like crazy. Their new CEO is selling their companies and saying we’re getting back to soup. That means you read the Wall Street Journal. That means you stay up on what’s going on. If you want to do mutual funds, bonds, etc. you can buy into a fund and there are professionals who watch that for you.”*

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

*“I think that’s about it.”*

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

Yes, via email

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors professors
- Honors students

Possible next-steps:

- Add a question to our dialogue asking about what financial investments students should be making.
- Reach out to other Honors professors to hear their opinion.
- Contact other Honors students for an interview.

Dialogue14

Stakeholder Group: Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal of this opportunity is to gain insight into what is and what isn't working in regards to what the Honors College is doing to prepare students for life after college. This student is a junior in the Honors college, so he is just beginning to prepare and is he is noticing some flaws in the Honors College.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>We were able to get another point of view from an upperclassmen student on what his opinion of the Honors College is and whether or not he thinks it is helping him prepare.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>We learned that this person does not think that the Honors College is very helpful in regards to life after college. Although he is a junior and he has not been preparing much, he is unsure as to what resources could help him further prepare in regards to getting a job. He thinks that the Honors College offers classes that are pointless and that they should be replaced with classes that are either more focused on a student's major, or are more focused on real world preparation.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Honors College does not offer classes of value to this student</li> <li>• The Honors College does not provide resources for life after graduation</li> <li>• This student is unsure how to get a job after college and feels he has little to no support.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little about yourself as a student at GVSU?</b>  <i>"I'm a junior, I'm an accounting and marketing major, and I'm involved in Beta Alpha Psi and Sigma Pi Fraternities. I'm an Honors students as well."</i></p> <p><b>As an Honors Student how would you articulate what sets you apart from the rest of the student body?</b>  <i>"I think I've been exposed to a different style of classroom. My Honors sequence had four professors specializing in history, philosophy, art and literature. I've never had a class that had that many professors who specialize in that many topics. I was in an Honors science course, and I am not a science major so I was able to study plants and draw them."</i></p>



**How would you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?**

*"I have used the tutoring, the success centers, both writing and by department. I've also used the chemistry success center and the accounting success center. Also, I've gone to professors' office hours."*

**How has the Honors College helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not?**

*"I mean I don't think the Honors College specifically has. I've been able to mention that I'm in the Honors College in interviews but I think using Grand Valley's Career Center and their resume help that helped me more."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college and why?**

*"Well I don't have an internship lined up yet so I'm a little skeptical about how things are going to go. I feel confident that things will all work out in the end."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think could be helpful for you transitioning to life after college and what improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*"I don't know if this actually exists already but there should be a service that can link you to companies that are looking for employment besides for the career fair. Handshake is pretty helpful but I think that would help."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"Oh, getting a job easily. I have no money to start with."*

**In what ways do you think the Honors College could help you with this?**

*"I don't know, they could help me find a job. I really need help with that."*

**What reasons can you think of that being an Honors student is helpful for life after college?**

*"Well for one thing I'm on track to graduate a little early because I didn't have to take General Education classes for the most part."*

**What services have you found most helpful for building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"I would say the people I met through Beta Alpha Psi, and the Career Center at Grand Valley. They helped me with my schedule, they've recommended that I really start looking at internships because a lot of internships will hire right out of college. They've helped me with my resume."*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students outside the Honors College. How have they been preparing for life out of college compared to you?**

*"I don't think there's a difference to be honest with you."*

**What is your biggest issue with the Honors College in preparing you for life after college?**

*"I would say that they make you take classes that are outside of your major. For example, having to take a plants class, it just seemed like credits I had to take. It's definitely not going to help me."*

**What do you think would be the best improvement the Honors College could make to address that issue?**

*"Don't make me take classes that don't relate to real life."*

**How could the Honors College help you prepare more?**

*"Well they could emphasis the benefits of the Honors College a little more, like I don't know what it means. I've questioned this throughout my years in it. Saying that I'm graduating with Honors, does that only look good on a resume? Do employers care? Is that really something people look at? I really wish I had a better understanding of what it is and how it's helping me."*

Stakeholder response to "what is the one thing I didn't ask you that you think I should have?"

He did not have a response, he said that the questions covered everything he had to say.

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

Yes, by text or phone call.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student
- Honors Student
- Honors Senior

Possible next-steps:

- Contact contacts for interview.
- Further contact this stakeholder for his opinion on what could be implemented in Grand Valley as a whole to help him feel more prepared.
- Analyze what this stakeholder has in common with other stakeholders we have interviewed.

Dialogue 15

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal was to learn more about how our interviewee felt that Grand Valley was preparing him for life after college and to learn more about his views on the Honors College.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It will show us how a non-Honors college student views the Honors College and it will give us a better idea of how GVSU can better serve its students in their transition to life after college.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The interviewee is a second-year electrical engineering student that is active in campus ministry. They said that he felt like Facebook support groups would be really useful. They also said that the Career Center was an important resource for them and that they are currently looking for a co-op position. One of the biggest changes that they feel like they will notice in their transition to life after college is that they will be spending no time doing homework and instead will be focused on working for the company that employs them. Lastly, they said that the largest difference they thought they noticed in Honors College students was their relations with their peers.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Facebook group for networking after college could be useful to GVSU graduates.</li> <li>• The friends that students make in the Honors College could be one of the bigger assets of the Honors College experience.</li> <li>• Campus ministry gave this student a strong support system.</li> </ul>
<p>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</p> <p><i>“I can’t think of anything.”</i></p>
<p>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to be contacted?</p> <p>Yes, via email</p>

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Student
- Honors Parent
- Honors Student

Possible next-steps:

- Remove the 12<sup>th</sup> question as it is repetitive
- Contact Honors Parent for an interview
- Ask other Honors students how close they are to their peers

Dialogue 16

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal of this interview was to learn how an Honors student felt like the Honors College could improve the transition to life after college.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>This will help us as we will be able to better understand the view of an Honors College student and see what they struggle with in their transition to life after college. In addition, we will be able to hear their ideas for improving the experience.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The student felt that some sort of networking group, either online or in person, would be helpful for them. They also mentioned that they felt like the strongest thing that differentiated Honors students from non-Honors students was that Honors students have a stronger work ethic. They said that the Career Center at GVSU should do more to try and let students know all of their different capabilities. He has used the Career Center previously but still doesn't know all of the different services that they offer to students. He hasn't talked with any advisors in the Honors College and isn't sure how they would be able to help them as he has finished most of his required Honors classes.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Career Center should advertise their services more.</li> <li>• A networking group could be useful for students.</li> <li>• Honors advisors should explain how they're able to help students prepare for life after college.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.</b>  <i>"I'm a third year Honors student that is going to school for computer engineering. I really enjoy coding, but I wouldn't say I love all of my classes."</i></p> <p><b>As an Honors student, how would you articulate what you think sets you apart from the rest of the student body?</b>  <i>"That's a hard question. I guess I would say that my work ethic separates me from others. I think that having Honors College on my resume shows that I'm able to work hard and that I'm very motivated."</i></p> <p><b>Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?</b></p>

*“Yeah, I’ve used the Career Center a fair amount and I’ve also gone to my advisor a couple times. I’ve actually never used the Honor’s advisors but I would imagine that they can be helpful. I should probably go talk to them. I don’t know what they would help me with though I’m pretty much all the way through my Honors College part I guess.”*

**How has the Honors College helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn’t, how has it not been helpful?**

*“It hasn’t helped me at all, besides another line on my resume of course. I think that it doesn’t necessarily need to have a second career center or something. I guess it would be helpful if there was some sort of networking group that I could take advantage of and that helped me to get jobs.”*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*“I feel pretty confident in transitioning to life after college as I believe that I have a strong skillset and know that I can work hard at what I need to do.”*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn’t exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college.**

*“I think that it would be really helpful if there was some sort of networking group for current student and Grand Valley alumni. Maybe the issue is that alumni aren’t willing to come. I don’t know what the issue is, but it seems like an obvious solution and I’m honestly surprised they don’t have it already. Networking can be really helpful in getting jobs later and talking to alumni could help us prepare for life after college.”*

**What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*“I think that more marketing would be helpful. I’m not even sure what all services the Career Center offers, it would be handy to know what they offer for students.”*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*“I’m most concerned about learning to adapt to my new life. I’m not sure what the social scene will be like, but I think I will have to learn to spread my wings a bit more when I leave college because there won’t be organized events to encourage everyone to socialize with one another.”*

**In what ways do you think the Honors College could help you with this?**

*“I’m not sure that they really could help me out much with this. I need to push myself to be better at meeting people and communicating with others so I guess that encouraging group work and socializing would be helpful.”*

**What reasons can you think of that being an Honors student is helpful for life after college?**

*“You learn a stronger work ethic and you have closer relationships with your professors. I think that your relationships with your professors could be helpful after college. At least I hope so.”*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*“I have found that the advising center is helpful because they help to make sure that I’m able to graduate on time. Scheduling classes can be an issue. I should probably make better use of the Career Center and the Career Fair, but it’s just hard to make time for all of that.”*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students outside the Honors College. How have they been preparing for transitioning out of college compared to you?**

*“I think that I should be looking more into the future and preparing more and I think that most normal students have the same issue. Perhaps because I’m in the Honors College most would expect that I’m already thinking about it, but I’m really just thinking about getting through my classes.”*

**What is your biggest issue with the Honors College in preparing you for after college?**

*“I think that they should implement those networking groups that I talked about.”*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that the Honors College could make to address that issue?**

*“Make online networking groups for alumni and students to talk to each other. I guess they kind of already have that though in some of their groups.”*

**How could the Honors College help you prepare more?**

*“It could make those groups that I talked about.”*

**What questions should I have asked you that I didn’t?**

*“You should have asked me why I chose to be in the Honors College as I think that would’ve given you some more context as to what the assets of the Honors College are, and perhaps that would help you determine how it can best help 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:

- Honors Students

Possible next-steps:

- Determine if this interview mentioned similar topics as other interviews with Honors students
- Contact Honors Students for an interview
- Examine how a networking group could be rolled out either online or in person

Dialogue 17

Stakeholder Group/Location: Associate Dean of The Graduate School
Estimated Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 <u>  x  </u> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>Gain insight from the Associate Dean of The Graduate School about what can be done to better prepare Honors students for life after graduation, and more specifically, how to prepare for graduate school.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>We are trying to find ways for FMHC to better prepare its students for life after graduation.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>One major theme that came up several times in the interview was to encourage students to not limit themselves to one very narrow study area and to explore other options. The importance of graduating with a good overall GPA was also emphasized, at least for getting into graduate programs. The interviewee also suggested that Honors students should get more experience with research and presenting research to professional conferences. It was also suggested that FMHC do a better job of connecting students with faculty within their department of choice. Overall, it is important to get a wide range of experience and to take challenging classes that might not exactly align with the direction students might want to go with their futures.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors students need more research experience.</li> <li>• Avoiding a narrow mindset of future possibilities is imperative for success.</li> <li>• Attaining a high GPA is important for admission into graduate schools.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Can you please explain what your job entails as the Associate Dean of The Graduate School?</b></p> <p><i>“So currently, my primary responsibilities are to conduct and analyze surveys that we administer through the office to a couple of different audiences. The primary one is a survey that we do annually over the course of the year to ask graduate students who have filed for graduation a series of questions about their experience at Grand Valley. We’re looking for insight into what was good during their graduate program and experience, what was okay, and what was mediocre too bad in terms of their experiences. We do it by program so we can collate that data, put it together and summarize it. We do the survey three times a year and we combine all the responses for an entire academic year and return that to the program so that they can get a sense of how well they’re doing, what</i></p>



*they need to improve, and what might not be working so well. There are a number of other surveys we do in addition to that. I am responsible for and administer the Academic Conference Fund which is a source of funding for graduate students to use to attend a conference if they are going to present a talk or poster related to their graduate research. I also administer what is called the Student Initiated Combined Degree Program. It's where an undergrad who has decided they want to pursue a graduate degree and would like to take advantage of a policy the university has that allows an undergrad to count twelve credits of graduate credit toward their undergrad degree and at the same time count those same twelve credits toward their graduate degree. It saves time because you are cutting out some of the undergrad course work by counting the graduate courses toward your undergraduate degree. As long as you are below a certain credit level, then those graduate credits are charged at the undergraduate rate so you also save money on tuition. So, I am primarily responsible for that. I am also the contact person for the Graduate Student Association. It's the student organization that represents graduate students on campus. I also have a primary responsibility of reviewing graduate curriculum proposals in conjunction with a faculty committee called the Graduate Council. Then there are some other various things, but those are kind of the major items."*

**What qualities do you see in students who get accepted to The Graduate School?**

*"Well, the way we're structured, The Graduate School doesn't actually admit graduate students. There are some universities like the University of Michigan where a student applies to the graduate school and has to be admitted through the graduate school. Our model is that an individual applies to the program and they're admitted to the program, so except for non-degree seeking graduate students, we don't tend to deal much with the admission process. But, in general, the individuals that we see, the attributes and characteristics that we see of individuals that do enter the graduate program, it varies across programs for sure. The minimum expected GPA for admission to a graduate program is generally a 3.0. A program can change that on a case-by-case basis; they can waive the 3.0 requirement if an applicant has other attributes or characteristics that would confirm for the program that the student has a high probability of success. Undergraduate grades are a reasonable indicator of potential as a graduate student, but it's not the only thing. Perhaps an undergrad was pretty bored in their courses, so they just didn't try and didn't do too well, or they had a really bad freshman year, or something like that; so, there are ways to make allowances for that. But, because we have that minimum 3.0 admission requirement, for the most part, the individuals that start a graduate program are academically pretty good: they've shown that they can do the coursework part. That's usually not a big question. Once in a while you'll get a student that may struggle with graduate-level courses, but we tend to accept students that have a little higher academic achievement, at least on paper. The profile is pretty strong for grad students. We certainly see some issues. One of the big issues for grad students is their writing ability, so we're trying to come up with a couple different ways to help foster the improvement of writing at the graduate level. It's probably the weakest part of our graduate student profile, but I think that's probably systemic across higher education at this point anyways. A lot of our programs are professional programs and say the Doctor of Physical Therapy program, the individuals that are accepted into that program*

*are academically pretty accomplished because of the rigor of the material; it's human medicine. Same thing with the Physician's Assistant program because it deals with human health. Certainly, the expectation is that someone will be able to prepare academically to be a successful clinician in the field. Just like if you go to the med school, it's the same deal. Folks that are capable of grasping that kind of materials in that volume, academic aptitude is an important part of that. Overall, I think you can say that the students in our graduate program are academically above average when they come into the program."*

**What about personal qualities? You mentioned that occasionally students who's GPA is not what The Graduate School is looking for are accepted; what kind of personal qualities help them get in?**

*"So, a well written statement on why they want to go to graduate school. A statement to the effect that 'I really love this field or this discipline; this is exactly what I want to do for my career and having a graduate degree is a significant step forward in that.' So, being adamant and explicit that going to the graduate school is the most important thing, that it's what the student has been thinking about, planning for. Statements like 'You know, I'm going to graduate in April and I'm not sure I'm ready to get a job, so I'm going to try grad school,' that's a bad idea. That's not the kind of statement we're looking for. But, someone that can say 'I really want to be a biologist and having a master's degree is a better track to achieve that and this is what I really want to do.' So, clear evidence of a strong commitment to the program, to the faculty, that a student is very serious and that there is a good probability that they're going to finish. So, dedication to getting a graduate degree and clear evidence of a level of determination or tenacity that will carry a student on to another 2-2.5 years as a graduate student. Having that perseverance and commitment becomes the currency that indicates the individual has a high probability of being successful in the program."*

