The Dynamic Developers Innovation Portfolio

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THE

DYNAMIC

DEVELOPERS

Innovation Portfolio
MEET THE TEAM

Carrie Warner (Radiation Therapy, ISFJ): Team Leader, Recorder, Team Mediator
Responsibilities: Organize team documents and meetings. Keep everyone on task. Follow up on everyone’s roles. Initiate and resolve conflict.
   Carrie is a sophomore at Grand Valley State University majoring in Radiation Therapy. She is a color guard member of the Laker Marching Band and served as Financial Officer on the Executive Board for Grand Valley’s first winter guard team.

Rosalie Gagnon (Allied Health Sciences, Pre-SLP, ENFP): Interviewer, Data Collector, Assistant Finalizer.
Responsibilities: Perform interviews and collect data from stakeholders regarding prototypes; participate in all written projects and presentations. Helps with finalization of assignments.
   Rosalie is a sophomore at Grand Valley State University and is studying to become a Speech Language Pathologist. She is a member of the GVSU Chapter of NSSLHA, is vice president for the student group Protect Life, and is a Student Ambassador for the Frederik Meijer Honors College.

Briana Newcomb (International Relations, INFJ): Finalizer, Assistant Mediator.
Responsibilities: Review and edit assignments before final submission, ensuring it meets acceptable standards. Helps to resolve conflict if needed.
   Briana is a junior at Grand Valley State University majoring in International Relations. She is a member of Circle K, Bringing Together the World, was on the Executive Board for Spanish Club, and studied abroad in Spain.

Hannah Samaan (Biomedical Sciences, INTJ): Data Analyst, Researcher, Assistant Mediator.
Responsibilities: Seek out pertinent data related to idea formation and revision and review data obtained by data collectors.
   Hannah is a junior at Grand Valley State University majoring in Biomedical Sciences, with a pre-physical therapy designation. She is minoring in Business. She currently works as a behavior technician at Autism Centers of Michigan, and she will one day open a multidisciplinary center for children with autism.

Tyler McKarge (Psychology/Business, ESTP): Interviewer, Data Collector.
Responsibilities: Performing interviews and “field-work”
   Tyler is a senior at Grand Valley State University. He spends the majority of his time wandering through the woods playing guitar and reading old books. In the future, he wants to utilize his Psychology degree by working with suicidal teens.

Shared Team Member Responsibilities: All team members will assist in formulating ideas for projects and weekly assignments. All team members are responsible for presenting in front of the class when applicable and must help in the writing of projects and weekly assignments. All team members will assist the lead interviewers in scribing or transcribing when necessary.
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Dear Reader,

We appreciate your interest in the work of our team, The Dynamic Developers. We take great pride in the work we have done over the course of four months. Our research consisted of reading numerous scholarly articles, interviewing multiple stakeholders, and collecting feedback on our work through collaborator debriefs. From this portfolio, you will be able to see the Design Thinking Process we followed to develop a solution that will better student engagement at the Frederik Meijer Honors College.

Our team consisted of five Honors College Students with diverse backgrounds and areas of study. Each team member brought different perspectives and strengths to our process.

We believe our final innovation will provide a solution to encourage student governance of the Honors College. From this innovation, Honors Students will have an opportunity to share their voice and have a role in improving their Honors College experience.

We are grateful for those we interviewed, our professor, our classmates, and our collaborators for providing us valuable insights that have contributed to our research. Thank you for taking the time to read our Design Thinking journey. We hope our hard work will improve the future of the Frederik Meijer Honors College.

Sincerely,

The Dynamic Developers
DESIGN BRIEF

BACKGROUND

The Frederik Meijer Honors College (FMHC, Figure 1) at Grand Valley State University offers an engaging alternative to the usual general education program at Grand Valley, and challenges students to look at and act in the world in ways that they may never otherwise try. The overarching goal of the FMHC is “to inspire and empower motivated students to be intellectually curious lifelong learners who make positive contributions to their local and global communities, and serve as capable leaders and active global citizens” (Frederik Meijer Honors College Website https://www.gvsu.edu/honor/what-is-the-fmhc-98.htm). To achieve this goal, the Honors College has developed a unique curriculum of interdisciplinary courses.

The current director of the Honors College, Dr. Roger Gilles, states that “what distinguishes Honors courses is the level of engagement shown by everyone involved” (FMHC 2018 Annual Report p. 3). Honors students and faculty immerse themselves deeply in their classes and in this experience learn a great deal about other disciplines outside of their own area of interest.

Honors students are represented in all majors and on-campus organizations. They are shown to be leaders, receiving top awards for “I am Grand Valley,” disciplinary departmental awards, and
participating in Student Scholars Day. The previous Honors College Director, Jeff Chamberlain wrote in his 2016 Annual Report, “Students contribute in a wide array of fields and to many different communities...they lead very substantial organizations; they start effective initiatives and develop new products...and, of course, they go on to some of the best graduate schools in the country and are hired at top firms” (Chamberlain, 2016).

A survey of Honors College students discovered that over 50% of these exceptional students are drawn to Grand Valley because of the Honors College (Chamberlain, 2017). Each year, the number of students welcomed into the Honors College increases, with total enrollment exceeding 1,700 in 2017 (Figure 2). The Honors College provides a unique program to challenge bright students, a friendly environment, and modern facilities.

Figure 2. 2009-2017 FMHC Total Enrollment

When reviewed by members of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) in 2017, several positive aspects of the GVSU Honors College were highlighted. These included the close-knit community within Honors, the support system of faculty, staff, and peers, and the “bright, energetic, engaged, and intelligent” Honors students themselves. (NCHC, 2017, p. 2)

Despite all of these positive aspects and the fact that Honors students are more engaged and actively participating in Honors curriculum and GVSU at large, their direct involvement and representation in the governance of the Honors College is less apparent. While this need was not implicitly identified in the NCHC, Dr. Roger Gilles expressed direct concern over the lack of communication and student-feedback that is readily accessible for faculty members and administration on topics such as curriculum, student recruitment, Honors College policies and
procedures, and organization/distribution of events/event information. Dr. Gilles recognized this need to give students a say in important decisions in the FMHC.

Currently, there is an Honors College student organization called ANCHOR. This organization organizes programming in social, service, and academic areas (Chamberlain 2016). However, ANCHOR is not well advertised to the Honors student body, limiting the involvement of the majority of Honors students. Especially with the continual increase of Honors College enrollment, it is a struggle for the Honors College administration and faculty to hear the opinions of and properly communicate with the Honors College student body.

Based on the issues addressed above, Dr. Gilles has challenged our team to use design thinking methods to create viable solutions for the following problem statement.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

“How can we as Honors Students best contribute to the governance of the Honors College?”

*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.*

**ECOSYSTEM**

A key component in the design thinking process is considering both those who are currently affected by the problem at hand and those who will be impacted by the solution. These involved parties are referred to as “stakeholders.” An outline of the stakeholders in this case is represented in *Figure 3*. We decided that facilitation of communication and representation of
students regarding decision making in the FMHC would most drastically affect Honors students. As such, we identified Honors students as primary stakeholders. Honors students, however, are not the only ones who would take interest in the involvement of students in FMHC decisions. Students can be broken into five categories: non-Honors, non-traditional, upperclassmen, underclassmen, and incoming students. Students looking to enroll in FMHC would want to know that they have opportunities to have their voices heard. Other secondary stakeholders include parents, GVSU faculty, faculty councils, student organizations, and event organizers. Most of these stakeholder groups can be broken down even further. Given this stakeholder map, we will make it a priority to consider each stakeholder’s perspective, empathize with them, and find a solution that best accommodates everyone.

Figure 3: Stakeholder Map
RESEARCH METHODS

Our methodology for research is best described as human-centered design research, a part of the Design Thinking Process. This process includes steps to define, empathize, ideate, prototype, and test (Figure 4). This process is not necessarily linear as we will be continuously going back to re-define, empathize, ideate, etc. as we discover more through our research. We will be using the book, Creative Confidence, by David Kelley and Tom Kelley, as our guide to help us create prototypes balancing three main factors: feasibility, desirability, and viability (Figure 5). This book, other class readings, and guest speakers, will all lead us in the direction to enhance individual and team skills that are essential in this challenge and beyond.

Research from primary resources is important to gain information directly from our stakeholders through interviewing, immersing, and observing. We will be taking concrete detailed notes with the dialogue summaries template provided and recording interviews when applicable. Every week, for six weeks, our team will be completing four interviews, resulting in twenty-four dialogue summaries. Conducting primary research will help our team gain empathy from our stakeholders for a more encompassing and effective proposal.

As for secondary research, we will be using existing data through resources such as, Frederik
Meijer Honors College Annual Reports, National Collegiate Honors Council reports, and Honors College reports from other schools, to understand our stakeholders from narratives provided through other sources. Each week, for five weeks, we will engage with three identified sources and complete summaries of these research bibliographies for a total of fifteen summaries. Applying secondary research is important as it provides for historical and statistical data, helping us to identify potential constraints and guide new thoughts towards innovative solutions.

CONTRAINS

As we explore possible solutions to the challenge at hand, there are certain constraints that will provide guidance for our ideas. While getting students involved in decision making in the Frederik Meijer Honors College is essential, we must refrain from creating solutions that cannot be implemented. These constraints include:

- We will not be able to disband existing student organizations in order to create new ones.
- Given the 15-week time frame for this project, the number of interviews we will be able to conduct will be limited.
- We are unable to make changes to the FMHC curriculum.
- We cannot make changes that challenge the Honors College mission:

The mission of the Frederik Meijer Honors College is to inspire and empower motivated students to be intellectually curious lifelong learners who make positive contributions to their local and global communities and serve as capable leaders and active global citizens.

DESIRED OUTCOME

According to Dr. Roger Gilles, there is a lack of representation and communication between the Frederik Meijer Honors College administration, faculty, and students. Our goal is to offer an
opportunity for students to have a sincere voice concerning the vital decision-making processes of the FMHC.

We desire to fully understand the current problem from the perspective of Honors College members and affiliates to thus create a viable solution representing everyone involved. This solution will additionally be open to adaptation and growth to increase the longevity of its application within the FMHC.

Once our ideas are implemented in the Frederik Meijer Honors College, the result will be a vibrant institution where students are represented in significant decisions affecting the FMHC, especially those regarding curriculum and special events. The diligent faculty and administration will be better connected with the exceptional Honors students, making it easier to reach out for opinions, ideas, or any other critical feedback. This will further strengthen the living, learning, and leading community of the FMHC as the students will be an important and integral part of the institution, allowing for vast improvements and transforming the Honors College into their own!
Before we are able to begin our research, we must create a stakeholder map to identify groups of individuals who would be impacted by the outcome of our project (Figure 6). In order to design a solution, we first have to "empathize" with those we were designing for. Since our problem statement involves giving students a voice in the governance of the FMHC, we placed FMHC students at the center of our map. In doing so, we acknowledge them as the primary stakeholders. After pinpointing the rest of our stakeholders to this center point, or whom we are solving for, we were ready to begin interviewing individuals within each of the groups. From this research, we gathered insights that we carried into the next steps of the Design Thinking Process.

Figure 6: Stakeholder Map
Creating an affinity map is important in the “re-define” step of the Design Thinking Process (Figure 7).

To form an affinity map, key insights from interviews and research bibliographies were recorded on sticky notes and placed on the wall. As more insights were added, similarities and patterns started to materialize creating clusters based on common themes. Each week, our team would reorganize these insights to break down broad topics into several concise clusters. From those clusters, needs statements were formed to re-define what our collaborators need, which served as the platform for developing innovative prototypes.

Figure 7: Affinity Map
To check in with our collaborator, instructor, and other important stakeholders, we conducted three debriefs through the Design Thinking Process. These collaborator debriefs were useful to have open discussions and gain new insights and ideas to guide next steps in our work. At these debriefs we were also able to address some of our burning questions on information that was not obtained through other research means. The first debrief discussed common insights we collected from our primary and secondary research. Our second debrief focused on three needs statements we derived from the insights and the resulting top five innovation concepts to address the needs. The third debrief helped our team gain insights concerning our two prototype concepts. After each debrief, our team analyzed what converged and diverged with our team thinking and helped us to plan our next steps to take in research and in the Design Thinking Process.
# Debrief 1

## Common Insights

## Debrief Preparation

### Articulating and Revising the Initial Vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Statement:</th>
<th>We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key Insights:      | • Time is a major constraint for students  
|                    | • Students are unaware of Honors events and occurrences  
|                    | • There needs to be a unifying goal for Honors Students to encourage participation |

## Questions for the Stakeholders

1.) Where would you go, or whom would you contact, if you had ideas or general concerns about the Honors College?  
2.) How would you like students to be involved in helping shape the Honors College experience?

## Debrief Feedback

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

| Instructor          | ✤ Is there a place to go? Based on interviews, no one really goes to mentors after first year. As a faculty member, goes to Honors Administration.  
|                     | ✤ She feels like there’s nowhere to go to address a problem.  
|                     | ✤ Students should have the opportunity to shape their education in a way that’s meaningful for them.  
|                     | ✤ Idea to have a junior seminar led by student with faculty input.  
|                     | ✤ Faculty and advisors only available during day, not in evening when students are free. |
| Class               | ✤ Tries to answer her own questions on the Honors College website, doesn’t go directly to anyone. Students are reluctant to |
approach faculty. Curriculum confusion goes to advisor. Passive complaints don’t voice their concerns.

- Freshman have mentors and many questions, but as we go on, we don’t have as many questions.
- Meeting with professors is difficult due to scheduling.

**Stakeholders**

- **Honors Advisor:** desires to build community and are willing to put in work for it. Has to be effort from both staff and students in order for organizations to grow. Wants to spend time with people that want to create community but want help from others along the way.
- **Honors Mentor:** hopefully they go to mentor for resources, disconnect after freshman year.
- **Honors Administration:** walk into the Honors office to talk to anyone, students want to make a meaningful impact. Students should be practicing leadership with faculty help. Students need to take initiative and find a way to get students to want to make an impact. Want to build something that lasts, gets students to make time.
- **Honors Transfer Student:** He goes to an Honors advisor, sends an email - “Do we learn about the specific roles of people and where we can go for questions during freshman orientation?”