**Do you see any differences in Honors students that are in The Graduate School at Grand Valley than other graduate students that are not Honors?**

*"I can't say explicitly on that point. I can't recall in my time as Graduate Program Director specifically identifying students that were in the Honors College versus students that were not in the Honors College. I suspect if I went back and looked at the GPAs of students and compared Honors College students to those students who were not in the Honors College, my guess is that there would probably be a pretty good trend that students from Honors had, in general, higher GPAs. The other part of the Honors College that I think is a great benefit even though it may not be explicitly identified as Honors is the requirement for doing a research project in Honors. The other element that faculty look for in terms of admission and some of the certainty that the student will finish is having demonstrated already that they're capable of doing some level of independent research or an independent study of some sort. Because that's a requirement in the Honors College, as you write that personal statement of interest and personal goals and commitment, you've already started that as an undergrad in the Honors College. There's good evidence that will carry through into a graduate degree program. I'm sure there are subtleties that are baked into the Honors College curriculum that allow Honors students to bubble to the top, without being explicit about having been in the Honors*

*College. It might partly be a bit of a glitch in the admissions process, because every program asks for undergrad transcripts. A big part of that is for the overall GPA and GPA in the last 60 credits, any prerequisite courses for admission. A lot of that gets focused on the GPA, just as a piece of advice, when students in the Honors College write their statement of intent and interest, it would probably be a good idea to say something like 'As a student of the Honors College at GVSU...' in case faculty miss that point."*

**Going off that, you mentioned that the Honors Senior Project is a great way to help students get prepared for graduate school. Do think there are other things that the Honors College isn't currently doing that they could be or should be doing to prepare students for graduate school?**

*"Getting them started earlier to identify a faculty member and actually get started earlier on research or working in the discipline with faculty in the department of that discipline so that they actually have an earlier start rather than that last year of doing your Senior Honors Project as a wrap-up. Actually, having Honors students approach faculty earlier, say in their sophomore year or early in their junior year to get started on a project and maybe have that develop into a more extensive project for your Senior Honors thesis work. That might be one thing. I don't have any data to know exactly how much or to what extent making sure that Honors students get that chance to do a presentation at some sort of conference is encouraged. I know a lot of Honors students present at Student Scholars Day. If they could participate in a professional conference allied to the discipline they are interested in as an undergrad, would also be a very strong indicator of their desire to go on to graduate school, the capacity that they can work at and the fact that they already have had a professional experience like going to a conference in the discipline would be another nice little piece to have. I know there is a number of undergrads that do go to conferences, I'm just not sure how many Honors students get that chance."*

**You mentioned that students have a hard time getting started earlier in their career and that's something we've been seeing a lot in previous interviews, both of students saying that they don't know when to start and even faculty recognizing that students wait until the junior year or later to start thinking about what they're going to do about their future. Do you think there is a way that the Honors College can encourage students to start thinking about that earlier?**

*"One avenue might be for the Honors College to invite faculty from individual departments to give a brief overview of the faculty and their research interests. Have them do this for the students in the Honors College, say in the fall of their sophomore year so that the Honors College students can get a sense for what individual faculty are doing and what their research interests are and what opportunities are available for students to get involved in some sort of research. Whether it's physics or math or chemistry or biology or political science, any of those programs, depending on the demographic of the Honors College, so that students can individually target faculty that have research interesting to them. Maybe key in on larger departments first and then work on more ancillary departments on an individual basis or something like that."*

**Switching gears, a little bit, can you describe what the transition period was like for you from graduating with your undergraduate degree to entering your graduate program?**

*"I was fortunate to know that going on to graduate school was what I wanted to do from a pretty early age, probably around middle school. I don't know why. There was a fellow down the street that was faculty at Albion College; I don't know if it was him; there was a woman that lived behind us that had been in education; I don't know if it was her, but I just kind of knew that I wanted to go on and get a graduate degree in biology from a pretty early age. I knew I wanted to do aquatic science, I didn't know exactly what, but even knowing that it was something to do with aquatic biology gave me the focus to see a direction and stay on that path. I see a lot of students let the uncertainty of not knowing exactly what they want to do become a real road block. The uncertainty of direction causes students to lose their focus to the point that they even struggle in classes. A lot of that is driven by parents and high school counselors. Those external forces that leave students feeling like if they don't have the single, pigeon-hole statement of what you want to do when you graduate with your bachelor's, I think it causes a lot of anxiety and it causes students to lose motivation to study because they don't know what the goal is. I always tell advisees, regardless of whether you know what you want to do or not to still put time in on courses because when you do figure out what you want to do, having good grades will still be important. You can't lose that focus and momentum in your coursework. Don't feel like you need to be pigeon-holing yourself into a particular area. My advice is to not put yourself through the process of deciding the singular thing you want to work on. Instead of doing that, sit down with a piece of paper and make a list of all the things you know you do not want to do. Then, when you're thinking about grad school and you're trying to decide which program or field to apply to you might accept a position that you didn't initially think you were going to go to graduate school for. For me, I knew I wanted to go into aquatic science from an early age so I took some extra courses as an undergrad in aquatics to have more of a background. I thought I wanted to work on fish or insects because those were the two classes I had taken as an undergrad. I applied to get my master's degree and I went to University of Wisconsin- Lacrosse with the intent to either do fish or aquatic insects. The guy that was the fish biologist was not a real nice guy; he wasn't the kind of person that I wanted to work with. The guy that did aquatic insects wasn't taking any grad students. So, I ended up looking for an advisor and the guy I ended up working with had a project studying algae in the Mississippi River. I had never even taken a class in algae when I was an undergrad at Central Michigan University. I talked my way on to this project and he was pretty hesitant because I hadn't taken an algae class, but because it was aquatic and it was something that wasn't on my list of things that I didn't want to do, I thought 'shoot, what's the worst-case scenario? I'll realize that I just don't want to do that anymore.' But, that's actually what I did for my Ph.D. was algal ecology. I didn't deny myself the opportunity to take classes over the years and I think that's a really good strategy. The transition for me was simply letting myself have the opportunity to pursue a research topic in an area that was within what I had defined as my boundaries for my career. I took a year off between my undergrad and master's degree and worked in a factory. I was making a lot of money, I had good benefits and making overtime. I could've stayed there, but all it did for me was absolutely confirm that I wanted to go to graduate school to pursue my*

<p><i>interest in aquatic biology. It was good to take a break and step back to reassess the world.”</i></p>
<p>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</p> <p><i>“How should students approach preparing? Approach your undergrad degree as the beginning of your career, not a hurdle that you need to get over. Work hard at this point whether you’re going to graduate school or not.”</i></p>
<p>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to be contacted?</p> <p>Yes, email contact is preferred.</p>
<p>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Career Center</li> <li>• Program directors for graduate schools</li> <li>• Career advisors</li> </ul>
<p>Possible next-steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research a process that students should be following to prepare themselves for life after graduation.</li> <li>• Find out how feasible it is for Honors faculty to connect Honors students with faculty in other departments.</li> <li>• Investigate how Honors faculty could incorporate more research into their teaching.</li> </ul>

Dialogue 18

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Professor/ Employer
Estimated Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 <u>  x  </u> 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal was to learn more about what an employer looks for in an employee. In addition, we wanted to see what suggestions an Honors professor who was at class with us every day and had heard what our stakeholders had to say.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>It will help us to learn how an Honors professor thinks that the Honors College can better prepare the students for life after college, and it will also help us determine what employers are looking for in potential applicants.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>One of the most notable suggestions was to utilize an algorithm that would help GVSU to push out updates that specifically target people based off of their interests. The insight that notifications need to be personalized to match the student’s interests was a key insight that businesses utilize routinely but that GVSU still doesn’t utilize. One of the top innovations in the professor’s opinion was to create a checklist that the students could utilize to determine what they needed to learn before graduating from college. The interviewee suggested that instead of making the checklist the same for every student it could be customized to fit the student’s goals and aspirations.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The checklist should be customized to the student’s goals.</li> <li>• Notifications should be sent to students based on their interests.</li> <li>• Honors students need to know how to ask for help.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Can you describe what you do at the Honors College and when did you start working there?</b></p> <p><i>“I think my appointment started in Fall of 2015, so this is my third year as endowed chair and I’m teaching a class along with many, many senior projects and helping build an innovation emphasis in the Honors College. As endowed chair I teach classes and work with curriculum. A lot of senior projects; I really enjoy working with students as they are defining that project. Connecting with them to develop a project that is very interesting for them to pursue and will help pull together a portfolio for them. I have also been a visiting professor as part of the design class. I have been a visiting professor for a university in France and run two different classes there. It was a Ph.D. granting university, so I was teaching Ph.D. students.”</i></p>

**What differences do you see in graduating seniors from the Honors program and those not in Honors?**

*"I don't have a lot of experience teaching students outside of Honors except for the first year of this class. We wanted to have a gen ed version. Before I was endowed chair, I was actually working on this curriculum independently. Initially this class was LIB 323 and Honors 313, so it was a mixed class of Honors and non-Honors students, with the non-Honors being primarily liberal studies students. I will say that Honors students tend to be much more diligent, much more concerned about deadlines and quality of work than non-Honors students, but that's painting with a broad brush and is likely very unfair. What I also found though, is that liberal studies students tend to be more reflective, they're more comfortable taking risks and letting the opportunity to learn drive them more than grades. So, there is an upside and downside for how you approach learning."*

**Why do you think that students choose to be part of the Honors College?**

*"It's interesting, I'm actually going through this process right now with my daughter. I think there is a perception that being in Honors means somehow that you're just tedious and not engaged with the university. I find that fascinating, because if you look across that university at almost any leadership position, it's generally Honors students. I think there is a bad wrap for Honors students. There is data that suggests that universities that thrive in general for everyone at the university have a 10% Honors student base."*

**What are some of the resources that the Honors College offers to help students better prepare for life after graduation?**

*"I don't think there is anything in particular, I think a lot of it is what you make it. They have excellent advisors. Honors students, as most students, carry a lot of stress and with that comes a lot of emotional challenges and I'm seeing our Honors advisors really engage. I think Honors professors are very accessible to students and create advising relationships with students that are vital to success in college. I'm not sure how proactive those are. There are wonderful opportunities in fellowships and scholarships. Other resources don't necessarily target Honors and statistics show that Honors students don't really seek those resources out."*

**You were saying that some of the common problems that some of the Honors students have are stress. Among the common problems what are some that the Honors College has been unable to help with? How do you think they could be more helpful?**

*"I just don't know because I've never walked in an Honors student's shoes. Where's the touch base points? Where is the very intentional touch base points? It's interesting because there'll be a philosophy for sure from some people that says "Hey, they're adults, they can figure it out. They're smart people." We have opportunities for them, all they need to do is call to make an appointment. But I do think there are times when you don't even know that you need help or you're trying to figure it out on your own to the point where you don't want to ask. So, I'd like to see these sort of touch points in some fashion so that, or at least put the information out there. You know Honors students are really smart so if you said 'hey you're experiencing these things and maybe chart a path*

*to say if you experience these things here's where you should go for help, because what we don't know we don't know.' So, Honors students might actually find their way around very successfully if they have a little bit of ability to see where to go which we don't really do very clearly. Then the opportunities that we do have like scholarships and internships, it's a passive marketing plan which is a newsletter, and you know if you're taking 18 credits a semester it's really tough and I think advising struggles with that a lot. They're thinking how do we get people's eyes on opportunities when you're just trying to finish something, and I think there's other pressures as well that people aren't recognizing which is the cost of the university, the student debt issues, more of the students are working one or two jobs, they're slowing down in graduation rates because they can't get it all in, they're trying to work on top of going to school. The student base is getting a little bit older as a result. They're not finishing at the same rate. So, I don't know, those demographics are really going to get interesting over the next ten years."*

**So, do you think that the Honors College advertises their resources enough? In what ways do you they could improve?**

*"Ask students how they best receive information because I don't the world of texting is, I mean I don't know if students would look at it. If you got a text every day that said in Honors today, we're doing this, would you pay any attention to it or would you start deleting it? You have to opt in in order to have the information. I don't know where your saturation points are, where people won't pay attention. It has to have some sort of value proposition that you care about. So, what is that messaging and how do Honors students.... I mean everyone is intentionally usually coming to college with some sort of goal in mind and it could just be as simple as I just need to be able to work you know? I know it's important to go to college because I want to do something but I don't know what that looks like yet. So that should be known, I mean we know that coming in. I mean we have 400-500 students coming in every year. We put them in a room you know for a week together, we ask them to write on a little cloud "what do you want to do?" It's fascinating on the range of responses to that. Some people just are being glib and funny, some are pre-med. If we have that information why aren't we tailoring, you know what are the steps we need to take? Starting as a freshman you know if you're going to be premed this is what you need to be thinking about. Or if you don't know here are the resources that you can use to move forward in a healthy way and not just get lost in your sophomore year because you're ready to quit. So, I don't think it's as hard as we make it. I mean you're in the world of software and computers. You know technology can help here. Technology can learn [who I am], it should be able to pick up around the university, if I put in here's my preferences, you know here's what's going on around the university and push to me what is personal to me. Very similar to Facebook ads. Oh, it can't be that bad, every single lecture that's going to happen, but right now there's no filter on it. There's no pushing specific information that I want and I can change my preferences as I change. So, I would think that's just a fundamental service, but I don't see it, maybe I don't see it maybe it's out there."*

**For what you know now what resources do you think Honors students aren't utilizing enough?**



*“That’s so specific to each person, but there isn’t a resource on campus that thinks Honors students are using it enough.”*

**Can you share a story about some students that you have mentored or supported?**

*“I’m actually going to dinner tonight with a young man. He’s two years out now. He signed up in my first year to do something on a whim that was called customer discovery. The work was outside of the Honors College, but it was opportunity to take six projects that had intellectual property through this process. I collaborated with the University of Michigan on this; I co-taught with them. We talked with people in the market. It was an amazing experience to watch this young man grab hold of this. He did 35 interviews in 4 weeks and redefined an entire business model in a project that we were working on at the university and actually worked on that as a senior project afterwards. He landed an internship with Deloitte in Chicago as a result of that work. We talked about how to sell it, how to talk about the skills involved. Had a great summer working for Deloitte, and they offered him the job for that year so he had a year to finish out here. He finished out here and is now working for Deloitte traveling the country in different project capacities and he’s in town, so he said let me take you to dinner and I’m excited to see what he’s done. I think he’s also looking at something with a career transition probably within the company you know which we’ll talk about extensively; you know how he can gain more education on the company dollar. You know hopefully they’re challenging him to get an MBA and they’ll pay for that at one of the best schools in the nation. If you just focus there’s so much opportunity and its hard work and you have to create your opportunities all the time. That’s what I’d tell anyone who is getting mentored, that it’s up to you.”*

**As an employer what do you think future employers are looking for in a potential application?**

*“You know I look for flexibility and adaptability because every day something new is going to be thrown at you and your ability to integrate that and sort of figure out what to do next - you know problem solving. I want strong communicators. You know I need for you to be able to tell me something in five minutes as your boss. You know I want to know in five minutes what’s going on. Being able to tie that with the big picture and it all comes down to the details on it. It goes along with communication because you know those skills matter in business. On the other hand, I want someone who has interest outside of work. I always ask what you do outside for fun. Because I want to know that they have ways of filling their emotional bank account, because people work all day and you have to put a lot out all day. I want to know how you fill back up, how do you stay energized. Because you know it’s a long haul. A career is a long haul, it’s forty to fifty years. Unlike with the football players who just get hit for ten years. So, you have to know how to balance. What are your dreams and aspirations and how are you going to reach those on top of working, so I look that people are thoughtful about that and then there is the disciplinary skills. It’s all about thinking on your feet and not letting things throw you off. And you know experience counts.”*

**For our current top five innovations**

- **Create a class that helps students learn how to accomplish basic adult tasks.**

- **Workshops that teach adult skills that help students throughout their entire Honors experience.**
- **Create a checklist of things students should know how to do by the time they graduate, separate it by age/class. Like MyPath.**
- **Create a mentorship program for Honors students once they have a declared major.**
- **Create a website for Honors students that organizes helpful resources for transitioning out of college.**

**Which do you like the best? What feedback do you have?**

*“You had the website concept, you had the checklist concept. How do you push those together to develop something meaningful? There’s the opportunity at this university to actually be a collective and push customized information to somebody that wanted to participate. You could sign up and literally have someone fill out a pamphlet about what they like instead of just having a website that says hey this stuff is available because it requires having a way to capture what stuff is available and how you do that is interesting, but an algorithm could certainly be developed. I think the checklist is a really great place to start. It’s like that thing in the lobby; there’s all the transitions and the emotional component. Why isn’t there attention paid to career exploration, getting a job shadow in, making connections earlier, figuring out how to network, taking a training class or workshop so it’s sort of combining that stuff. So, I would challenge you to not try to amplify or put on steroids something the university always does unless you have very clear insights on why you think Honors needs to be separate from. I’m not saying they don’t, if you put it across the street and called it Gilles College what would it have that it doesn’t have now; could we recruit better, would we retain better, would we graduate people more successfully?”*

**What needs to be on the checklist?**

*“Well I think thinking about your resume, thinking about the opportunities you can take to build a resume. I always encourage people to think about what’s the line item you’re getting out of it. What’s the line item in your resume? How are you going to speak to it? That could be a number of things. That could be an internship. It could be joining a specific club, so you can have exposure in a certain area. It’s difficult, I know when you’re 18 to be strategic about what you do because you just came out of high school and who does strategy? You’re just so stinking happy to be done with that! I feel sometimes college students are just in that same sort of mode, like if I just do this stuff, I can check the box and get on with what I really want to do. For me it’s just kind of pulling back on that and saying no this is a four-year, five-year opportunity to learn some amazing things, to grow as a person, to build a network and then decide what’s important to you. I mean where do you want to live? I would ask that question. Do you want to stay in the United States? Do you want to travel? Then you need to find a job that will let you travel the world. Industrial tourism is great. I was able to travel the world on someone else’s dollar and be intentional about that. I never turn down an opportunity to fly off continent, and I still wouldn’t. How do you think about what you want to do? Set the goal and then build the checklist from there. So, what does it look like? I mean what if you sat down and*

*said what does it look like? You're gearing towards opening your own business; how many people are there? How big is it? What are the problems you want to deal with? It's sort of trying to create a personal vision in a different way. Then are you willing to think about that when you're a freshman? Probably not, but if you had some sort of a checklist that would start you on that path. There are very few people that think about I'm going to run my own business at your age. So, your path is already very different than many people that would never ever think about that. It's not even a remote reasonable professional goal. Like nursing for example, there are people who are so driven to be a nurse that their opportunity to start their own business it's not going to happen. So, the checklist has to say you know go read these two books, they're the two best books for starting a business. That's what I mean there's got to be this customization. We sit, and we collect clouds. I mean go look at the clouds, especially if you're going to propose checklists. We ask people this, and we do nothing to help them strategically plot a course outside of go take these classes."*

**Who else should we talk to?**

*"I would push beyond the Honors College. I don't know how much you've gone and talked to career advisors at a different college and called Michigan State advisors at their Honors College. Do they have similar problems? Sort of building on your innovations from the things that might be happening at other places. Some sort of validation that your insights are accurate. Is there a difference between Honors and non-Honors? How much does that matter? You know if you're creating a prototype at this point it's also a microcosm within the university. It's a fantastic place to prototype your ideas. You know Honors should lead all the time in thinking new and doing new. What other career advising or career center models are there that have some interesting stuff? Or if you think about your innovations is there anybody out there doing things around that that you could use as reference? Again, you don't have to share anything when you interview them. It's just saying "Hey how do you reach out to students? What are their social media channels?"*

Stakeholder response to "what is the one thing I didn't ask you that you think I should have?"

I think you covered all the questions that you should've asked.

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

Yes, via email

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors advisors in other colleges
- Employers
- Honors professors

Possible next-steps:

- Look into the possibility of customizing notifications
- Research the best way to notify students
- Research the optimal timing of alerts given to students

Dialogue 19

Stakeholder Group/Location: Non-Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Nonbinary
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal of this opportunity was to get a senior's perspective on the transition to life after college that they are fast approaching. This includes what changes they would make based on their entire college experience to make life easier for future students.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>Our team problem statement involves figuring out what is making the transition to life after college so difficult for students, specifically Honors students. Though this person is not an Honors student, they are a senior, making them rich with input on what they've experienced and what they would change.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>Basically, the gist of this interview was that they feel prepared for life after college, but not because of GVSU. Rather, they feel prepared because they had a lot of work experience before college out of necessity. The strongest suggestion that they had included strengthening communication between students and their advisors, as well as updating gen eds to include practical adult skills. This includes networking. They mentioned that personal finance has been the single most helpful class for real life that they've taken in their almost four years of college. Lastly, they think too much relies on the students reaching out to advisors and resources. Not that students shouldn't have to reach, but that it's hard for students to make time to do all the reaching, let alone be aware of their resources.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are all told the importance of networking, but we aren't taught how to do it.</li> <li>• Communication between advisors and students, and even faculty and students in general, is lacking.</li> <li>• A student's choice of major can have an impact on their preparedness for life after college, or at least their confidence in the transition.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell me a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.</b></p> <p><i>"I'm a senior here at GVSU, I'm expected to graduate in April of 2019. When I came here, I was undecided as a student, pretty much being a first gen. My mother did go to a school called Baker College, but she only went for two years and got her certification for her nurse degree or something, and she never really did anything with it. So, she didn't really have much to help me with when it comes to advice. I quickly decided to be a</i></p>

*philosophy/classics double major because I was pressured by people who were helping me register for classes at orientation to choose a major at that time. Once I started taking classes I quickly decided to stop being a double major. Then I was a classics major/philosophy minor for a time, then I was a philosophy major/classics minor, and then I switched to just a philosophy major, and then I switched to a writing major/philosophy minor, which I am currently expected to graduate with. In high school, I was pretty good student, though I really didn't have to study. In college, I've had more difficulty with that, more so because of outside troubles than difficulty of courses."*

**Can you describe some of the campus resources that you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?**

*"I went to the career counseling center once, and I talked to them for about 40 or so minutes, and it was helpful at the time, but as soon as I left I realized that they didn't actually answer any of my questions, nor really give me any advice or plan that would actually be helpful to me. I've talked to my writing advisor four or five times. I've also used the campus mental health services multiple times to get some counseling sessions. Out of all of them, the counseling center was the most helpful to me."*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*"I'm pretty confident, but not because I feel like GVSU has prepared me in any way, more because I've got work experience outside of college. I started working at the age of 16 pretty much full time, trying to pay bills and stuff like that, because my mom wasn't able to pay the bills at the time. So, I already had experience with adult life. I knew what was expected of me after college, so that's more so what's getting me antsy rather than worrying about if I can get a job. I'm confident that I can manage myself, I'm just not sure if I'm confident about my job prospects."*

**How has GVSU helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school? If it hasn't, how has it not been helpful?**

*"That's kind of difficult, because I feel like a lot of GVSU's resources rely on a student's willingness to go the extra mile to pursue those resources and use those resources. But as a first-time student, who's busy with course work and working now, it's a bit hard for me to always use those resources, because I'm often busy doing other things, or just trying to relax for mental health reasons. But I think out of everything the most useful thing to me when it comes to finding a career was my internship, and that was based on my own research rather than help from anybody else. I interned for the website isportsworld.com as a journalist for the summer of 2018. I wrote 38 articles for them in that time, all of which was unpaid. So that experience itself helps a little bit with me realizing what I would enjoy doing after college, but also its kind of hindered as well with the fact that I was putting in full time hours to a job I wasn't getting paid for. When I mentioned that to the internship director for writing, she apologized that I felt the struggles in that sense, but also said that many other people who were able to get internships in the writing field were able to get paid positions, which didn't exactly help anything. In fact, it just kind of seemed like she was blaming me, when she could have helped me pursue a paid internship, or just pointed out opportunities for paid internships."*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college. Or, alternatively, what improvements could be made to existing resources?**

*"I think advisors need a bit of an overhaul in general, at least in my experience with them. Because, again, it relies a lot on the student going that extra mile to meet with your advisor and constantly talk with them. But even the meetings I've scheduled with my advisor, I didn't really feel a connection with them, nor did I feel like they were really any help towards the worries that I had. So, I feel like there should be more resources put into either training them to keep more regular contact and being more in touch with their students. Especially when it comes to smaller majors like writing and philosophy, that type of thing. I understand that with the big major advisors don't have the time to be personally acquainted with all of their advisees, but I think it should be something that's pushed for, because right now I don't feel like I got any use out of my "advisor" at all, despite the fact that she's somebody who's quite successful in the writing field. She's published multiple books, poems, that type of stuff, so I feel like she has a lot of experience that she could help people with, but I didn't feel like I got a lot of that because been so busy with other things. And trying to schedule meetings with her in my already busy schedule is putting too much emphasis on me trying to do everything myself. I feel like a part of my money is paying for GVSU's assistance in that.*

*As for a service that I think we should be offering: there should be a department focused on career readiness for seniors, where you're talking with them at least once a month about where you are in your career planning process, have you've taken a personal finance class, do you know how to do your taxes, do you know where you want to live, do you understand how car loans work, etc. Those types of things. I feel like having that service as a senior, because the year kind of flies by fast, would help slow things down and keep things focused for us. Because I could definitely see in four months when I'm a month from graduation I realize that I haven't done anything for after college because I've been focused on the classes I'm still trying to take. Having that service there to just kind of help me keep focused on that would be nice, because it's hard to focus on 12 to 15 credits while also trying to focus on the future."*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*"The viability of my major entirely. The job market right now for this generation and people who are getting degrees now is so scary, especially in the Bachelor of Arts field. I feel like unless you have a lot of experience with networking and pushing yourself the extra mile every single step of the way, you're kind of at a disadvantage to people who have Bachelor of Science degrees. I definitely feel like all the Bachelor of Arts fields themselves lack career possibilities that a Bachelor of Science offers you. If you make it through the 5 years of the engineering program, you're going to have a job. If you make it through the 5 years of the computer science program, you're going to have a job. Business not necessarily, but still. I feel like that's still more viable than one of the more "liberal" majors like writing. Writing is still good, but it hasn't relieved any of my fears. I did a lot of research before I decided to choose this major, like how good is this major, how much is this going to affect me, is this worth my time, my effort, and my money. In*

*the end, it was either that or you don't know. Because I didn't have a lot of experience in courses outside of the Bachelor of Arts field, so that's why I went with a writing major. It's still something I'm scared about, because I have 4 or 5 friends that were writing majors and none of them are working in the writing field. That's my biggest worry: can I get employed and pay off the mountain of debt that I have with the major I chose."*

**What do you think is the difference between the regular college and the Honors College?**

*"I feel like the Honors College, at least from my experience seeing my girlfriend, the course work seems a little more streamlined. There are fewer options that you can take to satisfy things, while also presenting an opportunity in that when you graduate as a member of the Honors College you have that extra thing to add to your resume, whereas the base college doesn't have that. Based on my experience as a regular GVSU student, there's limitless options for what I could've taken to cover the different gen eds, whereas people in the Honors College have fewer options, but those options seem to be more effective in preparing people for college. Because those are designed to be the more academic fields. The main thing is a resume builder. It's always impressive to say that you graduated from GVSU, but it's more impressive to say that you graduated from the Honors College at GVSU. Especially if you did well in those classes. I also feel like with the Honors advisor and regular advisor and stuff like that, they just have more resources to use than regular students."*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"People would be fellow students. I don't feel like the faculty or any service or anything like that helped prepare my confidence at all. In fact, every time I come out of a meeting with faculty or leave an event my anxiety has increased about after college. But seeing other students succeed, seeing other people confident that are my age or trying to complete the same things that I am definitely helps my confidence. You know, I'm no different from them, they're going through the same struggles I am, so I can relate more to them. Having that around helps my confidence. I can talk to them, and they have the same fears and stuff that I have, so knowing that we have that together helps my confidence in a weird way. We all fear these things, we're all afraid, and we're all excited at the same time."*

**Tell me about relationships you have with students in the Honors College. Can you tell how they've been preparing for the transition out of college compared to you?**

*"One of my friends, who is my girlfriend's friend, Annie, is in the Honors College. She seems quite stressed about literally everything, which is also just a base college experience in itself, but it seems almost multiplied by 3 for the Honors College. It kind of seems like she's a little bit more scared and unprepared for life after college than base students are. And I can transition into my girlfriend, Emily Ruth. Just seeing how stressed she is and stuff like that from her classes, especially the Honors classes... and how you mentioned that there are so many resources for Honors students to go to, I've seen that stress in her. Their experience seems to be more streamlined, yes, but also a little bit more stressful because it has that aura of academia, of importance. More so than*



*anything, from what I can tell, what's helped Emily Ruth, and even Annie, with feeling comfortable is not necessarily the college itself, but the people they surround themselves with. Going back to fellow students, Emily Ruth's friend group, including myself, has helped her anxiety a lot. Annie, too, when she comes over and we have dinner together, there's been a couple times when she's come over scared and anxious and stuff like that, and we were able to calm her down. We know what she's going through. Whereas the college doesn't seem to alleviate all of that anxiety."*

**What is your biggest issue with GVSU in preparing you for after college?**

*"The biggest one is I think that the class personal finance should, without a doubt, be a requirement for seniors to take. I took it as an elective because I had the free room, but a lot of students who are in more restrictive majors won't have that freedom to do so. Even though my attention span is a bit wavy at best, I've learned more in that class about adult life than I have in the 120 credits that I have taken for my major. I know at least a bit more about my credit score and how that works, and how mortgages work, how personal loans work, how interest rates and everything like that fluctuate, how to focus on different things for car loans, what each thing means under life insurance, how to do taxes... these are very basic adult things that everybody should know, because not everybody can afford to have an accountant. But not everybody is going to get the chance to know because not everybody is going to have the opportunity to take a personal finance class.*