### Post-Debrief Reflections

**Integrate the Feedback & Ideate Next Steps**

| DIVERGE: How did the feedback provided deviate from your team’s current insights? | 1. Faculty believe students can go to Honors office and mentors believe students can go to the mentors, but we have not received these insights from the student perspective.  
2. We were unaware of the extent of the freshman-junior gap that exists within the Honors College, where students feel detached their sophomore year. |
| CONVERGE: How did the feedback align with and enhance the team’s current insights? | 1. Students desire more community and interaction with the Honors College.  
2. Students, particularly Honors students, are constrained by time. Upperclassmen are even less available because they usually work and go to school simultaneously.  
3. Honors Students DO NOT read the Honors Newsletter. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>APPLY: How can you use the feedback provided?</th>
<th>ACT: What are your next steps?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. We can integrate the insights learned about the Honors student’s desire to build meaningful community and center the organization on a common goal that improves the lives of everyone in the FMHC.  
2. We can use these affirmations of our three main insights to dive deeper into developing prototypes around these student constraints of time, motivation, and lack of awareness of events.  
3. Because faculty are typically available in the day and students are typically available at night, our team will need to think about addressing this challenge when creating prototypes. | 1. We will continue researching and interviewing to get more insights that will help us shape our prototypes.  
2. Interview an RA, or several RAs, to get feedback from them on how students build community.  
3. We will draw from this information and our affinity map in order to create five innovations for our next collaborator debrief. |
Debrief 2
Needs Identification and Top Innovations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Design Challenge Debrief</th>
<th>Debrief Preparation Telling the Story</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Problem Statement: We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Needs Statements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In addition to the definition of their roles and responsibilities, students need a better definition of the opportunities and power they have in the Honors College to take control of their own education.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students need a catalyst to bring them together.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students need to be more involved beyond their freshman year.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Top 5 Innovations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create an Honors pamphlet to define roles, responsibilities, and governance opportunities of students within the FMHC given to all Honors students upon committing to the Honors College.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students are required to go to a certain number of Honors specific events per semester, with one of these options being a Town Hall style public meeting, where students can participate in discussions for bettering the Honors College.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pair students together by major or other interests and helping them organize events, such as Honors study sessions, for their groups.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Have a suggestion box in the FMHC for students to express concerns anonymously.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Create a resource on Blackboard that connects all Honors students to Honors faculty for questions regarding classes, events, or any other issues that need answering. This resource will include simple feedback forms.</td>
</tr>
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Summary Illustration
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Questions for the Collaborators

- What innovations do you think would have no effect, or be counterproductive to our mission statement?
- The innovations we have formed based on our research have little to do with how to involve students in Honors governance, which is our original problem statement. In your experience, how can these kinds of activities and resources lead to an increase in student participation in Honors Governance?

Debrief Feedback

Capture What’s Meaningful to Advance Effective Innovation

Instructor

- Regarding the pamphlet idea, why would students read it? Need a motivation for students to read anything.
- May be nice to have a listing of all of the opportunities that students can get from the Honors College somewhere.
- Students have more to offer after their freshman year.

Class

From the class it was evident that the other teams have a focus on governance that are different from our own. One team said that, in order to establish governance, it is necessary to first establish better communication. The other team is focusing on encouraging trust and comfort in the Honors College, which will in turn lead to better communication and better governance structure.
| **Collaborator** | • Maybe there should be an initiation ceremony for incoming Honors students where they are given a contract with all of the opportunities, expectations, and responsibilities they have as Honors students.  
• The students could present these to the other students.  
• It would be a way of asking them if they are completely ready to make the commitment to become a member of Honors. |
| **Other Stakeholder(s)** | 1) **Honors students**  
• Favoritism in non-anonymous faculty-student discussion.  
• Want a break from “major specific” issues and people.  
• Honors Tours should distribute pamphlets with information regarding opportunities that Honors has, in addition to the responsibility that being in Honors entails.  
• Representatives from ANCHOR and the mentor council are willing to help and claim they are also currently working in the same direction as our innovations within their groups.  
2) **Honors Professor**  
• We as students need to be involved in the changes begun implemented instead of just creating solutions for the administration to then work on, still without student cooperation and participation.  
• With the pamphlet, perhaps if students designed it, then it could be better known what the students deem as important. |

### Post-Debrief Reflections
**Integrate the Feedback & Ideate Next Steps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DIVERGE:</strong> How did the feedback provided <em>deviate</em> from your team’s current insights?</th>
<th><strong>CONVERGE:</strong> How did the stakeholders react to the use of the pamphlet?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. The stakeholders believe that if students are not anonymous in a message board, there may be favoritism in the response to ideas or problems presented by the students. We thought this would allow them to have more of a voice if they had their name on it.  
2. Honors student believes that a mentor should be outside their major because they are constantly with people from their major.  
3. Our collaborator hopes for there to be an environment where students don’t need incentives like extra credit or pizza. | 1. The stakeholders liked the idea of the pamphlet. They agree that it would be helpful to have a listing or narrative of what is expected of **Post-Debrief Reflections**  
**Integrate the Feedback & Ideate Next Steps** |

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**Integrate the Feedback & Ideate Next Steps** |
| feedback provided *align* with and enhance the team’s current insights? | Honors students all in one place and presented to them when they begin the Honors program.  
2. ANCHOR is unsure of their role in the Honors College. |
|---|---|
| **APPLY:** How can you *use* the feedback provided? | 1. Considering the insight, students have much more to offer after their freshman year; we can use this insight to think about how each of our innovations can apply to each year in Honors.  
2. We should be designing with the students, not for the students. |
| **ACT:** What are your next steps? | 1. We will talk to the Mentor Council leadership, specifically about our innovation on pairing students together by major.  
2. We will discuss with ANCHOR members our town hall innovation. |
Debrief Three
Feedback on Top Two Prototype Concepts

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Envisioning the Future</th>
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<td>Team Problem Statement:</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Top 2 Prototypes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors College Companion Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Paired on major, hobbies, class year, sex, etc. based on the students’ wants and needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Able to join the Companion Program at any point during their time in the Honors College.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gives students a friend with which to attend Honors events.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Honors College Town Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Once a month meeting in the Multipurpose Room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gives opportunity to network with peers, faculty, and administration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A predetermined topic for the meeting will be advertised to students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There will be an option for students to present their Senior Project at this meeting.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Summary

Illustration

Honors College Companion Program

Pairing Form

Your Info:
- major
- interests
- hobbies
- living center
- hometown
- other:

How would you like to be paired? (rank 1 = the priority)
- major
- interests
- hobbies
- living center
- hometown

Hammer and anvil with various symbols on a disk.
### Questions for the Collaborators

1. What other factors could connect students via the Companion Program?
2. How can we ensure the longevity of the Honors College Town Hall and keep students involved in it?

### Debrief Feedback

**Capture What’s Meaningful to Advance your Prototypes**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>COMPANION PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pair students together by Meyers Briggs Personality Test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freshman would struggle to find events to go to and get out, so they might choose to do nothing together. Maybe have the one of the companions be an upperclassman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students may want to share their experiences and knowledge with someone younger that they get along with.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN HALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would students be more interested in the beginning or at the end of the semester?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe take the Town Hall, break it up, then have 30-40 topics that get discussed in smaller groups to get input.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>COMPANION PROGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Companion Program could be established by sequence or academic year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The program could include ACTIVATE, a GVSU collaboration between the five campus social justice centers and the Community Service Learning Center. Most of these programs already have a mentorship program, so maybe we could connect and cooperate with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We do not necessarily need to start a whole new “mentor program.” Might just want to fix the program we have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As an upperclassman, it would be a burden to mentor someone if I didn’t like them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I didn’t want to go to orientation. I didn’t know any other freshman. But when I went, I met the people and everything was fine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What if they do not like their companion? Can they get a new one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOWN HALL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students could be required to come once a year.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• End of semester would be better attended than the beginning of the semester.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Stakeholder(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPANION PROGRAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty need incentives to come to meetings and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students could be connected through their high school. It would be powerful to meet peers who shared the same experience as you. Increase comfort level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN HALL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Make it quick and cover lots of topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cater to what direction the students are going. Let students lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Town Hall sounds too formal. Change the name to something more inviting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Post-Debrief Reflections**

*Integrate the Feedback & Decide on Your Best Solution*

| DIVERGE: How did the feedback provided *deviate* from your team’s current insights? | 1. Make one of the companions an upperclassman. |
| --- | 2. Town Hall timing (during semester) may affect turnout. |
|  | 3. The Town Hall can be broken into smaller topic segments that can be better analyzed in smaller groups. |
|  | 4. Could somehow incorporate Companion Program into existing Honors Mentors’ program. |

| CONVERGE: How did the feedback provided *align* with and enhance the team’s current insights? | 1. Town Hall should be informal in attire and manners. |
| --- | 2. Companion Program can be based on several different interests, including high school and Meyer-Briggs personality. |
|  | 3. Town Hall should be fast-paced. |
|  | 4. Require students to attend at least one Town Hall meeting. |
|  | 5. Companions can be paired with someone else if they do not get along. |
| APPLY: How can you *use* the feedback provided? | 1. Criteria to help with pairing within the Honors College Companion Program may also include personality tests, ethnicity identification, and Honors Interdisciplinary Sequence.  
2. Social media can be used to connect Honors Students in Companion Program.  
3. Faculty also need incentives for events. We need to determine what will encourage faculty to attend.  
4. In order to encourage attendance, the name of the Town Hall should be changed to be less intimidating. |
|---|---|
| ACT: What are your next steps? | 1. We will add suggested matching categories to the Companion Program.  
2. We will brainstorm new creative titles for Town Hall.  
3. We will brainstorm incentives for students and faculty to attend the Town Hall. |
1. Honors College Companion Program

The Honors College Companion Program will be the catalyst to unite students within the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Every student within the FMHC will be paired with one or two other Honors student by intended major, hobbies, class year, gender, etc. according to the students’ wants and needs. Upon orientation, all incoming Honors students will fill out a form to list out personal details and decide what aspects they would be looking for in a Companion. It will be necessary to rank the most important aspects in a Companion, as there may not be a perfect fit for everyone. If unable to attend Honors orientation, these forms will be available to be completed online through resources such as the FMHC website and Blackboard. Students may also choose to opt out of the Honors College Companion Program but should be informed of all potential benefits of having a Companion. Benefits of the Companion Program include, but are not limited to, having a buddy to go to events with, talking to a peer about classes, networking within your field of study, informing each other of new Honors information and opportunities, and above all, a friend (Figure 8). The Honors College Companion Program will not replace the current Honors Mentor Council, but create an intentional, longer-term, and individualized experience resulting in more intimate relationships between Honors students. The Companion Program will run throughout the year and be actively managed to accommodate students and their companions graduate, transfer, or prefer new networks. The forms will be reviewed by either the current FMHC Mentor Council, ANCHOR, or a new executive board to assist in pairing students. This innovation will facilitate communication between students to become more involved in the Honors College. Subsequently, students will be more invested in their Honors College experience, and may be more inclined to get involved in programs such as ANCHOR and the Mentor Council, or to attend more Honors College events.
2. Pamphlet

Our vision is to create an Honors pamphlet to define roles, responsibilities, and governance opportunities for students within the Frederik Meijer Honors College (Figure 9). The roles and responsibilities section will include everything expected of Honors students while they are in the Honors College. It will be necessary to include a definition of the institution and highlight the importance of student input and impact in the FMHC. It will also be important to include a checklist for Honors course requirements, GPA requirements, mandatory events, etc., that Honors students should consistently be aware of. The opportunities section will detail all the ways a student can get involved within the Honors College including events and student organizations such as ANCHOR and the Mentor Council. Each will include a description and their expected time commitments. Ideally, this pamphlet will be created by students to appeal to students. Creators and editors will be eligible to earn course credit for the development and maintenance of the pamphlet. It will be provided in print, but also have an interactive online component that will be an easily accessible feature on the FMHC website or Blackboard where students, both incoming and current, can view the content at any point in time. The pamphlet will be updated on a bi-weekly basis to assure the most accurate, up-to-date information is always accessible. The print version of the pamphlet will be sent out to incoming FMHC students and their families, given out on tours, during orientation, and will always be available in the Honors office.
3. Blackboard

We wish to cultivate communication between the FMHC students, administration, and faculty by creating a Blackboard tab available to everyone associated with the Honors College (Figure 10). Based on stakeholder research, we have determined that the most common and frequently checked tool used by students for school communication is Blackboard. Because many students have Blackboard notifications sent straight to their phone, utilizing this tool will connect students, administration, and faculty within the Honors College more quickly and effectively. An ‘events and opportunities’ section will continually be updated with Honors-specific events, including those by student organizations ANCHOR and the Mentor Council, to keep engaged in their Honors College experience. These events will be viewed on a calendar, which will be found through the ‘tools’ tab of Blackboard. An ‘information’ section will include all Honors pamphlets, especially those listing student roles and responsibilities within the FMHC. A ‘discussion’ section will be used by administration and faculty to prompt student collaboration on issues within the FMHC. This section will give students a platform to provide lengthy suggestions and feedback without face-to-face confrontation, which some students prefer. Other students prefer feedback forms and other surveys, which are quick ways to receive student input anonymously. Other forms, such as the Honors College Companion Program pairing forms, Mentor Council grouping forms, and suggestion forms, may also be available on

http://www.flipbuilder.com/application/digital-pamphlet-software.html

Figure 9. An online resource for students to create an Honors pamphlet.
Blackboard for student convenience. Blackboard will be an excellent tool for organized information and student opinion to improve engagement, inform members, and establish communication among decision making in the Honors College.

Figure 10. A site for students to access their class courses and the new section for the Frederik Meijer Honors College

4. Suggestion Box

Our team’s objective is to provide a place for Honors students to give voluntary feedback and facilitate the delivery of student ideas and opinions to the administration and faculty of the Frederik Meijer Honors College. A suggestion box is a simple solution that allows students to give anonymous feedback regarding their classes, professors, and overall experience in the Honors College (Figure 11). This feedback will be kept anonymous for students to provide their opinions openly. Along with general suggestions, there will be optional prompts for directed feedback. These prompts will be asking students’ opinions on what events should be held, their preferred place to study, or their favorite Honors classes. To try to reach as many students as possible, the decorated box will be placed on the mail counter in the Honors College Niemeyer living center lobby. There will also be an option online platform on the Honors College Blackboard page. This will allow for students that aren’t often in Niemeyer to participate in
providing suggestions. The Honors student organization, ANCHOR, will oversee checking the box weekly and setting aside time to address the suggestions at their meetings. Then, they will bring the suggestions to the correct people in Honors administration and faculty along with possible ideas to improve upon what has been suggested. Another important part in this process is to let students know their suggestions are being heard. Knowing this gives students the motivation to continue sharing their suggestions. Next to the suggestion box will be a publicly accessible board with the suggestions that have been solved or are in the process of being solved. This will give students the reassurance that their voices are being heard and making a difference, as well as give them ideas for further suggestions.