*Also, a lot of the classes I took felt like filler classes. Like classes that I felt like I didn't need to take or were more so wasting my time than anything. Especially the gen ed classes. I didn't feel like most of them helped me in any way shape or form. I get that's part of the liberal arts experience, that you can go in multiple different directions so you have a good general sense of a few different subjects outside of your major. And I love that, that's one of the reasons why I chose GVSU. But I feel like it needs to be modified and upgraded a bit to more so give practical value out of it too. Whereas for your sciences and your labs and stuff like that pushing for more computer science-based classes and engineering classes as that general ed requirement, rather than geology, or biology, that type of thing. That's definitely more useful and I feel like I could've gotten more use out of that. Pushing for more writing comprehension outside of Writing 150 would also be good because a lot of people don't know how to write well, despite having to write for most of their classes. So, I feel like the general eds need to do a little bit more when it comes to giving a good grasp of realistic and practical uses outside of college. Because some people are going to enjoy just taking an Art 101 class and just blowing it off and stuff like that, and that's a good class, I'm not saying it's not. But what about the undecided major who's a first-time student who has no help, no support outside of themselves when it comes to preparing for college? Who's telling them which gen eds to take? They're seeing this list that includes 20 different course names, without knowing what they're uses are. So, if anything, one minor improvement can be adding a part to each course's catalog entry that says "this is useful for this field," or "this gives you this skill." Just something for student awareness, giving more information to the students. Especially those like myself who didn't have anybody else who had experience with college assistance and stuff like that."*

**What do you think would be the best improvement that GVSU could make to address your biggest issue?**

*“Helping make the general eds more practical, giving more information about what each gen ed does, especially individual classes. Not necessarily art, sciences, that type of thing, don’t try to put it there, but put it in each course description. Kind of going back to one of the first questions about what services could be added to help things, I think adding in a mentorship program for seniors or recent grads to be paired with freshmen would be incredible. Because you’d have somebody who’s graduated or going to be graduating soon who can help guide along a freshman. Make it a volunteer thing, or a paid position, or something of that sort, so people aren’t forced into doing so. Maybe make it an elective. Just to give a student somebody who’s not an “adult,” somebody who’s a bit more relatable, who’s gone through that same struggle that freshmen are going through would be just wonderful. As I said earlier, students are often the best resource for each other in building confidence, so having a mentor program could help a lot, especially with undecided students, who just don’t know what they want to major in.”*

**How could GVSU help you prepare more?**

*“Communicate with me more. Just talk with me more. Emails, phone calls, texts, whatever really, just letting me know what opportunities are available for me, checking in how my mental health is going, those types of things. I’ve mentioned different tools that could be useful when it comes to classes and stuff like that, but what could’ve helped me prepare more would be knowing a bit more about what’s going on after college. So just getting a little more help when it comes to research and stuff like that outside of college for future opportunities and stuff like that. I don’t have a lot of time to do that right now. I don’t even know when I should start applying for jobs.*

*Another thing we should have for a gen ed, this is going back two questions I think: Networking 101. This should be something that freshmen have to take. Because it has been stressed multiple times throughout my college education that networking is extremely important, and yet I’ve never been told how to do it. How to do it in a way that is not annoying to the people that I’m supposed to be befriending, or in a way that doesn’t put me in a bad situation. I never got the tools needed in order to network. So right now, I am coming out of college with one useful contact, when it comes to professionals, and that’s my internship person, the person I worked under. Even that’s more of a job reference than somebody that I can reach out to for a paid position. Just having a networking thing would be wonderful, especially a class itself. A lot of the class could even be based on setting up events, or the class goes to a bunch of different events to network in different areas, or have conference calls with important people. Stuff like that, utilize GVSU’s alumni. Have them come in and talk to the students, something like, “if you’re interested in this area, here’s my personal information if you want to get ahold of me, or if I find a cool person I’ll talk to your professors,” that type of thing. That’s the perfect thing for that type of class. Just to help guide students along in how to network, because I feel like the only people who actually know how to network are the people whose parents networked.*

*There should be a class that teaches you the tools and techniques that you need in order to be able to adeptly negotiate your salary, including any and all benefits, and also that gives you additional resources you need in order to research and apply to different careers, and compare them. That should be a general ed thing, not an elective.”*

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

“Do you feel that the money that you invested into this school via your pursuit of a Bachelor’s degree was a good decision?”

“What do you wish the University would have told you before you selected your major?”

The stakeholder agreed to reconnect for further inquiry. They can be contacted by phone, email, or in person.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Students
- Honors Alumni
- College Advisors

Possible next-steps:

- Reach out to recent graduates.
- Match up some of these insights with our innovation ideas.
- Question to investigate: do first gen students have a disadvantage to transitioning to life after college than non-first gen students?

Dialogue 20

Stakeholder Group/Location: Parent of Honors Students
Estimated Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___x___ 40-50 ___ 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal was to learn more about what employers look for in potential employees. This could then be used to help Honors students develop those assets.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>This work will help us to learn more about what employers are looking for in potential employees. This will help us know what we should teach H students so that they are able to more easily land the job that they're looking for.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The operations manager at Lakeshore Tech Repair, said that he thought that attention to detail, being a people person, and being friendly is what he looks for in a potential employee. He had a different view on Honors College students; he felt that Honors College students lacked some independent thinking skills because they just took the path approved by society instead of trying to think about what path they wanted to take. He doesn't look for college education in his techs because the position doesn't require a college education. He does employ some people that have a college degree though but doesn't view it as an asset.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The interviewee represented a different viewpoint as he is a business owner that didn't go to college that currently employs a college graduate.</li> <li>• The interviewee mentioned that they look for soft skills in an employee.</li> <li>• They also said that they felt the best way to network wasn't to attend fancy networking events but instead to just ask other people about themselves.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>What company do you work for?</b>          "Lakeshore Tech Repair."</p> <p><b>What does that company do?</b>  <i>"We buy and sell electronics retail and wholesale as well as repair electronics for consumers and businesses."</i></p> <p><b>What has been your experience with college?</b></p>

*"I didn't go to college because I didn't want to just do what everyone else was doing and I didn't see much of a return on investment. If I had gone, I wouldn't have been able to focus on it at all. One of our full-time team members though has a college degree in business, I think it's an associates or bachelors."*

**What position do you hold in that company?**

*"I'm the operations manager. I'm in charge of cash flow, getting things sold on time, getting things done on time, employee relations, yeah that's it."*

**What do you look for in a potential employee?**

*"Attention to detail, people person, and friendly is what I look for."*

**What do you think separates GVSU Honor's College graduates from those that didn't attend the Honor's College, if anything?**

*"The people that didn't attend the Honor's college are less sheep-like."*

**What do you mean by that?**

*"Societal standards will try to push you to become the best within the educational field that's possible. It will push you towards attending the highest prestigious educational experience you can get. Those that didn't attend the Honors College most likely have a greater ability to think independently."*

**What leads you to think that?**

*"Honors College typically places them in a high paying job where they're not making the final decisions so they're okay with not having to think independently and making independent decisions because the final decisions don't typically come down to them. They can just follow the business's decision model."*

**Do you look for students that have a college degree? Why or why not?**

*"I wouldn't really care. I would be indifferent on it. My field doesn't require college education in order to act within it. I don't think many really do though."*

**What are essential skills that graduates of GVSU should have for their professional life?**

*"Ability to make money. That's it. That's all you need."*

**How do you develop that ability or how can GVSU teach students that?**

*"Putting a heavy emphasis on networking and getting to know the day to day life of the people you work with or oversee."*

**What are essential skills that graduates of GVSU should have for their personal life?**

*"Ability to forgive and forget. The ability to adapt to different situations because life will have ups and downs."*

**What networking events would you recommend for college students?**

*“I don’t know. I don’t do that. That’s not how I network. I don’t network in a professional setting where I go to fancy dinners and meet people with a glass of wine in my hand. I network with others by chatting about their lives and their families. We talk about how much their local football team sucks. I close deals while talking about how someone wants to get a divorce.”*

**How would you recommend that college students explore a career they’re thinking about? For example, would you recommend that they shadow someone in their career for a day? Call multiple people in the profession?**

*“This is going to be exactly like \_\_\_\_\_ says. What you should do is volunteer for someone for a couple years within the position that you dream of being. Don’t get paid, find some other side hustles that can make you enough money to cover your expenses. Do that fully and be underneath the person that you think does it best. Observe them a lot and figure out what they do well and what causes them to have such a drive and what causes them to be happy. Learn as much as you can and figure out how you will be able to use the lessons you’ve learned to improve your skills. Then a couple years later start doing that yourself and figure out where they’re weak and attack that area. For example if their employee management skills are weak then work on improving that so that you’re able to keep all of the good employees & maximize their productivity.”*

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

*How did others react when I told them I wasn’t going to go to college, and how that reflects on our society’s beliefs about college?*

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

Yes, they want to be contacted via text.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Owner of SmarTeks
- Owner of 4 CPR franchises
- Former owner of Genius Phone Repair, Owner of Wireless Refresh

Possible next-steps:

- Interview Kalyn
- Ask other employers if they view a college degree as an asset, and why
- Look for more employers to interview

Dialogue 21

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Female
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>Learn what an Honors student thinks about our top two prototypes and how they can be improved for ease-of-use.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>We are receiving feedback about systems that could help Honors students connect better with campus resources in order to prepare them for life after graduation.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The interviewee has previously used several campus resources. She wishes she would've known about tutoring earlier and thought that FMHC could help with that. She also really liked both innovations presented. The app might be really helpful for incoming freshman, but might not be as helpful for students getting ready to graduate. The life skills checklist would be very beneficial because of how important it is to be able to function as an adult. A one credit class would be very helpful to offer along with the checklist. Connecting people to campus resources would be helpful in general.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having the Honors College help connect students with internship opportunities would be very helpful.</li> <li>• Learning basic life skills is very important and a one credit class would be helpful for that.</li> <li>• The app innovation might not help graduating student's as much as younger students.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Can you tell me a little bit about yourself as an Honors student at GVSU?</b></p> <p><i>"I'm a junior studying psychology. I decided to do the Honors College in my senior year of high school and got in right away. Its where I've met my best friends in college so far. A few lived right down the hall from me and the rest I met in other classes including the sequence I took freshman year. I feel like my Honors classes are actually the ones I've done best in throughout college. They've given me a lot of opportunities and have introduced me to a lot of different world perspectives that I haven't had in other places."</i></p> <p><b>Going off of that, how would you say that the Honors College has set you apart as a student?</b></p>

*“The first year I got to take a sequence instead of a lot of gen eds. I felt like the gen eds were going to be more generic and things that I didn’t have any interest in. My first-year sequence gave me a lot of opportunities that I don’t think most students get. I went to the farm and got to do volunteer work. We went around campus and do things like getting sap from trees to make syrup. We got to do a lot of out-of-class activities that I felt like were very beneficial to my learning.”*

**Can you name and describe some of the campus resources that you have used so far?**

*“I have seen academic advisors through the Honors program a couple of times. I’ve also used the Writing Center a few times and I’ve used the librarians a few times for research projects and data base searches. That’s probably it.”*

**Are there any resources that you wish you would’ve used or known about earlier?**

*“Freshman year I knew there were tutors available, but I was kind of stubborn and wasn’t very educated on how that whole process worked. In my head there was a stigma about seeing a tutor even though there is nothing wrong with it. So, maybe changing that atmosphere.”*

**What do you think the Honors College could have done to make you more aware of resources or better connect you with resources?**

*“I think when you start the Honors program they give you a lot of pamphlets and information about things. Maybe if there was a whole form on academic resources, I think that would be helpful. They give you a lot of information about other things, but maybe for the academic resources, they could give you a whole sheet specifically about that.”*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college and why?**

*“I think I feel pretty confident. I have the normal fears of finding a job and money and stuff. I’m confident in my learning experience. It has given me a lot of tools to interact with different people in different walks of life with different experiences. I think my education has made me more confident in that.”*

**Which of those things would you say is your biggest concern?**

*“I think my biggest fear about starting a job would be that you learn all these things... like you learn about a subject a lot, but they don’t necessarily teach you how to do the job. You learn that in training, but you don’t learn how to practice it. I feel like there is a gap.”*

**What do you think the Honors College could do to close that gap?**

*“I think that the Honors College could help you get more direct shadowing experiences rather than having to look for it on your own. Having them have some partnerships with certain places that could give you direct experience to go and learn about more. My brother is at U of M as a health sciences profession. He tells them what he’s interested in and they find them for him. I think that would be helpful.”*



**Within the Honors College, what have been the most helpful resources and have there been any that haven't been helpful?**

*"In the beginning when I didn't know many people and was kind of nervous about the atmosphere and putting myself out there, they had a lot of scheduled events that helped me familiarize with a lot of people. That was a beneficial resource. I can't really think of an unhelpful resource off the top of my head."*

**One of our top two innovations is to create an app for FMHC that would advertise resources to students based off their individual interests. Can you tell me about your thoughts?**

*"I think that's a good idea. I like also adding other interests beside just major. The Honors College sends out a newsletter right now, but I feel like most of the opportunities in that are similar and on-campus based and that doesn't always get you the most diverse experiences."*

**Our other innovation is to make a checklist of sorts that would outline life skills and when you should know how to do them and provide a link to a resource that can help them achieve that. Can you tell me about your thoughts?**

*"I definitely think that's an important thing. I think a lot of people don't know beyond education how to go on with being an adult. I like that idea a lot. Even now, I can kind of do my taxes and I've actually tried to learn from my mom, but it's still hard to understand. I think workshops put on for life skill things would be important too. Now that I'm thinking about it, I don't know why that sort of thing couldn't be a one credit gen ed or something. I feel like that would eliminate so many life issues."*

**Can you think of anything else that could help Honors students into life after graduation?**

*"I stand with the Honors College providing job shadowing and internships. That is something that's on the Honors level and would be very useful. It would take time on the Honors staff to find those opportunities. I like the app, but I'm not totally sure that it would make things easier for graduation to life. I see that as more like an organizational skill for a new student. I don't think it's a bad idea, I just don't know if it would be that beneficial for older students."*

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."*

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

Yes. Calling or texting preferred.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Other Honors students

Possible next-steps:

- Talk to more Honors students about their thoughts on the innovations.
- Think about how to help Honors students of all ages prepare for life after graduation.
- Use interviews to narrow the top two innovations to one.

Dialogue 22

Stakeholder Group: GVSU alumni
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The primary goal of this interview was to gain insight on what an alumnus would like to see changed after his time at GVSU as well as get his opinion on our top two innovations.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>Our problem statement is to devise a system that helps students access and understand their resources, and several of the questions asked had to do with what the alumnus thought of the resources he used/what resources he would've liked to have been there.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>Grand Valley has a lot of helpful resources, but they are not communicated well to the students, so they are not being used as much as they could be. In addition, a liberal arts education is a fantastic thing, but practical skills could be integrated into the gen ed classes. Another major point is that Grand Valley does a great job of breaking freshmen into classes, but don't do a great job of transitioning seniors out of it.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's not that Grand Valley doesn't have helpful resources, it's that they aren't communicated well.</li> <li>• Seniors are rushed out of college without an adjustment period.</li> <li>• Learning adult skills is difficult to do on your own when you're trying to do both school and work.</li> </ul>
<p>Dialogue Questions and Response:</p> <p><b>Tell us a little bit about yourself as a GVSU alumnus.</b>  <i>"I graduated in April 2018, a little over six months ago. When I was at Grand Valley my major was in film and video production, and I had two minors: one in writing, and the other in advertising and public relations."</i></p> <p><b>Can you describe some of the campus resources you made use of in your time at GVSU?</b></p> <p><i>"I used the Counseling Center quite a bit during my second year at Grand Valley. I also used the Career Center a little bit and financial services a little bit. That was mostly for</i></p>

*resume and cover letter workshops, and financial aid just for questions about loans and stuff.”*

**How did GVSU help you with employment or applying to graduate school? If it didn't, how has it not been helpful?**

*“In some ways it has and it hasn't. In the ways that it hasn't, a lot of that job searching was stuff I kind of had to do on my own. The original jobs board that they had was not great. I was able to score some interviews and stuff like that, but most of the job help that I received from the university really was less so from the administration or from Career Services or anything like that, but was actually more so from my professors. They would hear about jobs in the area that were relevant to film majors and would make those postings known to those students, typically through email. Part of the reason I got my current job was not because of a general posting, but because one of my professors, we were just chatting one day, and she said “hey here's this job that's in your field nearby that's looking for interns and potentially someone to come on full time, I'll put in a good word for you, and you can get in touch.” I've been working there ever since.”*

**What can you tell me about the transition period from college to your career or starting graduate school?**

*“It was rough. I think the biggest reason as to why is because I was... I should back up a little bit. So, I was actually interning at the job I have now the first semester of my senior year, but it really didn't become super busy until the following semester. Basically, I've kind of just had one foot out of college and one foot still in college. So, if I was just focusing on academics, that would've been totally fine, or if I would've been just focusing on my career, that would've been fine, but because that was split across those two and I was actually working two full time jobs in that time span. So that transition, once I graduated, it was a lot easier to sort of get used to adult life because I didn't have homework to do, I could just focus on the thing that I was there for. Also, some classes that I was taking my last semester were more like busy work than actually trying to learn something or further my skills in some way. So, because of that, I'd just be putting in the bare minimum effort just to get a good enough grade and move on.”*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would have been helpful to you for transitioning to life after college. What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*“The biggest one for me is... I think it's called MoneySmart Lakers. They came in a couple of times for different classes that I had. One was for a high-level production class called “producing for clients,” so it was a lot more business focused, and the other was for my senior capstone. Both times they came in, they just covered the sort of basic “here's how you do a budget, here's how you allocate how much money you need for food, and utilities, and groceries,” and stuff like that. Which is great, and I think there are people that need that information, but for me personally, I was already supporting myself that entire four years. Granted, I had help from home, I wasn't fully paying my own bills and stuff, but I had to take care of myself and make my own money. I knew how to budget at that point in time. Something that I actually wanted to bring this up to the*

professor of that capstone class later on was that I wanted to learn more about the more advanced financial stuff, like knowing how to... I know the general adage of "you should save for retirement," but I know nothing about 401K's, or how to invest that money, or mutual funds, or anything like that. And also, things outside of just investing, but also like "hey, how do you buy insurance, how do you know you're getting a good deal on buying a car, or buying a house," or things like that. Because that's all stuff that I had to kind of learn on my own, and I'm still trying to figure it out. Not like, "I've figured it all out, guys, at the ripe old age of 23." But I think that was the biggest thing. There's a lot of adult things that you're not really prepared for. I think that at a very basic level the MoneySmart Lakers program works, but it really shouldn't be afraid to delve into the more advanced, complicated stuff, because, yeah, it's a little harder to explain and things like that, but it's still something that should be covered. So, this way when you graduate, you're not just dropped in cold and you have to figure it out on your own, and also potentially lose tons of money because you didn't know about a certain resource that was available. To MoneySmart Laker's credit, I think they do offer classes, and they're free to attend, but you have to take those classes in addition to your academic courses, or working, or just trying to survive and be healthy. And that's great, and they offer incentives to come, but it's like okay, that's nice, but at the same time, I have to make even more time out of my day to do this thing that should just be a part of academic curriculum in general. It's great to get a liberal education, I'm never going to knock that, but you also need to learn how to, you know, survive out there. I kind of regret not taking personal finance--I didn't even know there was a personal finance class until a friend of mine brought up that they were taking one. I think that would be an amazing gen ed to have, a required one, or even just a general... I don't say this to simplify, but even like a home econ class, because it's like, "yeah, I know how to cook, but in terms of knowing how to sew a button... I'm glad my girlfriend's handy, because I don't know how to do that." Those are things I would've loved to learn, but just don't have the time to. And I don't want to waste money on something that I'm not going to be able to figure out how to do, because then it'd be like, "well, there goes twenty bucks I could've spent on food, and three hours I could've spent doing something else."

**What were some of your concerns when you were preparing to graduate and in the transition process? In what ways do you think GVSU could have helped you with this?**

"I fortunately was in the good spot of having employment after college. I recognize that I'm extremely privileged in that mindset--not to say that I didn't work for it, but I'm in the minority, not everyone has a job right after college that's in their field, and I'm incredibly grateful for it. The biggest thing for me was trying to find housing and trying to figure out, "okay, once these classes are done, where do I go." Because I feel like, for me, it was kind of weird that I hadn't even graduated, I hadn't gone through commencement, and housing (I lived on campus my last year) was like, "okay, have to get your stuff, pack up your stuff and go." And it's like, "okay, well, I have to do that on top of classes, and on top of work, and on top of junk for commencement. I think there has to be an adjustment period. It's interesting, because--I came into Grand Valley as a freshman--the freshmen get there a week early, and they go through freshmen orientation and learn what it's like to be at college and all that stuff before going to classes. And I

*think that's great, I think that's important. There should be the same thing at the end. It'd be nice to have your freshman orientation and maybe, like, a senior orientation. Just like, "hey, you've got a week--and this is a free thing--to pack up all your things, find housing, find a job..." And I understand it's not a promise that you're going to get a good job, but just giving time to decompress after you made it through that final run-through. [Right now] you get through commencement, and then it's just like, "okay, you're gone, get out of here." There should be a time period to readjust and figure out what comes next."*

**What service, event, or people did you find most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"In terms of specific events, it's actually something that was put on by the film and video department, so, a little bias in that respect, but something they really tried to emphasize (at least when I was there) was building up resume, cover letter, and networking workshops. Because especially for my field, knowing people in various companies or various productions and things like that is how you find more work, and how you pay your bills. Deep down I'm a very introverted person, so going out to a networking event is not how I would imagine spending a good evening, but learning like, "okay, this is how you get out of your comfort zone and talk to people," because that's extremely important, and I've definitely gotten better at it. So things like that are really helpful. It's mostly just like, sometimes it's good to talk about things in the theoretical and things like that, but it's much more important to just go out there and, in a safe space, talk to someone in your field, no pressure, just get a feel for it, instead of six months to a year down the line, and it's like, "I have to figure this out because my job is on the line if I don't figure it out." So, mostly just ways to figure out how to network and things like that."*

**In what ways do you think the transition for non-honors students from graduation to post-college is different than the transition for honors students?**

*"It's hard for me to say because I wasn't in the Honors College... I guess just based off an impression based off of friends that I've had in the Honors College, it seems that there's a lot of focus on the liberal education aspect of it, even more so than regular classes that are taught. And that's fantastic, and I think those are really well suited for students that want to go into academia, but I think that they're still, whether they're an Honors student or not... you need to learn how to pay your bills, you need to learn how to balance a checkbook--even though most people don't use checkbooks anymore--paying for rent. But I think that's where I would compare it from."*

**What is your biggest issue with GVSU in the way it prepared you for after college?**

*"I think Grand Valley has resources that would be really good to have, but they're very poor at communicating it to their students. Even going outside of financial services and Career Services and things like that, I didn't even know we had a Counseling Center until I heard from one of my friends that we had a Counseling Center. And I was just like, "what? Really? We have that? That sounds amazing." So I went and used that. So one of the things that I fear is Grand Valley will spend resources in trying to make [a helpful resource], and it's this great thing and it's all set up, and then no one uses it, and they're like, "well, I guess our students don't need that," and then they defund it and it goes*

away. And that's my concern is like, "no, you do need that, but you also need to tell people that it exists so they can capitalize on it."

**What did you expect from GVSU in terms of transitional help that they did not provide?**

*"This is a little more towards my specific department than anything, but my senior capstone, it felt like it was trying to be a little more "here are practical skills you're going to learn," but it focused way more on the academic side of things. Occasionally people in our field would come in and talk to us, some who did a much better job at trying to instill confidence in us than others, but it seems like it was trying to go for that, but it felt like it needed to have a foot in academics. Which again, that's all well and good, but I feel like for a senior capstone, it should be preparing you for after graduation. If there are people who want to do a more academic way to end that off, they could take a thesis class, which they do offer. But for that senior capstone, it should be like, "okay, you've learned everything, that's phenomenal, you got it all in your head, now here's how we get you a job so you can pay your bills."*

**Our top two innovations are a checklist that outlines the practical skills that students should know by the end of each year in college and a customizable app that organizes student resources. Which do you think would be more helpful? Do you have any suggestions?**

*"Honestly, they both sound very useful. Combining them seems like the best way to approach it. Because having a checklist does sort of measure up like, "okay, as a freshman, here's where I should be at, as a sophomore, here's where I should be at," and so on. And also, just knowing what's here helps so much. Again, had I known as a freshman that counseling services were available, I would've been there from day one. And the same thing for financial stuff. As you progress through your time at college, you need to learn how to do this stuff, so having that checklist there would be really good, so it's like, "okay, as a freshman I should know this, and as a sophomore I should know this," and so on. I don't think there's a "you're too young to learn how the world works." That's just me personally. Even if you don't directly have to interact with it, when you do have to, you're not smacked in the face with trying to figure out how it works, and basically trying to figure it out while learning how it happens."*

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 you hit all the bases that I was expecting."*

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

He agrees to reconnect for further inquiry and can be contacted by Facebook messenger or in person.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Students
- Honors Alumni
- Employer

Possible next-steps:

- Ask more alumni about top two innovations.
- Talk to the faculty in charge of student resources to discuss better communication.
- Consolidate our top two innovations into one.



Dialogue 23

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Female
Primary Goal of this Opportunity:  Gain insight about our top two innovations from the perspective of an Honors student.
How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?  We are solving for FMHC, but Honors students will be the users.
Summary of Research:  Overall, the interviewee thought the adult skills checklist with links to resources would be more helpful than an app that advertises resources based off student interests. She also mentioned that workshops or a class offered to teach adult life skills would be helpful and she thought that students would take them. Overall, she thought that focusing on independent life skills would be the most beneficial for Honors students.
Important insights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A checklist would be more helpful than the app</li> <li>• Workshops or an adulting class would be very helpful</li> <li>• Learning adult skills is very important for the transition out of college</li> </ul>
<p><i>Dialogue Questions and Response:</i></p> <p><b><i>Can you tell me a little bit about yourself as an Honors student?</i></b>  <i>“I would say that I’m type A like most Honors students. I work harder than the average student and I’m more particular. I like to be challenged; I always want to be challenged in school.”</i></p> <p><b><i>As an Honors student, how would you articulate what sets you apart from the rest of the Grand Valley student body?</i></b>  <i>“Probably a lot of the same. I prefer the challenge. I work hard and I take my studies seriously. I feel like a lot of Honors students are more open to participation and discussion in the class setting. We’re more open to new ideas.”</i></p> <p><b><i>Can you name and describe some of the campus resources you’ve used so far?</i></b>  <i>“I’ve used advising quite a bit. I did it for pre-professional, undecided advising, and Honors advising.”</i></p> <p><b><i>How do you think the Honors College has helped you prepare for the future?</i></b>  <i>“It’s given me different skills. I feel like I’ve become a better and that will be important for applying for jobs. In any future career, there is bound to be communication through</i></p>

writing. I feel like the Honors College has helped with that and improved that. Overall, being a better team player and thinking in group settings, I think it has helped me. It has helped me be a more open thinker; a lot of different opinions come into Honors classes, but you learn how to work with those people.”

**How confident would you say you feel about the transition out of college and why?**

“Not entirely confident because I don’t have a specific direction that I want to go. I’m trying to keep things open and not tie myself down to a certain career for the rest of my life. So, I’m not super confident going into graduation, but I’m still excited.”

**What do you think the Honors College could do to make you more confident?**

“I think for my major I have to do fieldwork and an internship, so I think doing some sort of fieldwork through the Honors College could be beneficial. Not necessarily related to a specific program or major, but like fieldwork to get involved in the community around us would be beneficial to build your network of people and build connections if that were a class. You can do advising on your own, but maybe more advising to start to give you more of a direction on where you want to go.”

**Have you used any campus resources that were not helpful? What were they?**

“I think advising in general is helpful. But there have been some advisors before I knew what I wanted to do that were basically useless, like they were no help at all. Since I’ve had more a sense of direction, they’ve been really helpful. Once I had something that I was moving toward, they were more helpful which makes sense because they don’t really know what is best for me.”

**One of our top two innovations is to create an app for FMHC that would advertise resources to students based off their individual interests. Can you tell me about your thoughts?**

“I’m not overly aware of all of the resources Grand Valley has. I think it would be a cool concept. You can find that information elsewhere if you’re looking for it. I think an app could be helpful, but I think a lot of students don’t really seek out that help. You’d have to make it really beneficial for them or really helpful and really easy. Overall, it could be beneficial especially if you had it throughout your college experience.”

**Our other innovation is to make a checklist of sorts that would outline life skills and when you should know how to do them and provide a link to a resource that can help them achieve that. Can you tell me about your thoughts?**

“I think that would be extremely beneficial. Maybe not necessarily saying that you should know this by some specific time, but a checklist of things in general with no particular timeline, but before you are completely independent. I would definitely use that. I don’t know how utilized a class would be, but having someone to teach you these things. I know a lot of times, I try to go on a link and look something up and I can’t get it all from just looking at a website. I think a checklist and resources would be really helpful.”