![Figure 11. Two types of Honors College suggestion boxes](image)

5. Honors Open Assembly

We will increase student involvement and awareness of the decisions being made in the Honors College through the establishment of an Open Assembly event. These events will occur once every month and will provide opportunities for students to network with faculty, administration, and peers. At the meetings, there will be a predetermined topic of discussion, selected by Honors College administration and faculty or through student feedback. The assembly topic of discussion will be advertised prior to the meeting to attract students who may be passionate about the topic discussed. The meeting will be run in an open discussion format, with student representatives from ANCHOR and the Mentor Council, faculty, and the Honors
administration facilitating the discussion. The assembly meetings will not be solely attending to the business of Honors however; the format will provide faculty and students the opportunity to speak about their current Honors classes or projects, which may encourage others at the meeting to become more involved with Honors specific projects or to meet other students who may have similar interests. Specifically, Honors students working on their senior projects will have the opportunity to present their hard work at the events. Many students have referred to the senior project as a subject of some mystery. Seeing other students presenting their work and recognizing the required format and topics will be very helpful for students who are nervous or confused about planning their own senior project. The meeting style will be fairly informal, with no requirement to stay for the whole meeting but being able to drop in or out at any time during the discussion. This will encourage those students to come who would like to attend but have a schedule conflict for the first hour or who may have to leave early. Food may also be offered during the meeting to encourage attendance (*Figure 12*).

*Figure 12. A style of meeting where the old-fashioned style becomes collaborative when food is added*
TOP 2 PROTOTYPE CONCEPTS

Honors College Companion Program

The Honors College Companion Program will be the catalyst to unite students within the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Every student within the FMHC will be paired with one or two other Honors student by intended major, personality types, hobbies, class year, gender, hometown, Honors Interdisciplinary Freshman Sequence, etc. according to the students’ wants and needs. Upon orientation, all incoming Honors students will fill out a form to list personal details and decide what they would be looking for in a Companion. It will be necessary to rank the most important aspects in a Companion, as there may not be a perfect fit for everyone. If unable to attend Honors orientation, these forms will be available to be completed online through resources such as the FMHC website and Honors Blackboard. Students may also choose to opt out of the Honors College Companion Program but before making this decision, will be informed of all potential benefits of having a Companion. Benefits of the Companion Program include, but are not limited to, having a buddy to go to events with, talking to a peer about classes, networking within your field of study, informing each other of new Honors information and opportunities, and above all, a friend (Figure 13). The Honors College Companion Program will not replace the current Honors Mentor Council, but create an intentional, longer-term, and individualized experience resulting in more intimate relationships between Honors students. The Companion Program will run throughout the year and be actively managed to accommodate students and their Companions as they graduate, transfer, or move to new networks. The forms will be reviewed by either the current FMHC Mentor Council, ANCHOR, or a new executive board to assist in pairing students. This innovation will facilitate communication between students to become more involved in the Honors College. Subsequently, students will be more invested in their Honors College experience, and may be more inclined to get involved in programs such as ANCHOR and the Mentor Council, or to attend more Honors College events.
Honors Open Assembly

We will increase student involvement and awareness of the decisions being made in the Honors College through the establishment of an Open Assembly event (Figure 14). These events will occur once every month and will provide opportunities for students to network with faculty, administration, and peers. At the meetings, there will be several predetermined topics of discussion, selected by Honors College administration and faculty or through student feedback. The assembly topics of discussion will be advertised prior to the meeting to attract students who may be passionate about the topics discussed. The meeting will be run in an open discussion format, with student representatives from ANCHOR and the Mentor Council, faculty, and the Honors administration facilitating the discussion. The assembly meetings will not be solely attending to the business of Honors, however. The format will provide faculty and students the opportunity to speak about their current Honors classes or projects, which may encourage others at the meeting to become more involved with Honors specific projects or to meet other students who may have similar interests. Specifically, Honors students working on their senior projects will have the opportunity to present their hard work at the events. Many students have referred to the senior project as a subject of some mystery. Seeing other students presenting their Honors Senior Project work and recognizing the required format and topics will be very helpful for students.
who are nervous or confused about planning their own senior project. The meeting style will be informal, with no requirement on having to stay for the whole meeting but being able to drop in or out at any time during the discussion. This will encourage those students to come who would like to attend but have a schedule conflict for the first hour or who may have to leave early. Food will be offered during the meeting to encourage attendance. A sample Honors College Assembly would start with giving some time before the meeting for attendees to get food and snacks offered. The meeting would then begin with opening statements and announcements, including updates from the previous FMHC Assembly and upcoming events. Next would be a short 5 to 10-minute presentation by a student on their senior project or a speaker to inspire Honors students, etc. Then, the main discussion topics will be announced, and the floor will be open to new topic suggestions. Once all topics have been announced, tables will be designated to each topic and attendees may choose the topic/s they would like to discuss for the remainder of the Assembly. At these tables, there will be a leader to guide discussions, which can include the person who introduced the topic or student, faculty, and administration representatives. The tables will also include paper, sticky notes, writing utensils, and other resources that may be helpful to deepen ideas and discussions. With 5 minutes remaining, the leader of the Assembly meeting will end with closing remarks and collect all suggestions and notes from the meeting to enable further discussion and actions to positively impact the future of the Frederik Meijer Honors College.

![Collaborative Space](image)

*Figure 14. A collaborative space to talk about issues within the Honors College and brainstorm solutions*
Honors Open Assembly

Based on the student needs statements we derived from our research, the top innovation choice that fulfilled all of these needs is the Honors Open Assembly (*Figure 15*). The Open Assembly will occur once every month and will provide opportunities for students to network with faculty, administration, and peers. At the meetings, there will be a maximum of four topics discussed, one of which will be an open topic where any student can propose an idea or present an issue before the Assembly. Additionally, there will be a box for suggestions that will be constantly available in the Honors lobby, from which a topic of discussion will be drawn. Topics for discussion must directly related to an Honors College need, interest, or pending change that needs collaborative input. These Assembly topics, which will be selected by Honors administration, will be advertised through email, on the Honors College Website, and through various social media prior to the meeting to attract students who may be passionate about the topics discussed.

The Assembly meeting will be run in an open discussion format, with student representatives from ANCHOR and the Mentor Council, faculty, and Honors administration facilitating. Assembly meetings will follow a standard agenda that encompasses Honors business as well as provide a format for faculty and students to speak about their current Honors classes or projects, which will encourage others at the meeting to become more involved with Honors specific projects or to meet other students who may have the similar interests. A basic agenda for the Honors College Assembly would begin by giving some time before the meeting for attendees to get food and snacks offered and to socialize. The meeting would then begin with opening statements and announcements, including updates from the previous FMHC Assembly and the announcement of upcoming events. Next would be a short 5 to 10 minute presentation. Specifically, Honors students working on their senior projects will have the opportunity to present their hard work at the Assembly. Many students have referred to the senior project as a subject of some mystery. Seeing other students presenting their Honors Senior Project work will be very helpful for students who are nervous or confused about planning their own senior project. Then, three of the main discussion topics will be announced, and the floor will be open to new topic suggestions. Once all topics have been decided, tables will be designated to each topic and attendees may choose the topic/s they would like to discuss in more detail for the remainder of the Assembly. At these tables, there will be a leader to guide discussions, which may be either the person who introduced the topic or student, faculty, and administration
representatives. The tables will also include paper, sticky notes, writing utensils, and other resources that may be helpful to deepening ideas and discussions. With 5 minutes remaining, the leader of the Assembly meeting will end with closing remarks and collect all suggestions and notes from the meeting to enable further discussion and actions to positively impact the future of the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Attendees will be welcome to remain following the closing remarks to continue discussions and conversations.

The meeting style will be informal (drop in/out), with no requirement to stay for the whole meeting. This will encourage those students to come who would like to attend but have a schedule conflict at the beginning of the meeting or who may have to leave early. Food will also be offered during the meeting to encourage attendance and a relaxed atmosphere.

With the implementation of this prototype concept, our three student needs; 1) student involvement beyond freshman year, 2) the need for a catalyst to bring students together, and 3) the need for students to recognize the power they have in the Honors College, will be fulfilled and recognized. Students do not have to be a certain age or academic year in order to attend, and therefore they can get involved regardless of whether or not they are actively taking Honors classes. The catalyst provided by the Open Assembly is the desire of Honors students to take control and possession of their own education and thus become involved in matters of Honors governance. Finally, students will not only have their roles and responsibilities within Honors better defined through the Honors Assembly, but they will also have a better knowledge of the abilities and power they have to affect change within the Honors College.

In addition to addressing student needs, this prototype will create a reality that is beneficial to faculty and administration as well as students. The administration will gain the student feedback that they have been lacking and faculty will get the opportunity to work with the students and possibly talk about their own research. Solutions to prominent issues within Honors will be addressed and solved through collaboration and teamwork involving all members of the Honors community.
Figure 15. A collaborative space to talk about issues within the Honors College and brainstorm solutions
CALL TO ACTION PRESENTATION

Honors Open Assembly
The Dynamic Developers

Honors Open Assembly
Needs Statement #1

Students need to be more involved beyond their freshman year.

Needs Statement #2

Students need a catalyst to bring them together.
Needs Statement #3

In addition to the definition of their roles and responsibilities, students need a better definition of the opportunities and power they have in the Honors College to take control of their own education.

WHY???
Questions

- What differentiates a long-lasting organization from one that dissipates quickly?
- What would incentivize faculty and administration to attend?
- Where will the resources come from?
Scott is an Honors student living in the Honors College. Due to the weather conditions, his bike was ruined and he is upset that he could not do anything to protect his bike.

When Scott walks by the front of the Honors College, he sees there is going to be an Honors Open Assembly where he could address his problem.
At the Open Assembly, Scott has the opportunity to present the issue in front of fellow Honors College members.

At the Open Assembly, consisting of Honors administration, faculty, and students, will be listening to all the topics presented and starting to brainstorm ideas to solve these issues.
Breakout sessions begin where representatives from all areas of the Honors College come together to collaborate about Scott’s bike issue.

Because Scott had the opportunity to present this issue at the Honors College Open Assembly, he transformed the future and initiated the creation of a new FMHC Bike Shelter.
TEAM VIDEO

Dynamic Developers Design Thinking Video
## INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM REFLECTION

### Call to Action

**Envisioning the Future**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Description of How Your Presentation was Received</th>
<th>Our presentation was well received and the Honors College Director was ready to schedule the first meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the Teams Specific Call-to-Action</td>
<td>Our specific Call-to-Action involved encouraging all those present to give their help and support by showing the audience all of the benefits that will come from the Honors Open Assembly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Attendee Questions                                     | 1. How will students know when their solutions are implemented so they can get validation for their opinions?  
                                                   | 2. Why are students going to want to come other than for the incentives?  
                                                   | 3. Are students going to come to the Open Assembly to give feedback for faculty or are they just going to come for their own ideas? |

### Innovation Symposium Feedback

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

| Verbal Feedback | The Honors College has a kitchen in the Multipurpose Room and we could use it to make food instead of ordering pizza all the time.  
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                | To keep Open Assembly topics concise, there needs to be a defined scope of whether the issue is just for the Honors College, which can be addressed at the Open Assembly, or a campus-wide issue, which needs to be brought up to Student Senate.  
|                | The idea of presenting senior projects will be beneficial for future projects. |

| Written Feedback | ADVISE  
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                 | Is this a forum or is this a problem-solving group?  
|                 | Set the agenda a month in advance.  
|                 | Search student Town Halls.  
|                 | Awareness to adjustments.  
|                 | Increasing ownership. |
Implementing Design Thinking methods and mindsets.
Rubric for what topics to raise.
Testing ideas with students.
Is it possible to use the kitchen? Pizza gets old.
Maybe combine “showcase” (a draw) with the problem-solving discussion.
Bringing together Honors - Galvanize.
It might be good to have students be able to submit topics and questions ahead of time online in case they cannot make it or are shy.

AID
Innovators’ Compass – tool
Innovatorscompass.org

Visual Feedback

Post-Symposium Reflections
Integrate the Feedback & Offer Final Recommendations

**DIVERGE:** How did the feedback provided *deviate*

1. It was mentioned that a problem such as in our example, where a bike shelter was made for Niemeyer, perhaps was not a good
| from your team’s current recommendations? | example of the kind of topics that will be brought up at the Open Assembly. Instead of having students come and bring up whatever issues they wanted, there needs to be a defined scope of what can be asked and should be discussed.  
2. Food should not be used as a chief incentive. Pizza can get expensive, so maybe using the kitchen in the MPR or having a potluck would be better. Students should not come just because they are getting food, but rather to actually participate in the meeting. |
| CONVERGE: How did the feedback provided align with and enhance the team’s innovation? | 1. Having students present their senior projects will be very beneficial and rewarding not only for them, but also for other students who may be confused about how to go about their own senior project.  
2. It is a good idea to utilize the idea that students can always have access to a platform where their ideas can be submitted for presentation at the meeting in case they cannot attend the meeting or if they are too shy to want to present it themselves. |
| SYNTHESIZE: How can others use the feedback provided? | 1. Use the insights to think of what topics would be discussed at this meeting.  
2. Think about who would be in charge of organizing the Open Assembly.  
3. Consider if faculty would be willing to cook as an incentive for students to attend the Open Assembly. |
| RECOMMEND: What next steps does your team recommend to stakeholders? | 1. Talk to ANCHOR and the Mentor Council about the idea and gather feedback they might have or even ask them to begin planning it.  
2. Determine the limits that should be applied to the topics presented at the Open Assembly.  
3. Begin advertising the event and set up a test platform for suggestions to see if students will participate by giving their ideas, either online or through a suggestion box in the Niemeyer and Holton Hooker main lobbies. |
Our vision is for the Frederik Meijer Honors College to flourish with the creation of a collaborative environment for all of its members to improve on the current state of student governance. We would like students to know their opinions are valued and can affect change in their learning environment. With our proposed prototype concept, students will know their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to grow, deepen in their relationships with faculty, administration, and peers, and be involved beyond freshman year of college. We hope to inspire and encourage FMHC members to take advantage of the array of opportunities the Honors College offers.

We are honored to have been involved in governance of the Frederik Meijer Honors College through this Design Thinking journey. Thank you to all who were involved in helping our team develop effective innovations. Now, we will leave the future of the Honors College in the hands of students, faculty, and administration to shape everlasting experiences everyone will want to be a part of.

With gratitude,

The Dynamic Developers


“Frederik Meijer Honors College Website” *What is the FMHC*, https://www.gvsu.edu/honor/what-is-the-fmhc-98.htm.


APPENDICES

Dialogue Summaries

Research Bibliographies
Dialogue 1

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Student/GVSU Campus

Estimated Age: ___ X __ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 ___ 50+ ___ 50+

Gender: Female

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- The primary goal of this opportunity is to determine initial opinion and view of the Frederik Meijer Honors College from a student’s point of view. In this way, our team can empathize with the Honors College student population and better understand how they would like to be represented in Honors College decisions.

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

- Our team’s problem statement is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” This work is directly aimed at gaining empathy with one of the Honors College students we are attempting to establish representation and easy communication for. Therefore, this research is useful in determining how to produce viable solutions to our problem statement.

Summary of Research:

- The stakeholder met with in this interview was a sophomore student from the Frederick Meijer Honors College. Having held a leadership position in a student organization, she was able to highlight both successful and unsuccessful strategies when trying to get students involved. The student does not often read the Honors College newsletter and suggested perhaps having an email sent out once a month listing events, with weekly reminders of events of the week. This student felt that it could be difficult to give feedback to professors if they do not answer email or if their scheduled office hours are impossible or inconvenient to attend. However,
the student believed that more casual, conversational settings with professors, such as events with Honors faculty, are more conducive to producing an atmosphere for bringing forth new ideas or feedback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important insights:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Believes that casual settings are more conducive to exchange of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Would like emails and newsletter to be more event centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Would like to see more community in the Honors College, specifically with more group community service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Q:** What form of communication do you use most often for school?

**A:** With professors, email, with other students some messaging form of format.

**Q:** Are there any other forms (of communication) that you think would work better?

**A:** Not that I can think of. The only problem that I have getting in contact with professors is if they don’t respond to their emails or if they don’t have consistent office hours or if they have office hours at a certain time but I can’t actually make it there, but they don’t respond to their emails so I can’t actually get ahold of them.”

**Q:** In what ways have you previously given feedback to a professor? For example, would you use email, or the course evaluations?

**A:** The course evaluations. Yeah, those are nice because they’re anonymous.

**Q:** Is there any other way that you would like to offer feedback?

**A:** It’s kind of hard. I’ve had some instances where I’d like to go talk to a professor and be like ‘Hey, here’s the situation,’ that I’m feeling like there’s a lot of people feeling this way but I also don’t want to confront them. Even though they might blatantly be doing something wrong, I still have to show respect but sometimes that’s really overwhelming and not a lot of people always take it the right way, especially coming from a student. But
I feel like we should have a voice in those situations especially, because we’re the ones paying and actually trying to learn, so maybe professors just need to be more open-minded to constructive criticism about their teaching methods.

Q: What are some of the ways you have made your voice heard in the Honors College or in the GVSU community in general, or in what ways would you like to make your voice heard?

A: I really appreciate the get togethers with the professors and faculty and the students, I just can never make them. I like the idea, and I like having that open conversation with them because I think they like hearing our ideas and building off their ideas that they have. I think that’s really beneficial to the community and I wish more people would take advantage of it. I just like having conversations to get ideas out more, but I don’t know how to get people to those situations. Because I want to have those conversations, and I think that when we’re most heard is when it’s in a casual situation where it’s not like you’re trying to bring up a problem with someone and trying to fix it right away, but more like having a conversation with someone is how actual change is going to be most effective.

Q: Have you attended any of the Honors events?

A: I try to, like they sometimes have the food with the professors and stuff. I’ve gone to a couple of those, sometimes the RAs put on stuff here, I don’t know if that’s necessarily the Honors College curriculum aspect of it, but the living Honors. I know they bring in speakers and stuff, and I’ve been wanting to go to some of those but I haven’t been able to make them either.

Q: Are you normally well informed about when the events are? How do they usually come to your attention?

A: Either on Facebook sometimes, or in passing people will be like “Oh this is happening,” sometimes professors, but not always. I kind of feel out of the loop this semester because I’m not taking any Honors classes. Usually they’re bringing stuff up or I get more announcements on Blackboard because of that. But since I’m not taking any Honors classes, I don’t have any classes actually in the building, I don’t actually even
walk through the lobby, so I don’t even see any posters ever. So, I guess social media is my main way right now, but at the moment I feel like I would have to go on the Honors website to figure out what events are coming up and figure that out for myself. I know a lot of my peers aren’t always informed, especially if they’re not taking any Honors classes right now either, it’s kind of like “Oh that happened? That would have been kind of cool to go to.”

Q: Do you ever read the Honors newsletter that we get in the email?
A: Sometimes.

Q: Is that useful?
A: Usually there’s just so much information in it that I’m just like ‘I don’t have time to sit down and read all of this stuff now and then I don’t usually get to it. I just scroll through the email and there’s so many different things in it and all the different big advertisements for their study abroad or scholarship applications and then maybe one little thing about an event coming up. For me it would be better if it was consolidated into a simple calendar like “Here’s some deadlines, here’s some actual event coming up, rather than having all of the information in that newsletter. Maybe we can have links to more information rather than just like putting it all out there. I know that they consolidate it, but there’s still a lot. I also know with the actual letter part of it it’s usually pretty long and there’s a lot of words there. I’m moving around, I’m going from thing to thing, I don’t have time to read this.

Q: Do you think you would be more aware of events if you got an email listing all of them or even if you got one email per event?
A: Somethings I could use a reminder for because I’m interested in that, but if it’s like something that’s not very important or not as attention grabbing, I don’t want to get multiple emails about that. I think maybe an initial here’s what’s going on throughout the month, like at the beginning of each month ‘here are all the events for this month’ then at the beginning of each week send out the events for that week. That way it manages that a little bit more.
Q: What would make you want to join an Honors community organization?

A: There’s so many other organizations on campus and as an Honors student I feel like just being in the Honors organizations isn’t appealing either for resume building or for getting a diverse experience of campus. Personally, if it’s actually something I care about and am interested in, then I would go for it or start something, but there’s probably already some kind of organization on campus that does something like that because there are so many. But having it Honors-specific makes it convenient because I live here and I won’t have to go somewhere else, so that’s a benefit. Even some clubs where it’s on the other side of campus, it’d be fun to have like an Honors-specific club, like swing-dancing, having an Honors-specific swing-dancing in the MPR or they had this student initiative service thing through Honors that I was part of last year for a little bit and that kind of stopped I think, but I liked that because it gave me opportunities to get downtown and do service stuff, which was cool. So maybe, for me, I would like community service that we could do as a living community. I feel like doing that kind of thing always builds community more.

Q: When you were in a leadership role in a student organization, what worked well and what have you found doesn’t work out?

A: Finding time to meet as an e-board and then enough time to organize quality events for the group is probably what’s most difficult. We also have lots of ideas and we just want to do them, but actually getting them to work is a lot of work in itself. We’ve been doing well at communication, we communicate over a group chat, and even if I can’t make it to a meeting, I still call in so I’m there and hearing what’s being said and contributing, but it’s nice to have that technology so that everyone can still collaborate and communicate. I wouldn’t be able to do it by myself because they all do so much.

Q: Do you ever have trouble getting people to come?

A: We were told recently that we don’t have enough fun events and we send out a lot of information regarding outside events or volunteer events or scholarships and they’re like “Why don’t you do more stuff with just the club?” We try to have an event with our club once a month and usually we have several girls turn up. We had our initial meeting last
semester, we had a lot of girls show up, but getting people to attend during busy schedules is always a problem of any group.

**Q:** In general, are there any areas of the Honors College that you would want to change?

**A:** The curriculum is not very helpful for me personally. I came in with a lot of college credits and so I thought that was going to benefit me, and then it didn’t, mostly because my Honors sequence already covered several of the credits that I had covered already. I don’t know exactly if it benefitted me or not to be in the Honors College for taking gen. eds and moving through gen. ed. curriculum faster. I just didn’t think there was a very good transition there. I feel like I’m taking a lot more classes, like gen. eds than I necessarily need to, although they are good classes though. I like the professors so it’s a trade off. So far I like my Life Science gen. ed. class, that was awesome. It was information that I hadn’t learned before in a class in high school or something, so that was ok, but I don’t know what my other classes will be like, hopefully they’ll be good. I guess I would like more community. People don’t have to be extremely social, but there could be more community and it’s frustrating because we all want to do our schoolwork and nobody actually comes out and does anything. I think if that is going to happen, a lot more people have to be on board with that. People complain about that, but are they actually doing their own part to build a community?

**Q:** Are there any questions that I should’ve asked you that I haven’t asked already?

**A:** What are you most disappointed with after entering the Honors College. I don’t know if I have an answer right now, so far I haven’t really had any disappointments other than what I was just talking about with the curriculum. I’m not really sure how much it helped me, curriculum-wise.

**Q:** Do you have any other recommendations for ways we can look at our problem statement differently or ways to increase the representation of Honors students in the Honors College?

**A:** I was an Honors mentor and the council that runs those event are very well-organized usually and the events that they put on are really good for incoming students. I think that that is developing into a really strong leadership position or way in which students are
starting to run at least one aspect of the Honors College. Maybe we can even have that more with upperclassmen that are in the Honors College, and have more of an interaction between Honors upperclassmen and current freshman and sophomores. I’m not sure how that would look, but it might be an idea.

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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
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<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Reaching out to directors or students of other Honors Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Research what makes student organizations and participation succeed</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Investigate what forms of communication, especially social media, are used by the Frederik Meijer Honors College</td>
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Dialogue 2

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Student/GVSU Campus

Estimated Age: ___ X ___ 20-30 ___ 30-40 ___ 40-50 ___ 50+ ___ 50+

Gender: Female

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- The primary goal of this opportunity is to determine initial opinion and view of the Frederik Meijer Honors College from a student’s point of view. In this way, our team can empathize with the Honors College student population and better understand how they would like to be represented in Honors College decisions.

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

- Our team’s problem statement is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” This work is directly aimed at gaining empathy with one of the Honors College students we are attempting to establish representation and easy communication for. Therefore, this research is useful in determining how to produce viable solutions to our problem statement.

Summary of Research:

- The student interviewed is a sophomore in the Honors College. She prefers to contact professors through email and utilizes the end of semester course evaluations to give feedback on the professors and classes. The student shows interest in a student organization or some method of connecting students with others in the same major or program. She was also interested in an increase of social events for Honors students to get to know each other. The student does not read the Honors newsletter because of the length and the lack of eye-catching information at the top. She would like to see the newsletter organized with more imperative information featured at the top, such as upcoming events or announcements for housing. This student would also like to have access to more information about how the Honors College functions, especially pertaining to its governance.
Important insights:

- Would like to have some way to meet other Honors students in her specific program and major
- Does not read the Honors College newsletter because of the length
- Emphasized that empathy and understanding are important in a student organization since members have other obligations and time commitments

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Q:** What form of communication do you usually use for school to contact professors or fellow students?

**A:** For professors, definitely email. Usually, they ask us to do it that way. I usually don’t go to professors’ office hours. I think I have only a handful of times in the past, and for students usually email, or phone number if we’re close enough in class where we get that exchange.

**Q:** Are there any other forms of communication that you would like to use to offer feedback to a professor?

**A:** I’ve definitely talked to some professors if I’m confused or if I have a question about the class or even if I have a qualm with how the class is going or something I will actually sometimes talk to the professor about it in person, or end of the semester evaluations. I usually try to do those honestly.

**Q:** What ways do you think you’ve made yourself heard in the Honors College or in the Grand Valley community in general?

**A:** I really make it a priority to do well in my classes, so I feel like I make myself known by my performance in class. Again, talking to the professors especially in the Honors College. I’ve seen my professor for my sequence after the fact, after the class ended. I still like to keep in contact because she’s really cool.
Q: Are there any other ways that you would like to have your voice heard? Do you think maybe some community, or some organization would help with this?

A: I know that there are clubs in the Honors College, but maybe if we had clubs based by majors for Honors College students so I could know who’s in the program in the Honors College, because sometimes it’s just nice to have someone to talk to about shared experience or shared struggles. Especially with the program; it’d be nice to know someone in the program who’s in the same major that I could go to for questions. I do know that for a couple of people, but it’s not because of the Honors College per se, it’s just because I know them from class and then I happen to find out later that they’re in the Honors College. Maybe not even a club, but like a spreadsheet of ‘do you want to tell people what your major is’ or something or put it on the door.

Q: What Honors events or organization meetings have you attended or would have liked to attend but have not been able to?

A: Obviously I did the Honors Orientation freshman year and the mentor program and I’ve gone to some of the social event they’ve done in the MPR. I’ve done yoga once and we’ve done the ice cream socials. I think I would like to do ANCHOR. I’ve always kind of wanted to do that because I’m already in the Honors College all the time anyway and it probably, hopefully, wouldn’t be too big of a commitment.

Q: How do you usually hear about events? Do you think it’s usually effective how often you hear about them or do you want to hear more about them in a different way?

A: I feel like it’s either through email or signs I see around campus or just sitting in the dorms. I think maybe if they had, they might already have this, where they have an area in the hallway to put stuff about what’s going on. Maybe if they made it a bigger deal or made us know this is where you go if you want more information about things going on in the Honors College. That would be nice because I usually just happen upon things and I don’t always read those newsletter emails because I can’t be bothered sometimes because they’re really long. I usually see sign on the doors, but if there’s something I could always look at, like on the wall, it would probably be easy too.
Q: When do you find the newsletter useful?

A: I hardly ever read the newsletter. Maybe just the beginning parts of it, especially if it applies to residents.

Q: What kinds of things would you like to read about in the newsletter?

A: I think if they had it sectioned off with more important stuff first, that way I might be more like ‘ok.’ Because I’ll probably never read the whole thing necessarily, but it’d be nice to be like ‘here are the important things going on that you need to know about right now in the Honors College’ and then if I was interested enough in that I’d probably keep reading the rest of it. It might already be set up like that, I have no idea.

Q: If you were to think about what the most important things would be, what’s the stuff that you would be most interested in seeing?

A: Things about student events. Also, I see around campus sometimes they’ll have panels and stuff. It’d be nice if the Honors College did stuff like that, and if they do, it’d be nice to know about that. Like ‘here’s an event coming up with Honors students’ or stuff about specific housing like ‘East Niemeyer, you need to be doing this.’ That would be nice to have something like that in the newsletter.

Q: If you were to join an Honors community organization, what would encourage you or draw you into doing something like that?