**Can you expand on your thought of having a class?**

*“If you maybe had set times throughout a semester that students who are interested in learning how to do these basic life skills could come and ask questions or be shown how to do something. If you are confused on how to pay a bill, maybe they could go there and be shown; I know I’m a visual learner so learn from doing things and watching other people do them. So, reading and learning how to do things online wouldn’t be as helpful as someone sitting down with me. I don’t know how often you would want to do that, maybe if it was like three times during the semester or something like that for a few hours to learn how to do these things. I think a Grand Valley class on adulting would be beneficial. Something voluntary, but a class to learn about all these things that no one teaches you how to do.”*

**Which of our two innovations would you see yourself using more?**

*“The checklist. I think a lot of the things you are mentioning about the app I could figure out through the website. It would be nice to have everything consolidated and it could be helpful but having a checklist would be even more helpful.”*

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

*“I can’t really think of anything else.”*

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

Yes, via texting.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Other Honors students
- Honors faculty

Possible next-steps:

- Interview more students
- Analyze our innovations
- Discuss long-term effects of our innovations

Dialogue 24

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors student
Estimated Age: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+
Gender: Male
<p>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</p> <p>The main goal of this interview was to improve our perspective on how students feel about our two prototypes. Hearing from more students will either solidify our ideas or give us new ways to expand/adjust our plan.</p>
<p>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</p> <p>Our innovations connect students with resources more effectively to prepare them for life after graduation. Therefore, hearing criticism and/or feedback from students themselves about these innovations is very valuable.</p>
<p>Summary of Research:</p> <p>The student interviewed has used numerous resources around campus throughout his time at Grand Valley. He has heard that the Career Center is a very useful resource but thinks that it should be advertised to students more to spread awareness and knowledge of why they are helpful. The interviewee has never been there and has only heard about it through his fraternity. He personally believes the app is a much better idea than the checklist. This is because students can navigate around quickly and easily as long as it is designed properly. The checklist could be problematic since it will list dates of when certain things should be done by and every student's needs vary.</p>
<p>Important insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Checklist could be problematic since people need to learn different tasks at different points in time</li><li>• The FMHC should teach more practical skills</li><li>• The Career Center needs to find ways to spread awareness to students</li></ul>

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Tell us a little bit about yourself as a student at GVSU.**

*“Okay so I am an athletic computer science major. I’m a junior this year. I play sports, love to do art, I joined a fraternity for social purposes, and I love Grand Valley.”*

**As an Honors student, how would you articulate what you think sets you apart from the rest of the student body?**

*“Probably our academic prowess and our focus on school. Most of the student body doesn’t try as hard as we do. It’s often said that Honors students get better grades, but we do take harder courses, so this is true because we put in more effort.”*

**Can you describe some of the campus resources you have made use of in your time at GVSU so far?**

*“Yeah, so I have used the Writing Center, Honors Advising, regular advising, the Knowledge Market in the library, and free tutors. They have all been very helpful, specifically the writing Center for SWS classes.”*

**What reasons can you think of that being an Honors student is helpful for life after college?**

*“Probably the way Honors helps you, like the way they teach you to learn. They help you learn the material that they provide you, but they also help you find new ways to learn how to study the material they provide you. There is also a lot of collaboration built into the Honors courses which will be helpful after college.”*

**How has the Honors College helped you with future employment or applying to graduate school?**

*“It has helped me with future employment because when I go to the career fair and talk to employers they always seem to ask about my Honors career and how it has affected me. I haven’t applied for graduate school so I can’t say much for that.”*

**How confident do you feel about transitioning to life after college? Why?**

*“I feel pretty confident because I feel like I am a pretty individual person that can handle things on my own. But, as far as the Honors College preparing me for it, I would say they haven’t done much besides being able to make closer connections with my professor through smaller classes. That could be an improvement. The Honors college could figure out how to teach practical skills so that students can feel more confident.”*

**What are you most concerned about when it comes to transitioning to life after college?**

*“I am most concerned about the switch of routine. I mean getting used to the work life rather than going to class, and having to deal with work-related problems and other employees in the workplace.”*

**Tell me about a campus service that doesn't exist that you think would be helpful to you for transitioning to life after college. What improvements could be made to existing services to make them more helpful?**

*"They have a Career Center, don't they? I feel like if the Career Center was more integrated into the study body. Like we have people in our fraternity that will always tell us 'go to the Career Center! They are actually helpful.' But other than that, I would have no clue it even existed. So, I think that spreading knowledge and awareness of the Career Center would actually be a good idea."*

**What service, event, or people have you found most helpful in building confidence for the transition out of college?**

*"The Knowledge Market has helped me since they have people to help not only with writing, but things like presenting. I actually went there just to practice an important presentation one time."*

**One of our top two innovations for helping this issue is to create an FMHC app that advertises campus resources to students based on their specific interests and major so that they don't have to spend so much time sifting through various GVSU webpages to find what they are looking for. What are your thoughts about this innovation? How is it helpful and what needs more thought?**

*"I think it's a good idea. It will definitely be super helpful for a lot of people. I think you just need to be careful in the way you design it and make sure to categorize it very well. But if you do that, I feel like it could help out ease of access purposes."*

**Our other top innovation is to create a checklist of life skills and professional skills that students should be able to do by certain points in their college careers. Ex: by sophomore year a student should understand how to and be able to create a budget. If students are having a hard time completing those checklists, resources to help with each item on the list can be linked. What are your thoughts about this innovation? How is it helpful and what needs more thought?**

*"I think it is a bad idea. I think that people, like I like the idea of a checklist, but like something that says that you have to have this thing done by your sophomore year isn't really fair because people come across different things for outside resources at different times in their lives. Like budgeting, all of my friends and I started to budget this year but like someone else may have needed to budget their freshman year so I think an app would be better since it gives people the ability to access anything they need at any point in time."*

**Which of these two innovations could you see yourself using more and being more helpful?**

*"The app for sure."*

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

He did not have anything.

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

Yes. Text or phone call.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors student
- Honors student
- Honors student

Possible next-steps:

- Continue to talk to Honors students to see how they feel about the two innovations
- Use information from other students to decide on one innovation
- Take what the interviewee said about what could be problematic about the checklist into consideration

## Appendix B

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### Research Bibliographies

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#### Research Bibliography 1

<p>Ghosh, Arpita and Fouad, Nadya A. 2017. Career Adaptability and Social Support Among Graduating College Seniors. <i>The Career Development Quarterly</i>. Volume 65: 278-285. <a href="https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/doi/epdf/10.1002/cdq.12098">https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/doi/epdf/10.1002/cdq.12098</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This article talks about a study done to analyze ways to help college seniors adapt to their new environment and career.</p>
<p>Main argument: Transitioning from college to the workforce is a challenge that requires adaptability, communication, and management of expectations. Social support is believed to play a major role in making informed decisions and the overall transition to the workforce. However, graduating seniors have likely adopted coping strategies that lessens the need for social support.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During times of adaptation, the need for social support declines.</li><li>• Incorporation of support from family and university staff may help students make meaning of their work.</li><li>• Senior capstone projects that help students develop skills needed to enter the workforce could be beneficial.</li></ul>
<p>Evidence: Statistically significant results were found that correlates perceived social support and concern students had about the future. However, as concern, control, and confidence resources increase, social support decreases.</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts: “These results suggest that when students are engaging in adaptive behaviors, their need for support decreases” (pg. 281).</p>



“In addition to career adaptability, social support is an important component of successful entry into the labor market” (pg. 279).

“It is possible that they no longer need support when they are able to plan, control, and confidently cope with challenges to career decision making” (pg. 281).

Strengths: This article cited many other articles that can be used for further research.

Weaknesses: These researchers provided a great amount of contradictory research and their overall conclusion stated that more research was necessary and their work did not have a great amount of implications.

Connections:

- We could find out how FMHC can support students even after they leave school
- We can empathize with student to find out if they want or need support after graduation
- We can research more into preparatory classes for graduating seniors

Questions/Concerns:

- Do students actually want or need support from FMHC after graduation?
- How do other Honors College provide support for graduates?
- Are there different needs for students entering graduate school instead of the workforce?

## Research Bibliography 2

<p>Bowman, Nicholas. Year Published. Research in Higher Education. When do Honors College Programs Make the Grade. Edition 59/Issue 3: 272. <a href="https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/article/10.1007%2Fs11162-017-9466-y">https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/article/10.1007%2Fs11162-017-9466-y</a>.</p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This resource examines the importance of Honors Colleges and whether or not they are making an impact in student's lives.</p>
<p>Main argument: The main argument of this article is to figure out if Honors Colleges are effective. This article examined different Honors Colleges and analyzed the different effects that could skew the effectiveness. Some factors studied were race of students, ethnicity of students, admission requirements.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Honors Colleges encourage students of same intellectual ability to work together</li><li>• Honors students had significantly higher GPA's in comparison to non-Honors</li><li>• Honors students were more likely to be double majors</li><li>• Faculty-Student relationships are stronger in Honors</li><li>• There is a positive relationship between Honors and intellectual confidence</li></ul>
<p>Evidence: Honors participants reported more student-centered instruction in their Honors courses in comparison to their non-Honors courses. They also reported higher GPA and taking advantageous courses.</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>"In fact, Moon's qualitative findings highlight that some cognitively gifted students choose not to participate in Honors programs because they lack academic self-confidence."</p> <p>"Honors students also report greater academic involvement and gains in knowledge and cognitive skills compared to their peers."</p> <p>"After 3 years of college, students who had taken the Honors course had significantly higher GPAs, reported greater satisfaction with the academic and social components of college, and were more likely to be double majors."</p>

A new concept presented in this article was the idea that on average, an Honors College student GPA drops between the sophomore and junior year of college, but goes back up by senior year. It was said that the advantage given to Honors College students in the first two year disappeared by the third year of college.

**Strengths:**  
This article shows many ways that Honors College students thrive in the Honors College, backed by research and quotes.

**Weaknesses:**  
There are not very many weaknesses mentioned in this article or solutions to fix said weaknesses.

**Connections:**

- Gives an insight to the advantages of being in Honors College
- Shows specific ways Honors College is helping students
- Provides us problems that we can address in our solution

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we incorporate the honors college's strengths on our website?
- What are ways we can improve the students' view of the Honors College?

### Research Bibliography 3

Miller, A. L., & Dumford, A. D. (2018). Do High-Achieving Students Benefit From Honors College Participation? A Look at Student Engagement for First-Year Students and Seniors. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 41(3), 217-241. doi: 10.1177/0162353218781753.

Reason for including this source in your work:

This source is included because it focuses on studies and statistics that show that Honors students are overall positively impacted in numerous ways throughout their time in the program.

Main argument:

The Honors College experience is very valuable and beneficial for students looking to enhance their overall knowledge by involvement of integrative and collaborative learning, diverse discussions, and student-faculty integration. Studies found that first year students involved in an Honors College were often much more engaged than seniors, possibly due to seniors being more focused on their major requirements.

Important ideas:

- Student engagement was higher for Honors students due to all of the opportunities they were given.
- Seniors are often less engaged than first-year students, besides student-faculty interaction due to them joining with faculty to complete their capstone.
- Honors curriculum and learning techniques will benefit a student by improving their own personal knowledge and skills.

Evidence:

- "Student engagement, defined as student involvement in educationally purposeful activities, has been shown in many studies to be a strong predictor of students' learning and personal development" (220).
- "Interactions with peers through collaborative learning and discussions with diverse others are also valuable elements of student engagement" (221).

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- "If the student desires strictly an acceleration model and only wants to earn college credits and reach graduation as quickly as possible, then Honors Colleges may not be the best route for this. However, if the student has been exposed to and is pleased with a more enrichment-based model, many features of Honors Colleges may be attractive" (232).

- "It is widely accepted that student-faculty interactions generally have a positive influence on the cognitive growth and development of college students, as well as their satisfaction" (221).

- "In a similar vein, utilizing a deep approach to learning refers to a process that goes beyond memorizing content and instead suggests a focus on the underlying meaning of information, such as integrating new knowledge with existing knowledge or practical issues, and reflecting on one's own views while considering views of others" (220).

Strengths:

Gives us insight on how Honors programs specifically affect students and engage them.

Weaknesses:

Journal helps explain why seniors are less engaged and we want to engage them since we are focusing on the transition from college to a career.

Connections:

- All the characteristics that are enhanced throughout an Honors program will benefit the individual in the long run, whether it be with finding a job after school or later along in their career path. This gives us insight on how Honors improves a student's knowledge for their future and sets them apart from general education students.
- Seniors continuing to be engaged with student-faculty interaction gives us an opportunity to better our website to explain the importance of networking with professors since seniors should make as many connections as possible today.
- Honors Colleges are described as supportive and positive environments. Expanding on the importance of this to the FMHC students will assist them in fully understanding what sets them apart.

Questions/Concerns:

- What are additional ways to continue to engage seniors as they are mainly focusing on major requirements rather than Honors courses?
- How can we better inform students of the importance of networking with professors while in college? (regardless of class standing)

## Research Bibliography 4

<p>Rinn, Anne N. 2005. Trends Among Honors College Students: An Analysis by Year in School. <i>Journal of Advanced Academics</i>. Vol 16/ Issue 4 pages 157-167. <a href="http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.4219/jsge-2005-479">http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.4219/jsge-2005-479</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This article describes in detail how Honors College students differ from non-Honors students. They looked at the Honors students separated into two comparison: freshman and sophomores, as well as juniors and seniors. This could be helpful to our project as we define what makes the Honors College students stand out.</p>
<p>Main argument: The main argument of this article is that academic self-concept, educational aspirations, and career aspirations can vary depending on the year of the Honors College student. But there are unique commonalities and differences when comparing the Freshmen with Sophomores and then the Juniors with Seniors.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant differences were found between juniors and seniors with regards to academic self-concept, educational aspirations, and career aspirations.</li><li>• Freshman and Sophomores are very similar when comparing academic self-concept, educational aspirations, and career aspirations</li><li>• As students progressed through the Honors Curriculum, they became more likely to show interest in pursuing a graduate degree</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Junior Honors students had the highest academic self-concepts. The decline in academic self-concept seen from the junior year to the senior year was statistically significant.”</li><li>• “That freshmen and sophomores were not found to differ with regards to academic self-concept, general self- concept, educational aspirations, or career aspirations is a noteworthy finding.”</li><li>• “These findings suggest educational aspirations and career aspirations may indeed be separate constructs, suggesting researchers should include measures of both in their study of aspirations.”</li></ul>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p>

- Gerrity, Lawrence, and Sedlacek (1993) found 34% of 231 Honors College students joined an Honors College as preparation for graduate school and 18% believed Honors College participation would help them to get a better job.
- It is therefore unlikely that gifted upperclassmen will have differing grade point averages from other Honors underclassmen, as those with low grade point averages are not allowed to remain in an Honors program.
- “Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) cited evidence to suggest college students’ academic self-concepts decline during the freshman year. From here, they argued students’ academic self-concepts increase, such that by the end of a student’s senior year, his or her academic self-concept is greater than it was at the beginning of the freshman year.”
- *Self-concept* can be defined as “a person’s perceptions of him- or herself . . . formed through experience with and interpretations of one’s environment.”
  - When a gifted student enters a gifted program after having been part of a mixed ability level program, he or she may find himself or herself surrounded by peers of equal ability. This may challenge his or her prior conceptions of ability and lower his or her academic self-concept.
  - In other words, gifted students may realize their abilities because they were accepted as part of a highly able group, namely an Honors program.
  - Gifted students at the elementary and secondary level typically have higher academic self- concepts than their average-ability counterparts (Ablard, 1997; Colangelo, Kelly, & Schrepfer, 1987). Recent research has also found gifted college students to have higher academic self-concepts than their average-ability counterparts (Rinn, 2004).
- When researchers discuss educational aspirations, they are usually discussing one’s desire to attain a post-baccalaureate degree.
  - These findings suggest as students’ progress through higher education, they are more likely to aspire to a graduate degree. As this study was conducted in a selective institution, the results may be somewhat applicable to the current study of Honors students.

**Strengths:**

This article discusses in detail how Honors students compare to one another in regard to academic self-concept, educational aspirations, and career aspirations.

**Weaknesses:**

This article lacks information on comparing the lowerclassmen with the upperclassmen (ex. Freshman with Juniors).