A: Just knowing more about it. I don’t know much about the Honors College organizations really. I think just exposure would probably get me more interested.

Q: Have you ever been in a leadership position in a student organization or thought about it?

A: In high school I was in a couple campus ministry leadership positions I suppose you would say. In college I really haven’t been. I had a little bit of a leadership position in my softball team kind of, but that’s debatable.
Q: In those roles, do you know what worked well and what really didn’t?

A: Communication, and often reminders sometimes and understanding that people that are a part of your team, or whatever, have other obligations and yours might not be their priority. So just being sympathetic at least, but still trying to make sure that you’re getting stuff done. I think flexibility is important, but you have to have a fine line between being assertive and understanding that they have their own life. I think I did that a lot in campus ministry because I was doing something that not necessarily people wanted to spend time on because it was just part of another obligation that they had also in this in the club I was doing.

Q: Are there any areas of the Honors College that you would change or that you are dissatisfied with?

A: Not for the most part. I know we do a lot in the beginning of the fall semester especially. We do a lot of building-based games and stuff when the weather’s nice and I feel like you kind of get to know your floor more. That was for freshmen last year and I didn’t see as much of that this year or if I just didn’t go to it. I think it’d be cooler to have more of those throughout the year because I feel like, after the introductory period of getting people together it kind of lets you do it on your own. Niemeyer is such a quiet dorm that we don’t really do stuff on our own. I feel like having more things like ‘here’s a game night for east Niemeyer’ or something on campus even, because then you don’t have to worry about going somewhere else. I think we’re a little anti-social so maybe having something like that. Or maybe more ice cream socials or the thing we went to the other day because a lot of people went there actually for the hot cocoa. A lot of people actually went to that and I think if we had more of those it’d be cool.

Q: If we did that, would you prefer it would be a smaller group, like Niemeyer east, to get to know people better, or a mix?

A: I don’t really have a preference. It’s nice because I think east is small so sometimes people don’t go to things. I think it’d be a higher chance of being successful if more people went and then people found out about it.
Q: Do you have any other suggestions regarding our problem statements specifically?

A: I think it’d be cool if we knew how those decisions (in the Honors College) were being made, like how the governance works at the Honors College, because I have no idea how that works. I think having that knowledge out there for people who are directly involved like ‘this is how the Honors College runs’ or ‘this is who’s a part of it.’

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

- “I would like to know more about the Honors classes. I know we have the huge book of classes but I’ve never seen like a pamphlet saying ‘here’s the classes you can have at the Honors College’ because that would be kind of interesting. I probably would’ve maybe taken advantage of that if I had an extra credit or something in the future. I don’t know if they have any one credits, see what I mean? Maybe they don’t even have one credit Honors classes, I have no idea. I think it’d be cool to have something like that academics-wise. I’ve only ever seen the Honors classes that I’ve needed.”

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

- Yes; text messaging or email

Connections this stakeholder provided:

- N/A

Possible next-steps:

- Research how the Honors College governance functions at present
- Research how other organizations on campus or at other colleges successfully advertise to the student body
**Dialogue 3**

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<td>- The interviewee is a Senior at Grand Valley, and very accomplished academically. She is active in the greater campus community, but not specifically in Honors. She wishes that the Honors College were more elite, in fact, and doesn’t spend a lot of time investing into the FMHC. She doesn’t read the Honors newsletter and doesn’t think that it has any content that’s related to her. She regularly checks her email and gets blackboard notifications on her phone. She isn’t interested in joining an Honors student organization at this point but might have as a Freshman. If she did join, it couldn’t be a “time priority” for her, because she’s already so busy.</td>
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<th>Important insights:</th>
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<td>- Blackboard and Email are the best form of communication</td>
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<td>- Students may be uninterested in joining an Honors student organization</td>
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Students don’t always read the Honors newsletter

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: “What form of communication do you use most often for school?”
A: “That’s a weird one because I check my email multiple times a day, every day, and I know a lot of kids use that. I can also be reached on social media at all times because I’m addicted. Anytime professors communicate, it’s always through email or blackboard. So as far as school, email is probably the way to go. I check blackboard if I check for assignments or get notifications. I have the app on my phone, so I get notifications all the time. I check a lot of time for grades too. If it was an announcements page, I probably wouldn’t check.

Q: “In what ways have you previously given feedback to a professor? Other than the end of the semester review?”
A: “I sometimes don’t even do the end of the year review. I haven’t had any professors stick out as ‘very bad’. I didn’t know there were any other outlets for review. I have emailed them and I’m friends with one on Facebook.”

Q: “What form of communication would you most like to use in order to offer feedback to Honors professors, class, or overall content?”
A: “End of year review is too long. Lots of open-ended questions. I don’t want to have to type out all of my answers, there should be some pre-set options. If it took 2 minutes per professor, I would definitely do it, but sometimes I don’t want to explain.

Q: “In what ways have you made your voice heard in the Honors College or GVSU community?”
A: “Specifically to Honors, no. I’m getting an invitation later this month to an Honors Society, so I’m doing stuff with that but it’s not really the Honors College. I’m not the
most involved. I’m involved in a lot of stuff outside of Honors though.

Q: “What Honors events or organization meetings have you attended?”

A: “I’m going to the senior project one. A lot of the times they had didn’t work for me, so I feel like they need more resources of sending out information, or PowerPoints, or recording of the meetings. So, you don’t have to go meet with people if you don’t want to.

Q: “Do you read the Honors newsletter?”

A: “If I’m looking out for things, I might scroll through it. But honestly, usually I just open it so the notification for ‘unread email’ goes away.

Q: “How are you made aware of events and meetings at the Honors College? Do you even feel aware of all of them?”

A: “I’m not aware of all of them because I don’t necessarily check the resources they have. Mostly I find out through email, but if it’s not listed in the newsletter, I’m not aware of it. I came to Honors for the academic reasons. My main priority is academics, grad school, and getting good professor relations and in-class stuff that will help me in my career. The social aspect isn’t as important because it’s not qualification to get into the FMHC.

Q: “What type of info could be in the newsletter that would get you to read it?

A: “That’s a good question. Well, they already talk about some of the events, but I don’t know. If there were more topics related to scholarships that students aren’t aware of. I’m here for academic reasons, so social reasons aren’t going to make me read it. Anything related to free food or free stuff, I’m interested in. If there’s free stuff, I’m there. I go to Campus Life Night for free stuff.

Q: “What would incentivize you to join an Honors community or organization?”
A: “Anything that made it easier to get scholarships or grants. If there was no time commitment, other than a weekly meeting. In fraternities there aren’t any extra qualifications, like, you don’t have to do community service or anything. I can’t have it as a priority, but I’d like to have it as a resource. I busted my butt in high school to get here, so I want to focus on academics here. I’m full time work, full time school, busy until 5pm everyday (not including homework). I can do a weekly meeting but can’t do anything like ‘4 hours of community service per week’. I have a lot of homework, exams, and other stuff. I’m a double major, working 16 hours a week at the store, and I’m in other organizations/clubs. I’m involved in campus ministry.

Q: “What works in these organizations? What do you like that could work in an Honors setting?

A: “A lot of us have the same end goal. Like in Sign Language Club, we all want to learn American sign language. We all have different majors, but we all want to learn sign language. With campus ministry, it’s the faith aspect. My weekly involvement is Life group on Thursday. We are all girls, there to talk about faith, so it builds strong relationships (that’s the social aspect).

Q: “How do you communicate with these groups?”

A: “Well campus ministry uses an app. And so, I’ll get notifications for that. If the Honors College had an app, that would work. The Honors College though, has a lot of different majors and career paths. The only thing connecting us is Honors. We are very diverse in personality and fall into stereotypes, so you have your athletic academics, geeky academics, artists, so you don’t want to go to an Honors event with all of those. Because, like, I don’t relate to any of these people and I’m uncomfortable. It’s a very eclectic group, which can be good and bad.

Q: “What’s a way for the Honors College to improve? What don’t you like about it?

A: “I don’t understand the point of a junior seminar. It has nothing to do with my majors and I don’t see the purpose of it, other than to check a box when I graduate, which is fine, because Grand Valley has a lot of boxes to check off.
Q: “I appreciate your time today. Anything else you’d like to mention?”

A: “I think an Honors board of students is a good idea, but it’s another thing to compete and run for. I don’t know how many people would, I mean, it’s a resume booster, but compared to others it might not be as good. What if people run and you don’t like them, and they get to make decisions for your curriculum? You’d hate them! You could structure it like how city’s structure it. How about Town Meetings? If you have once a month Honors forum, and everyone who wants to come express a thought in front of an advisory board could, you could say: “I have an issue with this professor, this is my idea for a class”, and if you want to come say something you can, but if you don’t care, don’t come.

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

- They did not have anything to say in regard to this question.

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

- Yes; text messaging

Connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors professors
- Other students

Possible next-steps:

- Reaching out to other Honors students
- Visit incoming student group
### Dialogue 4

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Honors Student/Niemeyer Living Center

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- **Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**
  
  The primary goal of this opportunity is to determine initial opinion and view of the Frederik Meijer Honors College from a student’s point of view. In this way, our team can empathize with the Honors College student population and better understand how they would like to be represented in Honors College decisions.

- **How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**
  
  - Our team’s problem statement is: “*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.*” This work is directly aimed at gaining empathy with one of the Honors College students we are attempting to establish representation and easy communication for. Therefore, this research is useful in determining how to produce viable solutions to our problem statement.

- **Summary of Research:**
  
  - The interviewee is a senior at Grand Valley. She has been in the Honors College all four years, but never lived in the Niemeyer Living Center. She takes her academics seriously but is invested in working and climbing club. She didn’t have a lot of insight into the FMHC specifically, because she isn’t too involved, and specifically told me that she wished she were more involved, but just didn’t have time. She didn’t like the idea of writing feedback to professors or faculty, because she can’t articulate herself well enough on paper. She said that she would rather have a “town meeting” style to report feedback.

- **Important insights:**
  
  - Most students check email and blackboard every day
  - Students often do not read the Honors Newsletter
  - Students like flexibility of scheduling within clubs
Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: “What form of communication do you use most for school?”

A: Email and blackboard, but usually I check email every 10 minutes. If I’m checking my phone, it’s probably email. I use blackboard on my laptop but also on my phone, but mostly my laptop. I use texting with students if we are in groups, but with profs, it’s email.

Q: “Is there any way you’ve given feedback to a professor that you liked or found helpful?”

A: “I haven’t gone out of my way for it, but I’ve had profs who wanted feedback. So, a few weeks into the class they asked for feedback and adjusted the class accordingly. Some give out sheets at the end of the year. That’s the most I’ve done despite the end of the semester evals.

Q: “If you were to give feedback to your Honors professors, in a good or bad way, how would you feel most comfortable with that?”

A: “I think, if anything, a discussion. Writing on paper it is harder to explain what I’m thinking. It’s harder for me to think, it’s better to talk it out.

Q: “Are you involved in any of the Honors College extra-curriculars? If not, what else are you involved in?

A: “Climbing club, I’m vice president! I’ve been on and off with Swing Dancing Club. That’s probably it.

Q: “For climbing leadership, how do you communicate?”

A: “Facebook is the biggest. At the beginning of the semester, we send out an email in which we direct them to Facebook, and give them a rundown on all the information. But
anytime there’s something new, we post to Facebook. It works for us. For Swing Dancing club, we get a weekly email updating us on what we’re doing.

Q: “Have you attended any Honors events or meetings or anything?”

A: “Maybe as a freshman and sophomore, maybe, I forget. I’ve been meaning to go to the one about the senior project.”

Q: “Do you read the Honors newsletter.”

A: I skim it. That’s the one bad thing about email is that I get so many, so I have to filter through what’s important to me right now. It’s hard to save things for later, and there’s a lot in there. If it was broken up by topic, what was relevant to me, it would be better. They list so much in there, and technically I have the time to read through it, but I don’t have the patience because I need to get to the point.”

Q: “So it’s not that useful?”

A: “No. If they were more specific. I would want more emails with smaller topics that are more specific. It’s hard for me to track events through email.”

Q: “So, ideally, what could be in there that would get you to read it? What needs to be in there?

A: “What’s pertinent to me now is the senior project stuff, which is hard to find information about. Advising hours. I don’t know, I don’t find myself finding much need in the newsletter in general. Like, the math department sends out a newsletter that I read every time because it’s relevant to me. Maybe as a freshman and sophomore, the Honors email would have been useful.

Q: “Could you be incentivized to join an Honors student organization to help with curriculum, feedback, helping students, and be an overall leader?”
A: “I’d consider it, but I find myself not having enough time to do many other clubs. I’ve poured myself into climbing club and I give them all my effort. I’d rather go to Honors events, rather than organize them.”

Q: “Would you as a freshman be interested?”

A: “Yes, I’d have probably had more time to help, but I don’t know how to exactly word it. Like, with climbing club, it’s made me want a leadership position.

Q: “So, what works in climbing club leadership, and what doesn’t?”

A: “We meet every Sunday and Wednesday, and then event-specific meetings that we plan a week or two in advance. I like that it’s very flexible – as a leader we have to go to meetings. It’s not super structured, so, when it comes to paying dues, you go pay the club when you get the chance as soon as it’s convenient for you. You’re not going to miss any important info if you miss a day, as a leader or general member. It’s more of a community rather than a structured thing.

Q: “Do you recruit?”

A: “Yes, Campus Life Night. Also, if people come to the Wall at normal hours, there’s almost always one of us [leaders] there.”

Q: “Is there anything you want to effect change in, being in the Honors College for 4 years.”

A: “I guess just getting involved with it. My freshman year I was more involved with it because I had a class there and as a freshman there’s more things to do and more interest in Honors things. This year I haven’t even walked into the Honors College once. Why? I don’t know. I just haven’t found a reason to be here I guess, I don’t know.”

Q: “So if you could effect change, what would it be?”
**A:** “I’m not here enough to know what to change. Get me in the doors more and I’ll know what to change; that’s the root of the problem.”

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<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
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<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
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<td>❖ Contact other clubs, like Climbing club, on campus</td>
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Dialogue 5

Stakeholder Group/Location: Anchor/Student Senate/Honors Student

Estimated Age: ___X___ 20-30 ____ 30-40 _____40-50 ____ 50+ 

Gender: All female

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- The primary goal of this opportunity is to continue empathizing with Honors students, but additionally to interview leaders in the two student groups, Student Senate and ANCHOR, and learn how they affect our problem statement.