**Connections:**

- Honors College students are more likely to be perfectionistic, more likely to plan to attend graduate or professional school, differ with regard to personality type, and are more autonomous than non-Honors students



- Honors students had significantly higher GPA's, academic self-concepts, and career aspirations than non-Honors students
- Junior Honors students had the highest academic self-concepts and had a peak in their educational aspirations
- Senior Honors students have a decline in academic self-concept and educational aspirations but had significantly higher career aspirations than juniors

Questions/Concerns:

- Is it a good or bad thing that Freshman and Sophomores are so similar while Juniors and Seniors are so varying?
- Should the Honors College interact with Freshman, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors differently from one another?

## Research Bibliography 5

Murphy, Kerri A., David L. Blustein, Amanda J. Bohlig, and Melissa G. Platt. "The College-to-Career Transition: An Exploration of Emerging Adulthood." *Journal of Counseling & Development* 88.2 (2010): 174-81. Web.

Reason for including this source in your work:

It's a study concerning the transition from college to career, which is the problem that we are solving for Honors students.

Main argument:

The biggest finding in this study is that social support is crucial for facilitating the transition from college to career.

Important ideas:

- Social support from family, school, and work is a huge part of what determines a smooth or rough transition out of college, and ultimately a participant's satisfaction with life in the adult world.
- A rough transition doesn't necessarily mean that life after college is unsatisfying, and vice versa.
- Participants showed a general sense of optimism about their future, even if things weren't going well for them.
- A satisfying career life after college is "characterized by financial and geographic independence, work salience, discovery of self-efficacy through the transition, and expectations that were fulfilled or exceeded through the transition."

Evidence:

One participant (now employed at an insurance company) described how her transition was difficult, but her current life was satisfying: "After this whole final semester for me, it was hard. It was like this big transition in itself because I just came back from a trip to Africa, study abroad, and I was like, 'Okay, I'm back.' I don't have a job, I have two classes then I graduate, and then what? And it was just a sad time."

Then, about her current life: "I'm completely satisfied."

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

(Of one participant) “Her career plans evolved through different internships and summer positions, which exposed her to the field she was initially interested in.”

“Social support is crucial in mediating individuals’ transition from college to career.”

“Career counselors may be in a unique position to offer programming or seminars for groups of individuals on the brink of transition (i.e., college seniors).”

“We also recommend the development of intentional sources of social support in post-college work contexts, such as activities that enhance social networks as well as training modules that help recent graduates become acquainted with the goal of employers. Relationships could be enhanced between higher education institutions and employers by fostering these mutual goals aimed at helping merging adults succeed in the working world.”

“The emerging adulthood transition is greatly facilitated through social supports, while the lack of such support has been associated with a decrease in well-being, self-esteem, and in overall adjustment.”

Strengths: Study includes a diverse sample of people. The age range of these people is the exact range that we are working with for this project.

Weaknesses: Study only included 10 individuals. Research team was “relatively homogenous.”

Connections:

- It discusses what contributes to a smooth transition out of college.
- It highlights the relationship between expectations and outcomes about the transition.
- It includes ideas the career counselors could potentially use to aid the transition.

Questions/Concerns:

- What other factors are as big as social support?
- Does this carry to GVSU Honors students?

## Research Bibliography 6

<p>Lapan, Richard T., et al. "Connecticut Professional School Counselors: College and Career Counseling Services and Smaller Ratios Benefit Students." <i>Professional School Counseling</i>, vol. 16, no. 2, 2012, pp. 117–124. JSTOR, JSTOR, <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/profschocoun.16.2.117">www.jstor.org/stable/profschocoun.16.2.117</a>.</p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This source studies how the performance of students is affected by the ratio of counseling services to students.</p>
<p>Main argument: Students in a high school with a lower ratio of students to counselors had fewer disciplinary issues. In addition, schools that provided more counseling services to their students, as reported by the principal, had a better graduation rate.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As the ratio of students to counselors decreased the disciplinary issues reported at the school also decreased.</li><li>• Attendance and graduation rates were higher in high schools that reported more college and counseling services.</li><li>• As counselors spent more time performing non-counseling tasks they were less likely to report that at least 80% of their time was being used in a way that directly benefitted the student.</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The average number of suspensions per 100 students was 14. Schools that had 158 to 204 students per school counselor averaged 12 students suspended per 100 students. Schools with 252 to 297 students per school counselor averaged 26 suspensions for every 100 students. Finally, schools with over 298 students per school counselor averaged over 25 suspensions per 100 students.</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>"In high schools where principals reported greater levels of college and career counseling services provided to students, attendance and graduation rates were higher."</p> <p>"High schools where school counselors have smaller numbers of students to care for also have statistically significant lower rates of student suspensions and fewer disciplinary incidents."</p>

“When counselors indicated that they were providing greater levels of responsive services to students, lower suspension rates and disciplinary incidents also were found.”

Notable Concept: As the student to counselor ratio decreases the school’s graduation rates go up and disciplinary issues decrease.

Strengths:

The research shows that the graduation rate of students increases as more counseling services are added.

Weaknesses:

This research is on high schools not colleges. This research focuses mostly on the ratio of counselors to students and doesn’t focus on other ways to increase students’ performance.

Connections:

- This research paper shows that having more counseling services can improve student performance.
- One way that we could help students as they graduate would be to have more counseling services available for them.
- The findings displayed that disciplinary issues decreased as more counselors were available for students to use. Increasing the number of counselors at the Honor’s College may help students improve their GPA, which would help them find a job after college.

Questions/Concerns:

- Should the Honor’s College have more counselors?
- Are there sufficient counseling services to serve the College and its students?

## Research Bibliography 7

Martin, N.D. & Frenette, A. 2017. Lost in Transition: College Resources and the Unequal Early-Career Trajectories of Arts Alumni. *American Behavioral Scientist*. Volume 61(12): 1487-1509.

<http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/0002764217734273>

Reason for including this source in your work:

A major part of being prepared for the transition a student experiences while going from college to a career is being well-educated about job searching and general statistics about today's society in relation to getting jobs.

Main argument:

In today's society people are taking longer to find jobs after college and this article focuses on possibilities and statistics for why this may be the case. It also focuses on college resources that, if taken advantage of, help make job searching more successful, along with factors that contribute to students taking advantage of these resources.

Important ideas:

- Gender, race, and social class all impact the possibility of acquiring a job, specifically social class due to networking
- Studies found that involvement in campus life and social engagement varies between different races and genders (varies due to both opportunity & choice)
- Typical post-graduation job search has grown with time
- Art or design schools reported having less access to college resources than other colleges/universities

Evidence:

"In addition to factors related to classroom instruction and the traditional curriculum, we consider how interactions with the broader campus environment and opportunities to gain direct work experience during the college years are associated with successful post-graduation job searches." (1488)

"Specifically, we found that higher levels of social engagement and career skill development were associated with more successful early-career outcomes." (1501)

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“Students who are more involved in co- and extracurricular activities gain access to faculty mentors, supportive peer networks, and other social resources that can promote success during the college years and can provide guidance and information about post-graduation job opportunities.” (1489)

“In contrast to a narrow focus on the learning that occurs in the classroom, experiential education programs—such as internships, service-learning, and career development courses—aim to help college students acquire a deeper understanding of subject matter and build practical expertise for post-graduation careers.” (1490)

“We found that successive graduation cohorts over the past few decades generally report higher levels of three types of college resources: academic abilities, social engagement, and career skills.” (1500)

“Our results emphasized multiple dimensions of inequality across the college years and into early career pathways.” (1501)

“Arts alumni who devoted more attention to gaining practical experiences and building connections were more likely to have a smooth transition from college to artistic careers.” (1501)

Strengths:

This source talks about duration of job search and factors that affect the amount of time it will take a student after completing their schooling.

Weaknesses:

Not all statistics in this article relate to the transition from college to jobs and job searching.

Connections:

- Talks about the importance of practical experience and building connections in order to have a smooth transition after college
- Focuses on how experiential education programs (internships, career development courses, etc.) build practical expertise for career
- Includes ways that college resources can help better prepare students
- Studies student durations of job search after college and this can benefit our team to see what groups of students are having more trouble finding jobs after graduation.

Questions/Concerns:

- What classes can help prepare students for a successful job search? (where to look for jobs, etc.)
- Since students are more likely to have a smooth transition after college if they focus on networking, what are some ways colleges can encourage students and show students how to network?



## Research Bibliography 8

<p>Arnold, William W. 2018. Strengthening College Support Services to Improve Student Transitioning to Careers. <i>Journal of College Teaching and Learning</i>. Volume 15 #1: 5-26. <a href="https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/docview/2082228864?pg-origsite=summon">https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/docview/2082228864?pg-origsite=summon</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This article talks about things that colleges already do to support graduating students and about more that can be done to support them.</p>
<p>Main argument: A new change is occurring in the education system to better prepare students for life after graduating. Colleges must do more to prepare their students for ever-changing demands from employers. Students must be given more individualistic support in order to better prepare them for the workforce.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A more one-on-one approach with advising can be helpful.</li><li>• Traditional teaching methods are becoming obsolete in a more creative world.</li><li>• Education must focus on interactive, team, and service learning.</li><li>• Employer demand of recent graduates is steadily increasing.</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <p>Only 16% of U.S. adults think that a bachelor’s degree prepares students “very well” for future careers.</p> <p>The most important attributes that employers look for include: leadership, being able to work on a team, communication, and problem-solving skills.</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>“The traditional teaching methodologies...are becoming obsolete in a world that encourages people to think critically and creatively.” (Hainline et al. 2010, p. 1)</p> <p>“Employers, responding to competitive pressures in the marketplace, are in flux as they make continual changes in their requirements for new hires.”</p> <p>“For many students, knowing that someone in the institution cares about how they are performing is a powerful motivator.”</p>

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>This article talks about how their research affects each group independently and the challenges that each group faces.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p>There is a lot of information in this article, and it can be hard to decipher.</p>
<p><b>Connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggests ways to help students feel more motivated about what they are doing to prepare for graduation.</li> <li>• Includes potential constraints for many of the groups.</li> <li>• States needs of employers, students, and university faculty.</li> <li>• Declares that universities need to step-up to meet needs of employers and students.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Questions/Concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of classes could be implemented to prepare students for the technological demand of employers?</li> <li>• How do faculty know how to prepare students for graduation?</li> <li>• Is there anything that can be done after students graduate to ease the transition?</li> </ul>	

## Research Bibliography 9

<p>Cross, Tracy. 2018. Psychological Heterogeneity Among Honors College Students. <i>Journal for the Education of the Gifted</i>. Issue 3:272. <a href="https://search.proquest.com/docview/2087340776?pq-origsite=summon">https://search.proquest.com/docview/2087340776?pq-origsite=summon</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This source talks about the Honors College and uses student data to determine different personality types among gifted students. The data is then used to help Honors administration determine how to best help these students.</p>
<p>Main argument: This article takes a good look at the psychology behind Honors College students. Students were classified by their responses to the “Big Five” personality test (Neuroticism, Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion and Agreeableness). The results were then analyzed.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Honors College students have higher personal standards (i.e. perfectionism)</li><li>• Honors College students tend to be perfectionists – especially in comparison to non-Honors students</li><li>• There is a strong relationship between personality traits and perfectionism</li><li>• Honors students tend to be more introverted than non-Honors students</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <p>This author uses surveys to poll a small group of Honors students to determine different personality traits each possess. From there, he finds that Honors students tend to be perfectionists, and tend to be more introverted. The perfectionism stems from always wanting the perfect grade and the desire to be the best. The introversion has a lot to do with the separate facilities offered to Honors, such as “Honors” dorms, and the separate Honors College with different courses.</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>“Gifted students had higher scores on openness, but scored lower on neuroticism than average students.”</p> <p>“In a synthesis of 19 studies, Sak (2004) found higher percentages of gifted students classified as introverts (49%) than non-gifted students (35%).”</p> <p>“Some perfectionistic gifted students are vulnerable to underachievement, unwilling to submit work unless they believe it is perfect.”</p>

<p>The concept of perfectionism was new, the idea that a lot of Honors students across the country struggle with being perfect and the desire to be the best.</p>	
<p><b>Strengths:</b> Provides data from actual Honors College students about their personality, and provides insight as to how they are feeling about certain things in the Honors College.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Doesn't offer a strong solution to these conflicts, merely analyzes the students.</p>
<p><b>Connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show traits the Honors Students possess</li> <li>• Provides insight as to why Honors students are so focused on perfectionism</li> <li>• Analyzes at how Honors students feel different from their peers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Questions/Concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we help Honors students overcome their constant desire for perfectionism?</li> <li>• Why do the separate facilities make students feel more isolated?</li> <li>• Why are Honors students more introverted than non-Honors students?</li> </ul>	

## Research Bibliography 10

<p>Citation: Scott, Richard Ira; Frana, Phillip 2008. Honors 2025: The future of the Honors College. Honors in Practice- Online Archive 67: pages 29-34. <a href="http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1076&amp;context=nchchip&amp;mp=&amp;sei-redir=1&amp;referer=https%253A%252F%252Fscholar.google.com%252Fscholar%253Fhl%253De%2526as_sdt%253D0%25252C23%2526q%253Dhonors%252Bcollege%252Bphenomenon%2526oq%253Dhonors%252Bcollege%252B#search=%22honors%20college%20phenomenon%22">http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1076&amp;context=nchchip&amp;mp=&amp;sei-redir=1&amp;referer=https%253A%252F%252Fscholar.google.com%252Fscholar%253Fhl%253De%2526as_sdt%253D0%25252C23%2526q%253Dhonors%252Bcollege%252Bphenomenon%2526oq%253Dhonors%252Bcollege%252B#search=%22honors%20college%20phenomenon%22</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This article was written to provide insight into what should be expected of all Honors programs by the year 2025. We can use the insights that the article provides to apply some of the ideas to our prototype.</p>
<p>Main argument: The main argument of this article is that Honors Programs should shift towards a more collaborative approach in the future. They should even have an online community for the students to collaborate and share their work on. They will also have an online educator that they will have access to when they're in need of assistance. The educator will serve as an additional tool rather than as a full-on instructor.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We see Honors Colleges moving away from being defined by specific problems or disciplinary approaches and heading instead toward missions that convey. flexible problem-solving skills, and these require project-based classes.</li><li>• The goal is to develop citizen-scholars, capable of carrying out research, collaborating with others, leading when necessary, and embracing the public square as a locus of action that is as important to them as their work and family lives.</li><li>• Curriculum will be aimed towards testing skills under new circumstances and will really show their competence of the idea.</li><li>• Through the service-learning approach, students are thrust into positions of leadership, keeping track of progress, coordinating efforts, and organizing research and demonstrations of results.</li><li>• Project-oriented curriculum with online communities being primary means or collaboration</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p>

- Instructors on our campuses will find themselves reenergized by the possibility of groups that learn and generate content by working together on interconnected projects.
- Such a curriculum employs strategies, structures, and technologies of disintermediation: the practice of student-to-student collaboration taking place without constant intervention and over-sight by an instructor. The goal is readiness, the ability to respond to new situations rather than rehearse old scenarios.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- Such a curriculum employs strategies, structures, and technologies of disintermediation: the practice of student-to-student collaboration taking place without constant intervention and over-sight by an instructor.
  - They aspire to emphasize the use of new circumstances for the students to work under, rather than practicing the same old scenarios.
- By 2025 look for more Honors colleges requiring internships, team tutorials, joint theses, study abroad, and intra-national travel as classroom boundaries become permeable and elastic.
- We will see more Honors colleges hire core faculty, on a tenure track within the honors college or as joint appointments or both, to develop and sustain a cadre of faculty practicing collaborative, disintermediative, and interdisciplinary teaching methods.
- Service learning will proliferate, complete with more emphasis on extra-mural evaluation of students' work.
- Citizenship and leadership develop where students build and facilitate conditions for human flourishing, including practices of listening, turn-taking, and non-violent conflict resolution along with respect for difference.
- Outreach recruiters should be attracting a more diverse group than the subpopulation of all university scholarship recipients.