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

- Our team problem statement is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” ANCHOR is an Honors student organization that enjoys direct communication with Honors faculty and administration. Student Senate often works with bringing student needs forward and getting them addressed. The combination of these two agendas can be very insightful to solving our team problem statement.

Summary of Research:

- Honors Student: The Honors Student interviewed was a senior at Grand Valley. This student commented how it would be nice to have a calendar with all upcoming Honors events in chronological order so they are easier to see at a glance. She felt a disconnect between the Freshman sequence and her Junior Seminar and was lost when trying to figure out her senior project.

- ANCHOR Member: The ANCHOR leader emphasized the Live. Learn. Lead. focus of her organization. She wanted mostly to increase membership in the group, believing that this would greatly improve the impact ANCHOR could have. ANCHOR has a strong relationship already with the Honors Administration and Faculty and this student believed that other students could easily come to them with concerns.
Student Senate Member: This student stressed how she advocates more student involvement at Grand Valley. Student Senate does not specifically do anything with the Honors College.

Important insights:

- Having an Honors calendar of events would be helpful
- More assistance with senior project
- ANCHOR already communicates directly with Honors faculty and Administration
- ANCHOR could have more impact with more people
- Student Senate is large and addresses student issues around campus, but does not get involved with the Honors College specifically

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**HONORS STUDENT**

**Q:** How have you been involved in the Honors College?

**A:** I did the Honors College curriculum all the way through. I’ve lived in Niemeyer for the three years that I’ve been here, so that’s kind of how I’ve been involved. I’ve also done a research project through the Honors College with _____, so that’s how I know her.

**Q:** Have you gotten involved with any of the organizations or gone to the events in the Honors College?

**A:** Not really the student orgs, but I definitely go to the RA events that are put on, and some of the last lectures. The Honors College Director did like an Indian food night in the MPR so I went to that. That was kind of tasty, so just more like the social than the I guess leadership activity roles in Honors.

**Q:** Can you tell us the motivation behind going to the events on campus?

**A:** Just to spice it up. Niemeyer is kind of isolated from everything, so when things do come here I’m like, “Oooh, interesting.” It’s like convenient so I like to go to the yoga
here, because, you know, exercise, and it’s accessible and it’s for Honors College students.

Q: Are you involved with any other stuff on campus too?

A: I’m the service chair for a service organization called Circle K International. I’ve been that for two years, so basically I coordinate 4+ service projects a month to bring to our members, so that’s pretty fun.

Q: What do you do in that group?

A: So basically what we do, so we meet once a week, so that’s more of our social time and then that’s also where we broadcast what service opportunities we have and then, on the weekends, usually a Friday or Saturday, we’ll go out to local non-profits, like Feeding America West Michigan, Mel Trotter, Family Promise. We volunteer on campus stuff like the MLK day of service or Sibs and Kids week and kind of just stuff like that, just overall community, volunteerism, and involvement.

Q: When do you read the Honors emails helpful? Do you read the information and what information do you like in it?

A: I think it was really useful my freshman year and then, I’ve only been here for three years so if I talk about it, it will be my freshman year, my sophomore/junior, and then my senior year is this one. So it was really helpful. I would say my first year more often because it showed me opportunities, like clubs, that’s how I found the job with ____. It was advertised in there, so that’s kind of useful. It’s gotten more useful for sure as time has gone on. Like they have senior project workshops advertised now which would have been really helpful when I did that last winter. It’s just nice to know like when advising is because I was trying to use that when I was trying to get my senior project going ‘Oh when’s open advising? Right here, oh cool.’

Q: Are there any things in the newsletter that you would like to see that aren’t in there now?
A: Maybe a calendar of events, because a lot of the time it’s just, kind of just like disconnected pluggers for events, so they’re not necessarily in the order that they’re happening. So, maybe, I think there is an upcoming event, but maybe a chronological one, just for easier referencing and access, and more scholarships please.

Q: What do you think of the Honors College in general? Do you have anything you don’t like, or what’s your favorite part of it?

A: Well the Honors College is the main reason I came to Grand Valley, I got a full ride to ______ but the Honors College convinced me to pay to come here. So obviously it’s pretty important to me, and I’ve lived in Niemeyer for three years so I obviously really like the community aspect, especially my freshman year. That was really important. I found my current roommate, found my boyfriend, it got me involved with my friends in Circle K because they used to live here, once upon a time, so, I don’t know, it really helped me establish my niche and so I really appreciate it for that. I also like the collaborative nature of the classes, how it’s less like test based and I can actually talk for once, because I like to do that. , I don’t know, it’s collaborative and it feels like a meaningful and interesting education, and it’s led me to bigger opportunities like I was in a promo video for Grand Valley through my freshman sequence. I got published because of my Honors Senior project and Scholarworks, and I got to present at Student Scholar’s Day. Because of that project I go the job with _____ which was really neat, so it’s led me to a lot of good things on campus academic-wise. So I can appreciate it for that. I guess that only thing that I don’t really think is probably, at least, what it would’ve been for my year, is there would have been a disconnect between my freshman year and then sophomore/junior, senior year because it feels like, for your freshman year, you’re in there for ten credits so it’s a big time commitment. Sophomore year, if you have missing requirements, like usually humanities majors, they’ll take an Honors science, but I had a ton of credits coming in. Obviously I cut it short so I didn’t have that gap, but I wouldn’t have taken any Honors classes in my sophomore year, so I felt like that was kind of a loss of the awesome sort of community that had been built up in the freshman sequence. Then the junior seminar just felt different for some reason than the sequence. I don’t know why, but I didn’t really like it as much. I mean I liked it more than most of my classes, but I didn’t like it as much as my freshman year. And then the senior project I just kind of felt thrown to the wolves a little bit. I was like “Oh I missed the application deadline.” Office was like: “Ok, yeah, it wasn’t a hard one so you can submit it late. Oh
you’ve got to find a mentor though.” So it I like, oh, who am I going to find to mentor me so it was kind of like, there wasn’t really a lot of guidance on that so I was just kind of like figuring it out, like I didn’t really know the process.

Q: How did you get in contact with the faculty and the mentor?

A: So my mentor was outside of the Honor College. I did it on LGBT issues, so I was taking a Women’s Gender Study class the previous semester, so I reached out and connected with that professor. After I found out that in order to graduate on time I’d have to. The reason I found out that I was late for the deadline was I figured out that I needed to do my senior project in my sophomore/junior year, so I just connected with someone outside of the Honors College that I had established a relationship with and then just brought it in for, I just kind of turned it in. It wasn’t really an Honors Senior Project, it was more like a part of the curriculum that wasn’t through the Honors College per se.

Q: So do you want to be more connected with the Honors Faculty or do you feel pretty content with where you are?

A: Well, I feel like maintaining connections with the Honors Faculty, particularly for me, I had to apply to grad school, so trying to find letters of recommendation was pretty challenging. Professors I felt closest with, I knew them freshman year, so I had changed so much beyond that point that what they could’ve written about me probably wouldn’t have been as useful. So I feel like maintaining strong faculty relations is important for helping Honors students market themselves, so I had to scramble for letters of rec because I’m an _____ major so most of my classes are 120 kids. There’s not a lot of time for one on one with professors, but I feel like the smallness of the Honors College is a good opportunity for making those strong connections that can help you get a job or get into grad school, so I wish I had that sort of closeness. What my high school did is, we would have intergrade meetings once a month with a teacher so we could help each other navigate through the different years like ‘oh this is ACT, this is what your testing kind of looks like.’ I was in an Honors program in High School so I feel like, if our Honors College did something like that it would be useful, like utilizing the upperclassmen’s knowledge to help the younger Honors students through, and then also having an Honors faculty member that knows you well through senior leadership or how you can help others. I feel like that might be useful.
Q: So in high school did you meet with the same teacher?

A: Yeah, so I went to an International Baccalaureate High School so our freshman and sophomore year it was kind of prep for the IB program and then our junior/senior year, it’s basically like all the knowledge we did during that we’d be tested on at the end of our senior year. To get a different kind of diploma, and as a part of that curriculum, we had to do 150 hours of community service or planning, like an event, or just personal enrichment activities pretty much. So those meetings that we had were kind of like, so we’d meet one-on-one with the mentor or the teacher to check in how we were doing, but then we’d go out into the bigger group and then just like talk to each other, like check in like ‘oh how are you guys doing with this?’ or ‘here’s some advice for this, here’s how to handle it’ or they’d go through the content based on specific grades like ‘oh here’s how college apps should be going.’ So it’s kind of like an advice counsel I guess, just to try it for things that you know need to happen but don’t necessarily know how to. So I feel like the senior project could use especially this. Because there’s the outlines on the website, but that’s about it. For me and my senior project advisor, we kind of figured it out ourselves a little bit. Does that explain how it works a little better? So it was basically like a monthly meet up session.

Q: How many people were in that program? How many teachers were in there?

A: So there was 400 kids, 15-20 teachers, and some of them we shared with a middle school, like the band and the art, so every teacher had about, like, usually they’d have 3-4 teachers in a group and then there’d be like 60 students of various grades.

ANCHOR:

Q: Tell us about yourself and your experience in Honors.

A: I’m the president of ANCHOR which is our Community Council. We try to get a lot of kids involved in the three main Live. Learn. Lead. aspects of the Honors College that they like you to focus on.
Q: What do you guys do in ANCHOR?

A: We try to balance the three so we’ll plan some sort of academic event. I put together a panel of seniors working on their senior projects so that way students can come and ask questions and get more of a student perspective. Or we’ll have a study day, or come in and ANCHOR will help you plan your schedule, and help you register for things, and then we’ll do fun stuff like a night where it’s just something to get the community together. “Whose line is it anyways?” we did that last semester. It so much fun. We try to, sometimes they aren’t always successful, plan service projects, something that they can come in and do for an hour that earn an hour of service and benefits the community.

Q: What is your guys’ communication with faculty and administrators?

A: I have a meeting with the advisors every week in the Honors College and my vice president is also on their curriculum board. So we definitely have a voice, like a student voice from ANCHOR which is involved in a lot of the new Honors College stuff which is nice.

Q: How many Honors students would you say participate in ANCHOR and go to meetings regularly?

A: That’s a hard question to answer because it fluctuates. I’d say on a good day we have 15 people, second semester. First semester we get anywhere between 20-30.

Q: Are the meetings for anyone to come to?

A: Yes. Usually a lot of our events, we definitely try to publicize to the whole community so it’s not like you already have to know about ANCHOR to benefit from it. It’s not some secret circle club we’ve got going on, there’s no password at the door.

Q: Isn’t it just for Honors though?

A: It’s for the Honors Community, yeah. A lot of those members are people who actually live in the building. It’s really hard for us to yell across campus at the Holton-
Hooker kids or any Honors kids who might live off campus which is one frustrating thing for us.

Q: Have you come up with any ways to get them involved?

A: We have tried a few different things in the past like having two separate meetings, one here, one at North Campus. We’ve tried switching having meeting just there and then we lose the Niemeyer people because nobody wants to walk over there. Right now we’re working with ___ in the Honors Office to work on more outreach because sometimes walking over and putting up three posters in Holton Hooker doesn’t really get any people over here for the stuff.

Q: Do you guys have any sort of dues?

A: We rewrote the constitution this year to include dues but we haven’t put them into place until next year because we weren’t sure how. ANCHOR doesn’t really spend money, which we’ve been so used to that that’s just how we operate so we had never really thought of it before, so we don’t collect dues right now.

Q: How long have you been doing this?

A: I’ve been on the e-board all three of my years here.

Q: What made you join it in the beginning? How did you get attracted to it?

A: I went to their first meeting and they said ‘Hey! There’s an e-board position open’ and my friend ___ who was already on the e-board goes ‘Hey, you should do this’ so I was just like ‘Well ok, I guess.’ That’s how it started and then he graduated and I became president.

Q: What do you like most about ANCHOR?

A: I like that it’s a chance for us to bring the Honors kids together when they want to participate to give them a fun thing to do, like ANCHOR is here to help. It’s other
students, me and my e-board, would help anybody with anything. Like you want us to make you schedule for you, sure I’ll do that. I love doing that. I’ll do it all day long. You want to plan something fun with your friends and you want to use the MPR, you want to plan your own ANCHOR event we’re open to that too. I love that we give people the opportunity to make friends easier here, form a lot of bonds that you might not get outside of something like ANCHOR and also since we’re so involved with the faculty in the Honors College we feel like we really have an opportunity to listen to what students want and relay it back to them or put them in touch with people that might be able to help them to because you meet a lot of people and that’s kind of given me those good old fashioned library cards full of names ‘Oh you need that? I know exactly who to send you to.

Q: Do you feel that there is a disconnect between faculty and students?

A: I think that that’s a little bit of a hard question for me just because of who I am. I’ve always been very involved with them, you know I know a lot of the professors personally, but I couldn’t answer for the rest of the students.

Q: You don’t think that students come to ANCHOR looking like ‘Hey I have a voice and I can get my voice out through you guys’ does that not happen?

A: I don’t know if we’ve ever come across those issues, but we definitely have a good connection with the Honors office so I feel like if there was a problem, no one would hesitate to say something.

Q: What kind of structure is there as far as leadership goes?

A: We have five executive board members. There’s myself, my vice president, my membership officer who is trying to get all those outliers a part of ANCHOR, trying to keep the community involved, then we have a financial officer too obviously, if we ever have spending, keep track of that and also put in requests for funding. Now that we’re a student organization, we used to be under Housing. This year is of a learning curve for us, so she handles that, and we have a secretary who keeps track of our meeting minutes, helps send out emails, stuff like that.
Q: Are you missing anything in that?

A: No, if anything sometimes I need more stuff for them to do, but I’m sure some of that is just because it’s all new to us right now.

Q: Do you have any big goals other than focusing on Live. Learn. Lead?

A: One of my biggest goals has always been to grow membership. It’s been really hard for us to get people and keep people involved. I think that a lot of that is just the mentality of the building and the living situation and things like that. It’s just hard to get the Honors kids involved so that’s probably one of by biggest concerns. I would love it if one year ANCHOR was like ‘oh my gosh we have 100 members.’ That would be amazing, like I dream about that.

Q: Do you have any ideas of how you would like to meet that goal of increasing attendance?

A: We try new ideas all the time. It is a fast moving train that you see all these good ideas and you have to jump on the car before it leaves the station and you hope it works out. So we’ve had a lot of different trial and error scenarios.

Q: Can you tell us what has worked and what hasn’t worked?

A: We used to push ANCHOR as a big resume builder, service opportunity kind of thing and that did not work because the people who were there for the resume builder, if they didn’t get on the e-board that semester we never saw them again they were ‘adios! If I can’t be in charge I don’t want to be here at all.’ The service opportunities are difficult to plan something that gives someone an hour of service where we don’t have to go anywhere and we don’t need money to do it. So we’ve been having less and less of those, so we lose the people who only come for an hour of service. Some things that I would say have worked, on the other hand, is concentrating more on our community events. You know those fun things we plan to try to get people out of their rooms to
come down to the MPR, to interact with the people they live with. We get more people to come to those than to any of our other meetings.

**Q:** Are you guys that ones that are in charge of the ‘Pasta with the Profs’ or is that different?

**A:** We have never done that. There’s us, the Mentor Council, and then sometimes the Honors College itself tries to put on things like that.

**Q:** How do you coordinate that?

**A:** We try to plan things like the same event with the Mentor Council or now we’ve had a lot more open communication with the Honors office. Like I tell them what I plan on doing and they help me advertise for it. It’s not so much of a combat between you know, it’s never been a fight to get people.

**Q:** What is the Mentors Council? What do they do?

**A:** Ok so, obviously you guys are all Honors students right? So remember Freshman year you filled out that application form and it matched you up with someone who was wearing the mentor shirt? That’s who they are, that’s the mentor council. It’s comprised of those people who are supposed to keep in touch with the freshmen over their first year.

**Q:** If Anchor could be everything you want it to be, what would have to change next year?

**A:** Membership. More people, every time, that’s what I would say every time. If I could know consistently that we would get even the twenty people that would make me so much happier.

**Q:** What would you want to do with those twenty people, what’s the goal here? Would you want to plan more events, do more service, or are you looking to do more with the Honors College?
A: All of those things. How can I put this, it’s hard for the five of us on the executive board to plan a huge event and then have two or three people show up. When there’s no return I mean it’s just logic, why would I keep planning those things if nobody comes? So I think just like a bigger membership would be the biggest thing I would change. If I could put what I feel about ANCHOR into everybody here, oh my gosh ANCHOR would be so amazing, there would be thousands of us. We’d have to buy a new building or something to fit all the ANCHOR kids. That’s my dream.

Student Senate:

Q: Can you tell us about yourself and what you do in the Honors College?

A: Yeah, so I’m actually not a part of the Honors College. I’m president of Student Senate. Student Senate is the representative of the student body of all Grand Valley’s 25,000 students. I’m also interchangeably called the student body president so I’m just president of that whole organization but also technically the whole student body.

Q: What are some of the things you guys do and what are some of your goals on campus?

A: Yeah, so there’s a lot to describe us. We have a president, a vice president, and then seven committees. We have anywhere from educational affairs which does majors and minors and introducing new programs on campus, external relations which does civic engagement, working with the Grand Rapids and Allendale community, campus affairs which works with like campus dining, housing, our counseling center, things of that nature. So we do a lot of programming at first, but also a lot of advocacy. My role is largely with the administration and so hearing those concerns from students from everyone else, and then taking that to administration saying ‘this is something we’re advocating for, we need you to push this through.’ Somethings I’ve been really proud of this year in the winter, I was the first ever student speaker at graduation. One thing I’ve been really advocating for since I started my term is having a more student centered approach. We call ourselves one of the most student-centered college campuses, but we don’t have the student space in some of the spaces where it’s most important. So that’s kind of been a big thing for me is just trying to get student advocacy everywhere that it’s needed, to try to strengthen our relationship with the outside community. Ottawa County community is what we’re inside of and I organized for them to have their first Ottawa County commissioners meeting on campus this year. They came in, they talked to us
about a lot of different things. There are some issues going on with groundwater, with transportation, and it was the first time we had the people who make those decisions all in the same room which was huge for just growth and relationship and things of that nature.

Q: What is your enrollment?

A: Student senate is 50 people. Those people are elected every single spring and those elections are open to the whole student body. Actually next week Monday is when our election packet goes live. So people, if they want to run for student senate, have to get 100 student signatures, two faculty signatures. After they turn that in and a couple other pieces of information they have a week to kind of campaign for themselves and then the top 44 people are then considered student elects. We save 6 seats for transfer students and for freshmen since they didn’t have that opportunity in the spring, and then we go through another round of elections that’s just within those senate elects for our cabinet positions; so for the president, the vice president, and then the people that are in charge of each of our seven committees.

Q: Do you feel that you have all of the necessary pieces, that all seven committees are necessary to be there or do you think you could add more if you had more opportunity or funding?

A: I think for now we have a very good distribution, but I think we’re always open to more. We have a lot of subcommittees within that. For example, we have our campus affairs committee that was something I was in charge of last year and it’s very vague. We do everything from advocating more bike stands on campus, to adding more cappuccino machines in some place on campus, to working with the counseling center, with our center for women and gender equity. And within that there’s a lot of subcommittees, so we have our mental health awareness, sexual assault awareness, our housing committee, so those are things that someone could say ‘hey this should be a whole separate group’ but kind of the benefit of having those subcommittees is that we can pull someone who’s from that group, someone who’s from our external relations group and you have this interdisciplinary approach if that makes sense.
**Q:** How can students that aren’t directly involved with your board get involved with the decisions being made?

**A:** We try to make our decisions as public as possible and it’s hard because you know not everyone cares, which is frustrating, but we have our public general assembly every Thursday at 4:30, and within that there’s two opportunities called public comment where people can just come and express a concern to us but also all of our student senate meetings are open. We have a student senate email, phone number, and an office that’s in the basement of Kirkhof and that’s always open for students to come in and address concerns with us. We’ve gotten anything from ‘it’s too cold in Holton Hooker’ to ‘I need my tuition to be cheaper.’ We do a lot of tabling events in Kirkhof, and things of that nature. We do something called OREs which stands for ‘Outreach, Research, and Engagement’ where we just have one on one conversations with people, and we utilize that information to kind of get a bigger picture of ‘what are the most pressing concerns and projects.’ We want as much student engagement as possible, but it can be difficult at times.

*After this point the recording failed. One of the key things to note however, is that the Student Senate is not very involved with anything in Honors specifically.*

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

- N/A

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

- ANCHOR: Yes. Attend group meetings to look at meeting and structure and potentially hold more interviews with e-board members.
- Honors: N/A
- Student Senate: N/A

**Additional connections this stakeholder provided:** N/A

**Possible next-steps:**

- Attend an ANCHOR meeting
- Research the governance of S Senate and what makes them effective
- Look at existing methods that ANCHOR uses for event advertisement
## Dialogue 6

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Honors College Administration

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<tr>
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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- The goal of this opportunity is to get a better idea of the problem we are trying to solve. In speaking with this stakeholder, we were able to ask questions pertaining to specific aspects of how the Honors College is run as of now and determine what needs to change.

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

- Our team problem statement is: “*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.*” This work helps us to define and pinpoint those specific decisions that affect the Honors College and how to practically involve students in these decisions.

### Summary of Research:

- This stakeholder is a part of the Frederik Meijer Honors College Administration. He had extremely useful insights for our problem statement as he works directly with and understand the current structure of Honors College governance. The stakeholder mentioned how there are two bodies of faculty governance, but there is little to no current organization of the student body. Additionally, it was mentioned that, while increasing communication with students would be useful for the Honors College to cater more specifically to the needs of Honors Students, it is also important that students have a voice in their education and in the formation of both their academic and social life. It was also noted that there are currently very limited ways for students to give feedback about the Honors College itself and Honors events and classes.

### Important insights:

- Currently, there is little to no organization of the Honors Student body
Students have few places to go to give feedback

Increasing student involvement and communication not only helps the Honors College but also empowers students to shape the Honors College so that it becomes personalized and exactly fitting to their needs and desires.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: What is the structure of the Honors College governance right now and what should change?

A: There’s basically a faculty governance structure which right now comprises two committees. One is the, it’s called the Honors Faculty Council, HFC, which is the full-time Honors faculty that are in this suite and the two full-time academic advisors and that is primarily concerned with the overarching visions of the Honors College and also personnel decisions and work, reviewing people and that kind of thing. So that’s pretty internal. Then we have the Honors Curriculum and Development committee which is really an analog to the general education committee so it has representatives from all over campus, about 18 people. We currently have three Honors students working on this committee that we basically just handpicked. We tried to make them representative so we chose someone from ANCHOR, somebody from the Mentor Council and someone from the University Innovation Fellows program, and so there’s some justification there. It wasn’t just any three people. So that committee is responsible for reviewing course proposals and also both working on and communicating the overarching vision of the Honors College. So we really depend on those faculty to go back to their colleges and departments and speak knowledgably about what Honors is all about, and that’s important that people get that information. On the student side, I don’t think there’s any structure. There’s the ANCHOR community council, which is really based on the living centers, and they’re becoming a student organization. Then there’s the Mentor Council, which has a very narrow focus in a lot of way and then, well that’s it, those two. ANCHOR does not routinely report to us> in fact I think we’re trying to, ____ and ______ the two academic enrichment advisors have, over the last year or so have tried to become more involved in their discussions so that there’s more of a sense of interaction between the two entities or groups. The Mentor Council, they’re so important in terms of communicating with entering students and representing the Honors College that we work fairly closely with them about the orientation and welcome days, but like I said, that’s it. Once that’s over, it’s pretty much done. I should say too we have the student
ambassadors that are terrific in terms of during the scholarship competitions and also during the orientations and then Fridays when people just come and visit the Honors College. I’ve always been terribly impressed with the way they represent the Honors College and talk about it. In some ways, this whole discussion grows out of the fact that Honor students tend to be really good at articulating what Honors is all about. So they should be drawn on more to help with that, to help steer that not to just do their own individual experience or talk about their own individual experience but help shape it. So something like this diversity task force, we should, if we, being the whole group, were to come up with the idea of a diversity task force, we should be able to go to some student body and say ‘who would like to be represented on that task force, who would you like to assign to that task force?’ And likewise with our Honors Curriculum Development Committee, there should be three spots or however many spots for Honors College students and the students should decide, the students as a group should decide who’s there. And then I think I, as ______ should have people I can contact with questions and also just have regular meetings with them and I think that every class should be represented too. There’s just all of these things that I think we just need, like just this morning we had a staff meeting here with just the people here in the office, and we’re continually trying to think about how we communicate with students, and I think I talked about this when I came to your class, and we’re, we just started an Instagram account and we just have questions that we want to ask students and we just don’t know. You know I grab people in the hall, but you know, like that’s all. So we just need a way to have that communication and I’m talking completely from the perspective of what we need, but also, I said when I came up to your class, it seems like there would be students who have needs as well and we want to give them the chance to express those, desires, dreams, and expectations and all that stuff. So it needs to go both ways.

Q: When students are participating in the Honors College and they do have a voice, what is it going to look like in the end? What are you envisioning it being in the end?

A: Well I think you could make a case that students generally should have more say in the direction of social and academic life here on campus. But I would especially say that’s true in the Honors College because students tend to be more responsible generally, they tend to be more thoughtful like kind of on the ‘meta’ level of understanding the purpose of a curriculum and that kind of thing. I guess I envision this in the future as a partnership, and that students are recommending junior seminar topics, or they are
organizing. Like we’re having this music event on Thursday, this Pasta with the Profs, so they should be saying ‘what you really ought to be doing is doing appetizers at ten o’clock right because that’s when everybody’s studying and that’s when we need it, at 10 pm.’ So that kind of synergy, the cooperating in that would be, I think, ideal. Also last week we were talking about the overnight orientations and _____ and _____ did an assessment where they asked, well they did a survey of students, and just as, so a year ago, I did an assessment of senior project students asking them to reflect a little bit on their experience as Honors College students. It was fantastic and I used a lot of those quotes in the orientation sessions and Laker Experience Days and all this because they’re so good. And we also flash them on the screen during the senior recognition ceremony and then _____ and _____ did the survey and they came up with the same great stuff from students, all this language. What we were talking about last week was ‘hey, in the overnight orientations, why am I standing up talking?’ We should have three Honors students doing the talking about what the students should expect, but we don’t have that kind of, again it’s not coordination. We don’t know who’s around, we don’t know who’s willing. I think a lot of students, I would imagine there must be a couple of handfuls of students who would say ‘I’d love to do that’ and I think they’d be really good at it. So I guess my sense is that a lot of Honors College students may not even realize that we have conversations like that and we end up saying to ourselves often ‘wouldn’t it be great to have a student doing that?’ And then it kind of dies because we go back to our office and then get back to work and we have no way to kind of make that happen.

Q: What ways of communicating with students have been successful in getting students to join existing groups or going to events?

A: I think that’s completely up, I mean the student leaders are the ones who recruit for and decide on who’s part of that and so I think when I imagine a kind of a governance system I think it would be the same. The students would decide how many people would be involved and how they would be elected or assigned or whatever. In fact, this is all about the fact that I think things work better when the right people are motivated or are behind it. Again, Pasta with the Profs, that’s something that we have put together, but if the students were putting it together and inviting us, that would be even better. I would welcome an initial student group to decide how that would function.
Q: Are there any aspects of Honors that students shouldn’t get involved with?

A: That’s a really good question. I think probably the only area where there would not be direct student involvement would be in the personnel reviews for tenure and promotion. But the Honors Curriculum Development Committee, for example, is putting together a plan to evaluate, monitor, audit Honors College courses and that obviously involves personnel as it involves teachers but that I think they should be involved in. I don’t think students should be involved in ‘Teacher A is not as good as Teacher B’ but they should be involved in ‘Course A is not as good as Course B. We would like to see Course B become more like Course A or whatever. We like the features of Course A.’ The curriculum for sure and then the delivery of the curriculum, the teaching of the curriculum on that kind of larger abstract level I think. But I think we would want to keep away from the direct personnel stuff. Otherwise, the use of the building, the way we run orientations, the recruitment of students all across the state and how we can handle that, the kind of lectures and events we might have, extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, all of that, I think students should be involved.

Q: If someone was interested in doing something, is there somewhere for them to go now?

A: Well we would welcome it, but I guess the only place to go now is to the Director of the Honors College directly or to the front desk or to the GVSU Honors email address. So yeah, it could happen know, but it’s awkward for everybody. If students ever want to email me with an idea or a thought or a complaint, or anything, they’re certainly welcome to.

Q: Do you have any suggestions of places we should go for sources or any other people who might have opinions on this that we should talk to?