Strengths:

This article discusses in great detail how the future of the Honors program will look and function.

Weaknesses:

This article does not discuss how these classes will come into play regarding the student's majors.

Connections:

- Student-to-student collaboration should be emphasized
- "Honors" becomes understood as a site rather than a certain kind of student or class or faculty member
- The project-based classes will help with students being able to "distinguish themselves from traditional students"

Questions/Concerns:

- How much of this has already been integrated and how much has not yet been applied to Honors curriculum at GVSU?
- How can these interdisciplinary teams be picked (by major, randomly, etc.)?
- Can the projects worked on be more oriented toward majors (so they can discuss their work in the future, for instance, in an interview)?

## Research Bibliography 11

<p>Lam, Michele. Santos, Angeli. 2018. "The Impact of a College Career Intervention Program on Career Decision Self-Efficacy, Career Indecision, and Decision-Making Difficulties." <i>Journal of Career Assessment</i>. Vol. 26(3): 425-444. 10.1177/1069072717714539.</p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This source is relevant because it is an experiment aimed at helping college students be more prepared for their careers.</p>
<p>Main argument: The main argument of this article is that a "Career Intervention Program" has proven to be a successful tool in helping college students with their career decisions and confidence.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The goal of intervention programs is to increase "CDSE" (career decision self-efficacy) and reduce "career indecision."</li><li>• Critical components: "(a) workbooks and written exercises (b) individualized interpretations and feedback (c) world of work information (d) modeling, and (e) attention to building support."</li><li>• Course is designed for students who are "undecided about a major or career."</li><li>• Can be in-person classes or online classes.</li></ul>
<p>Evidence: "Significant interaction effects of group and time on career decision self-efficacy (CDSE) where CDSE increased significantly for the intervention group." (Table directly from article.)</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>Terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CDSE: "career decision self-efficacy." This is a person's belief/confidence in their ability to make career decisions.</li><li>• CDD: "career decision-making difficulties." This one is self-explanatory.</li><li>• Longitudinal Design: research that studies the same variables repeatedly.</li><li>• Quasi-Experimental: an interventional study that measures the impact of an intervention on something.</li></ul> <p>Quotes:</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “On the whole, it can be said that the intervention was successful in achieving net gains in CDSE and reducing overall levels of career indecisions and career decision-making difficulties.”</li> <li>• “The findings provide evidence that a careers course based on Crites’ (1978) model of career maturity and that incorporates Bandura’s four sources of information through which self-efficacy is modified is indeed effective in increasing CDSE and reducing career indecision and CDD.”</li> <li>• “Course objectives, based on Crites’ (1978) career maturity theory, included the following: to (a) identify and list top personal values, interests, skills and achievements, and articulate own personality, and work and lifestyle preferences; (b) identify relevant career resources that provide information on the world of work including jobs in demand and salary information; (c) explore and identify course and career options based on interests and abilities; (d) list the steps for selecting goals and to set personal and academic goals; (e) develop an action plan for the future that details steps to achieving the goals set earlier; (f) identify the problems in a case study and propose solutions; and (g) identify obstacles and negative feelings that hinder the decision-making process and list ways to overcome them.”</li> </ul>	
<p>Strengths: “A primary strength of this study is the application of a theoretically robust and carefully executed intervention employing a longitudinal design and quasi-comparison group.”</p>	<p>Weaknesses: “Participants were not randomly assigned to intervention and comparison groups, thereby increasing the possibility that the groups were not equivalent and there was a self-selection bias.”</p>
<p>Connections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The issue of college students not being prepared for career life after college is not exclusive to Honors College students.</li> <li>• Career intervention programs could possibly be a way to aid GVSU Honors College students.</li> <li>• Since one of the issues is that college students are lacking a connection between classes and career, a course <i>about</i> careers could be a helpful transition.</li> </ul>	
<p>Questions/Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it really this easy? Can the problem really be solved with a program like the one in this study? Not sure about this.</li> <li>• While this study is helpful, the base of it seemed like common sense to me (a course about career intervention would help with future careers). Is there something that it’s missing?</li> </ul>	

## Research Bibliography 12

<p><b>Citation:</b> Jarzombek, Molly J, et al. "The Effect of an Honors College on Retention among First Year Students." <i>Research in Higher Education Journal</i>, vol. 33, pp. 1–16. <a href="https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1161500.pdf">https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1161500.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>Reason for including this source in your work:</b> I think that knowing what increases retention rates is helpful. It's helpful because as the retention rate increases the university has a larger time frame in which they're able to prepare the student for life after college.</p>
<p><b>Main argument:</b> Having an Honors College helped to increase retention rates across the board. Students in the Honors college had a higher retention rate than students that weren't in the Honors College, and retention rates increased across the board once the university added an Honors College.</p>
<p><b>Important ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students in the Honors College had a higher retention rate than similar students that weren't in the Honors College.</li><li>• The average retention rate increased substantially when Texas A&amp;M added an Honors College.</li><li>• Academically stronger students have a higher retention rate at Texas A&amp;M.</li><li>• Hispanic students have lower than average retention rates, perhaps because of lower than average access to basic support.</li></ul>
<p><b>Evidence:</b></p> <p>Average retention rates for all students increased by 25% after Texas A&amp;M added an Honors College. Students in the Honors College had an 11.5% higher retention rate than students that were Honors qualified but chose not to attend the Honors College.</p>
<p><b>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</b></p> <p>Hispanic students have lower retention rates in college than the average student.</p> <p>"The average retention rate of first generation students in the Honors College was 10.5% higher than those students who were Honors College qualified and not in the Honors College."</p>

“When comparing those students who qualified for the Honors College to those that joined the Honors College (Figure 4), results indicate that there was still an increase in retention rate for the FTIC students who were in the Honors College versus those who were not, but the difference was less. The average retention rate of those in the Honors College was 11.5% higher than those not in the Honors College. “

“Laden (2004) talks about the struggle between the feelings of low-income students or students of color and the faculty. The students may feel as if they aren’t welcome and that they are taking up space where other higher achieving students could be.”

Honors students tend to be high achieving students so they’re more likely to continue with their education.

**Strengths:**  
 It demonstrates a non-academic difference between Honors students and non-Honors students.  
  
 It examines the retention rate of Hispanic students.

**Weaknesses:**  
 It doesn’t talk about the Honors students transition out of college.  
  
 It doesn’t dive deeply into details surrounding on campus resources.

**Connections:**

- Honors students tend to have a higher retention rate. This means that the college has a longer than average time to be able to prepare the students for life after college.
- Honors College students increase the retention rate across the university. This means that the help given to the freshmen students matters more because they are more likely to still be there senior year.
- The report said that Honors students are more likely to join clubs. Perhaps working with professional clubs is a good way for the Honors College to help Honors students prepare for life after college.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Is there a difference in how Honors students are prepared for life after college compared to how other students are prepared?
- Are there any pieces of evidence that would show that the Honors College does prepare Honor’s students better than students that are qualified to be in the Honor’s College but chose not to?
- How does the Honors College work with professional clubs? Do they help Honors students’ network in any of the clubs?

## Research Bibliography 13

<p>Citation: Jusoh, Mazuki; Simum, Maimum; Choy Chong, Siong. 2011. Expectation Gaps, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment of Fresh Graduates. <i>Education and Training</i>. Volume 53, Issue 6: 515-530. <a href="https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/docview/888251823?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:summon&amp;accountid=39473">https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/docview/888251823?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:summon&amp;accountid=39473</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This article focuses mainly on the expectations held by both employers and recent college graduates and how it affects the overall experience of entering the workforce. It includes challenges faced by recent graduates, areas where colleges should improve, and how employers should better train and interact with new employees.</p>
<p>Main argument: Recent college graduates often enter the workforce with high expectations, often leading to job dissatisfaction. Similarly, employers have high expectations of the graduates they hire and often do not know how to best train them, which can lead to conflict with new hires. Universities do well with educating students about specific topics but fall short on preparing them for the workforce and professional careers.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recent graduates have expectations that are too high.</li><li>• Employers expect too much from recent graduates.</li><li>• Workplace conflict can arise due to disagreements on best training practices.</li><li>• Colleges are falling short on preparing students for professional settings.</li><li>• Graduates facing unsatisfactory working conditions often quickly accept help from previous learning institutions.</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High turnover rates can be quelled with quality time with management.</li><li>• Recent graduates are often too theoretical for the workforce.</li></ul>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>“Furthermore, the graduates may be too acclimated to the academic methods of performance feedback (such as grades and honors) that they are often unprepared for the less structured workplace feedback.”</p> <p>“...most managers feel the new graduates are ill prepared to deal with the realities of the professional life.”</p>

“...after interviewing hundreds of new employees, managers and executives about the transition from university to work, recognized that far too little attention is being given to teaching graduates how to go to work.”

“...higher learning institutions should monitor and assist their graduates whenever possible and keeping good contact with them.”

**Strengths:**

This article focuses very well on the perspectives coming from recent graduates and employers.

**Weaknesses:**

The research for this article took place in Malaysia which has a relatively new university infrastructure.

**Connections:**

- Directly addresses the transition from college to the workforce.
- Suggests that universities should keep in contact with recent graduates.
- States that universities need to do better with preparing students to enter a professional setting.
- Employers can do better with training new hires to increase moral and job satisfaction

**Questions/Concerns:**

- What does it look like for universities to prepare students for the professional world?
- How can students’ expectations be lowered for their first job after graduation?
- How can students be educated for more applicable knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge?

## Research Bibliography 14

<p>Citation: Scager, K., Akkerman, S.F., Keesen, F. et al. High Educ (2012) 64: 19. <a href="https://doi-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/10.1007/s10734-011-9478-z">https://doi-org.ezproxy.gvsu.edu/10.1007/s10734-011-9478-z</a></p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: I believe that examining the difference in the achievements between Honors students and non-Honors students will help us recognize what achievements Honors students value. In addition, I think that looking for correlations between certain skills in students and their success in accomplishing goals after college will help us zero in on which skills should be focused on in college.</p>
<p>Main argument: The article showed that Honors students and non-Honors students differ in many things besides persistence. It also displayed that intelligence, motivation, and creativity had a strong correlation with achievements in professional life.</p>
<p>Important ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Honors students differ a lot from non-Honors students in creative thinking, openness to experience, drive to excel, and desire to learn.</li><li>• Creative thinking was a strong factor in the difference between Honors students and non-Honors students.</li><li>• Intelligence was the weakest factor in the difference between Honors students and non-Honors students.</li><li>• Intelligence may be similar because non-Honors students tend to overestimate their intelligence compared to Honors students.</li><li>• Honors students majoring in physics scored themselves lower on persistence, creative thinking, and drive to excel than non-Honors students.</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <p>The difference in mean scores on students' ranking of their creative thinking between Honors students and non-Honors students was 0.5.</p> <p>Non-Honors physics majors rated themselves an average of 5.0 in creative thinking. Honors physics majors rated themselves an average of 4.8.</p>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <p>"An explanation for the negligible distinguishing value of intelligence could be found in the fact that average students are more likely to overestimate their ability than gifted</p>

students, whereas gifted students tend to base their judgment of their ability to succeed more accurately on the actual difficulty level.”

“Chamorro-Premuzic and Arteche (2008) suggested that persistence and intelligence compensate for each other in terms of achievement, which could explain the low distinguishing value we found for persistence. This would imply that these Honors students were intelligent enough to achieve well in school without having to put much energy into their work.”

“In all programs, honors groups differed significantly on the combined talent factors from their non-Honors peers. “

Honors programs do not pick all of the talented students. Some talented students are in the non-Honors program because they didn’t know about the Honors program, were rejected by the Honors program, or didn’t want to apply to the Honors program.

**Strengths:**

This article goes into detail on how Honors students differ from non-Honors students.

This article examined the differences between Honors students and non-Honors students based on their major.

**Weaknesses:**

The article did not examine why certain talented students weren’t in the Honors program.

**Connections:**

- Knowing that Honors students score abnormally high in creative thinking can help us better empathize with them.
- Recognizing that Honors students may tend to grade their intelligence based off of how difficult tasks are can help us understand why their grading of their intelligence may differ from other’s opinions of their intelligence. This can help us encourage them to highlight their intelligence more when applying to careers.
  - Honors students scoring roughly the same as non-Honors students in persistence helps us recognize that most students may not be able to realistically highlight that on their resume when applying for careers.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Do we consider how Honors student’s views of themselves factor into their transition to life after college?
- How can we capitalize on Honors students above average creative thinking skills?

## Research Bibliography 15

<p>Citation: Kelley, Kelly R. Buchanan, Susan K. 2016. "College to career ready: Innovative practices that lead to integrated employment." <i>Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation</i>. 327-332. 10.3233/JVR-170869.</p>
<p>Reason for including this source in your work: This source is relevant because it's about strategies for successfully going from college to career.</p>
<p>Main argument: The main argument of this article is that there are six practices that can help students set up for success after college: "Career interests and assessments," "Person centered planning practices to determine support needs," "Advising and college course planning," "Setting up internships and paid work experience," "Evaluation and observation of work performance," and "Connecting back to the community with video resumes."</p>
<p>Main ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "When facing unknown roads ahead and several new lifelong goals, it is important to have a roadmap to explore your strengths and guide you in every step of the way."</li><li>• "[Person centered planning] allows families to know how and when to be involved as well as holding individuals, families, and supports accountable for responsibilities."</li><li>• Roadmap for students: "(a) examine who they are, (b) who they want to be in the future, (c) leisure interests, (d) desired skills, and (e) career and job preferences."</li><li>• "Many universities offer a wide variety of jobs that parallel those found in many communities."</li></ul>
<p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soliciting honest feedback from employers in college helps prepare students for later jobs.</li><li>• Being employed in a college community can help boost independence.</li></ul>
<p>Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Person centered planning (PCP): there are no specific guidelines, but PCP is basically planning around a specific person's schedule rather than planning on outside events.</li></ul>



Strengths: This program was tested over several years.	Weaknesses: It's less of a controlled experiment and more of a collection of suggestions.
<p>Connections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These strategies could be used by transitioning Honors students.</li><li>• These strategies could be implemented into a course or courses at GVSU.</li><li>• This shows that feeling unprepared for life after college isn't exclusive to Honors students or even just GVSU students.</li></ul>	
<p>Questions/Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What other practices need to go along with these for them to be universally helpful?</li><li>• Will these work across different majors at GVSU?</li></ul>	