A: It might be interesting to talk to our Student Senate because I know a number of Honors students sit on the senate and just say, ‘what have you learned about student governance that we could emulate?’ I also, as I recommended, it would be nice if a group or two were to go to this Mid-East Honors Association conference to present your ideas but also to gather ideas, to talk to other people from other Honors Colleges. There is of course this national organization that there’s a conference in New Orleans next fall. I think it would be great if students went there and talked to people because that’s, that
kind of network. I don’t know; I’m fairly new to this scene myself so I don’t have specific schools to recommend, but you know the former director is going to come up in March, it would be worth asking him ‘how does it work at your school?’ Any of those conversations would be productive.

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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
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<tr>
<td>❖ You might think about asking about the kind of resources that would be available to you collectively as you form a group like this. Student organizations get budgets which is nice and we have space and we also have travel money, and so you might just think about the kind of resources that would be needed to get something like this launched. I don’t know what my answer is exactly, but I would say that we’re willing to put, it’s a special project that deserves some resources.</td>
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<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
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<td>❖ Talk to Student Senate</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Interview the director of another Honors College</td>
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<td>❖ Research the Mid-East Honors Association</td>
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**Dialogue 7**

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<td>Estimated Age: ______ 20-30 ______ 30-40 ______ 40-50 ______ 50+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender: Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity: The primary goal of interviewing a full-time Honors professor is to better understand and empathize with the problem from the faculty perspective.</td>
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How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?

Our team’s problem statement is, “*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College*”. By interviewing an Honors professor, we are attempting to see how student feedback and representation are viewed from the faculty perspective. It’s important to understand what ways students are wanted to be included in governance.

**Summary of Research:**

- The interviewee is a full-time Honors professor for the FMHC. He was a touring Jazz musician in Australia as a young man, but made his way over to the states to become a historian. He teaches two separate courses for the Honors College, and is an integral Honors faculty member. He provided useful insights regarding how the Honors faculty perceives and receives student feedback. He also provided insight into the existing committees, and the overall structure of the FMHC. He was very open with information, and was willing to do a follow up interview if necessary.

**Important insights:**

- ANCHOR is considered to be the existing governing body by Honors professors.
- Student input is unwanted in regards to tenure and promotion
- Student input is already taken on almost every committee.
Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: How do you think feedback from Honors students would impact your classes?

A: Yes, good question. We get feedback every semester through student evaluations, one of the questions is asking how this course may be improved, what did you like, what did you not like? I certainly value that. I also seek feedback in the class: what do you guys think about this, what do you think about that. I try to keep it as democratic as possible. Often with first year students, they’re not confident enough to assert themselves. That’s because they’ve come out of the school situation where teachers say: ‘here’s what you have to learn, here’s what you have to do, etc’. But I’ve taught some older classes when I used to teach the capstone class in the history department, so all graduating seniors, right from course design to readings we’d have, suggestions from different cultural readings, I would definitely take that on board. Certainly, older students feel more comfortable giving feedback.

Q: Direct feedback?

A: Yes, verbal feedback to the professor. Younger students do that anonymously, through student evaluations, and professors need to take that on board.

Q: Do you feel like you get enough feedback from those end of the semester evaluations?

A: Sometimes, yes. Mostly, yes. Sometimes Honors students take quite a bit of time to think about it. If they’re enjoying the course, you get a lot of positive comments. Then, in the ‘How Can We Improve The Course’ section, you often get response like: ‘nope, no idea’, or, ‘can't think of any way’, or, ‘it’s great as it is’. So, in terms of positive criticism, you don’t get a lot of that. Some of my colleagues have their own mid-semester evaluations, asking students how the course is going. I haven’t done that in such a long time because I get a pretty good feel from just the class feedback, and I try to give the students as much voice as possible.
Q: So, in what ways could student feedback be useful in ways that it isn’t being utilized currently? That if, students had a say more in structure or curriculum, the overall governance, what would it look like?

A: Well you touched on curriculum there in particular, and I’m not sure if the Honors College Director told you, we are undergoing a curriculum revision right now in the Honors college. We’re thinking about what the ideal new curriculum would look like, so student feedback is critical for that. There is a committee: The Honors Curriculum Development Committee, which has three older students on it, members of ANCHOR. And so, they good valuable feedback all the time. Part of the job is to think about curriculum structure overall, the other part is to look over course proposals that are coming from professors who want to teach a new first-year sequence or a junior seminar. We go through these very carefully, and say what we like and don’t like. Students give incredible feedback there, because they can imagine themselves in the class, and they’re often offering constructive ways on how to tweak this-or-that.... Ever since the previous Honors College Director was here, he tried to bring in student voices whenever possible. I have served on many committees that he convened, where there were at least one or two student reps. Even in the respect of advertising for new new-hire faculty. So search committees looking for new professors. We did some group-Skype interviews, and we had students on that committee, and some of the faculty thought that was inappropriate. But no, I thought that was great and I thought Jeff was right to do that. He was very much trying to bring students into every layer of Honors administration. So, as far as I’m concerned, on every committee we convene in this department, student voices will be useful because they bring a perspective that faculty doesn’t know.

Q: So, is there any aspect of the Honors college where student voices would be positively counterproductive?

A: The only area I’d say is the Honors faculty council, the 13 full-time Honors professors. We are often discussing important matters, reviewing personal files to see if our colleagues have done enough to warrant tenure and promotion. It’s delicate and personal material, and really should be done by the 13 of us without student input or other professors outside of Honors. Our job on that council is to make sure they’re doing their job and making their way up. They’re be an uproar if students were included in that,
it’s too private and delicate. I can’t think of any other area that student input would be unwanted.

Q: What do you find to be the best tools to communicate with your students, either quickly or efficiently?

A: Great question, I use Blackboard all the time. I put announcements up a couple times a week, things that have changed on the syllabus. During the polar vortex last week, I emailed the poor little dears every day, seeing how they were doing, telling them about good movies they could watch.

Q: I’m sure you were out trekking through the ravines that whole week.

A: Yes I was out and about. I did tell them not to go into the ravines. Blackboard is great for communication, and my main tool. Obviously, we see each other in class and have a lot of discussions there, or students come meet me in here [Niemeyer office].

Q: If you’re communicating with other faculty members, is it a different situation?

A: Microsoft Outlook. Plus, we meet every week. Plus, we’re all here, and we see each other and chat all the time. We meet every Wednesday morning too, the Honors Faculty.

Q: So, do you see anything in the Honors college that needs improvement off the time of your head?

A: The curriculum has taken a lot of work. Well, let me think about a few things. There are students living in Niemeyer, even now in the second semester, who still have trouble with interpersonal communication skills because they tend to live in their own bedrooms and not socializing. Students at Holton-Hooker don’t have that problem. It’s not so easy over there to hide yourself away. We thought we created the most beautiful accommodations here, essentially a retirement home for Honors students, but it became a little bit... well... it’s easy to be antisocial. We need to help overcome some of that. It’s a particularly Honors issue. Apart from that, the atmosphere is great and I’m pretty sure students are enjoying their sequences.
Q: The question is, where can student voices be elevated and identified?

A: It’s a good question, mate, and a delicate on too, in that, the former Honors College Director used to take older professors, not from Honors, to teach a sequence, where year after year they’d have bad evaluations from students. He’d ask them to try and change their approach: ‘Do we really need to read 13 books this semester?’ 13 books? And they said ‘You can’t tell me what to do, and I don’t need input from you’. So, there’s a level of arrogance with certain senior professors, and they don’t want to change their teaching styles. But this curriculum revision gives us a chance to kick some out, or not that exactly, but every curriculum now has to be theme based, and you have to make changes to meet new criteria. So, people like me will of course make the changes, but some professors might not care to teach their class anymore. Some professors aren’t so approachable, so some students will go see the current Honors College director, and complain. We’ve got terrific advisors now in the office, too, so there’s three outlets where students can express their concerns. But then, none of these three can tell a professor what to do, especially a senior professor, so there is a limit on what student voice will achieve in some cases.

Q: Well, to be fair, maybe it’s good for you to read 13 books in semester. It may be a little out of our range [as students] to be able to criticize professors who have been here for 40 years. I tend to side with professors when students complain.

A: Well good on you, mate, but in any democratic institution like this, students should have the right to complain. If they’re not getting essays back for a month, or teachers are completely disorganized, or cancelling classes. You’re paying for this education, and I don’t want to think of you as a consumer necessarily, but you’re paying for a good education. I had a first-year student complain to me last semester about a class she was in, it was a 6-9. They never went past 7:30. Ever. He cancelled like 4 nights out of 14, for no reason, and gave no feedback on essays whatsoever. I told the student to write to the chair of the department, and we did that together. The chair wrote back and said that there’s a specific way they do this, and that they would have to sit down with the professor. The student was scared and didn’t want to take it further. So there are impediments to taking it further. She didn’t want to sit down with the professor face-to-face, she’s just an 18-year-old girl.
Q: Is there any way you can encourage Honors students to speak up? Especially the more timid ones?

A: Well, firstly [Honors Faculty], we all think of ANCHOR as the governing body of Honors, and the honors counselors work closely with students in ANCHOR. I would encourage students to join ANCHOR. For sure. Those that are too intimidated to speak to a professor, that’s really hard. I’d encourage those students to go to advisors. By second year, most students speak up in class and can use their evaluations properly.

Q: I’ve been surprised, from the interviews of students, that, at least the people I’ve interviewed, nobody is taking the evaluations seriously.

A: Well, the professor has a role to play there too. Leading up to the end of the semester, I make a big deal in class. These evaluations matter. I will read these, and my boss will read these. They’ll go on the professor's permanent record, and I’m really going to be listening to what you’re saying. This is a serious job obligation, and I tell my students that. If you’re enjoying something say it, if you’re not, say it. You’ll feel better because you’ll feel like you have a voice. Even the most timid student should be doing that, at the very least, and professors should really be encouraging it. I get about 22 out of 25 every semester because I make a big deal about it.

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

“All the questions you had are very useful, but I’d ask the advisors how they help students that are unhappy and intimidated. I bet they have strategies. You could ask what plans they have to incorporate students further into the curriculum process. That’s about it though.”

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?
Yes. Office hours or email.

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<tr>
<td>❖ Honors office advisors</td>
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<td>❖ Honors professors</td>
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<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Interview Honors advisors</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Investigate ANCHOR and their current responsibilities within the Honors College.</td>
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<td>❖ Incorporate anonymity for timid students.</td>
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## Dialogue 8

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**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

- The primary goal of interviewing this career advisor, is to get a perspective of someone that knows the impact a students’ voice can have on the student’s future.

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

- Our team’s problem statement is, “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” This interview gives insight as to what motivates students to participate outside of the classroom. Career advisors talk with many students each day, helping them prepare for life after college. One of the main topics they discuss is how they can best utilize their college experience to prepare for their career. Conducting an interview with a career advisor provides an opinion from someone who talks with students, in multiple disciplines, about getting involved and sharing their voice.

**Summary of Research:**

- This stakeholder made several points about the diversity of the student body. Currently, we may just be reaching a specific part of the student body. We have to think about the life obstacles people are going through. This stakeholder, stated that life obstacles are one main reason students don’t participate. These obstacles may include: time, money, family obligations, etc. With time being very controlling, students want to see changes being made. If they don’t see the changes being made, they may get discouraged and feel they’re not valued. Also, a great way to reach the students is through their professors. Professors come face-to-face with the students each week. If you want to get feedback or advertise and organization, the professors may be really helpful.

**Important insights:**
The main reason students may not participate in organizations is due to life obstacles.
This includes time, non-traditional students, and money.
In order to get students more involved, we need to diversify the students we reach out to.
Professors are a great way to tell students about events or organizations.
Students need to be able to see changes being made based on the opinions they voice.
Often times, administrations will only make the changes that they thought of before students bring it to their attention.

Dialogue Questions and Responses:

Q: How often do you interact with Honors College students?
A: Periodically, I couldn’t tell you exactly unless they tell me themselves or I notice it is on their appointment selection. But periodically I’m sure.

Q: How does participation in student organizations help students in their future career search?
A: It helps them in their search, but when they know how to apply it. So it’s not just about participating in an organization. It’s learning that if you are planning a program in a student org, it will translate because you might have to plan a program and you’re still doing things like program development, maybe volunteer management, fundraising, and all of that can translate. Where a lot of students struggle is learning how to translate that skill or recognizing it as something that is transferable to their professional roles.

Q: What types of organizations do you see students being a part of?
A: Grand Valley has over 400 student orgs, so there’s no way that you could narrow that down. I use to work in the admissions office and I know it is heavily promoted to the incoming students, regardless of where they’re coming from, to get involved in something. Common easy ones are usually something related to their major or students of a specific community. Students of the LGBT community, there’s a likely chance they have some interactions or small involvement with those smaller sub communities of
Grand Valley. That’s the one area where I would notice a trend. Outside of that, it’s really all over the place.

**Q:** What are some motivators for students to be a part of a student organization?

**A:** I think the biggest one is finding community or finding something that will help them with their profession. So, if a major is connected to the group or one of those cultural based groups or one that targets a specific group, like international students. When I have conversation with students about joining groups, it’s usually going to be something around that space.

**Q:** What differences do you see between students that participate in organizations and students that focus more academically?

**A:** The students that aren’t participating in campus organizations, tend to be more at a loss with what’s going on campus. They know less about resources. I noticed that actively they know less about opportunities that are taking place around campus. Because if you’re connected with a student org, their advisors are sharing some information on scholarships and conferences that are related to your group. Those that are just going to class just get what their professors share with them. The professors aren’t always up to date with the student affairs side of things. But, you’re going to get that when you’re plugged into the student life network.

**Q:** What kinds of things do you think students should have a voice, in regards to University decision making?

**A:** It would depend on the level of decision making. I don’t believe that students should have active budget management roles. Like a student life budget. When I was an undergrad at Michigan State, our student org would manage a $30,000 budget. Then, we would distribute it to other orgs that are under our umbrella. I think that’s really healthy practice, but I wouldn’t have students be involved with a department budget. That’s where I would cut it off. I do think that there should be active committees like student governments who can make recommendations. But, I think that those recommendations often fall on flat ears. And it’s more of a nice thing to do without a lot of force backing it up. Because I remember I served in student government as an undergrad and we would make a million recommendations and often times it felt like the only times our recommendations would be taken was when it was already in line with what the
administration wanted to do and that’s what actually stopped my involvement in some of those student orgs. I just felt like I was wasting my time. Now when there are resolutions that we know that there’s some power to follow through with them, then I think that’s valuable. But, if you’re interested into going into government, then, it is a really good practice. I wasn’t. I wanted change in that particular involvement.

Q: What might hold a student back from participating in an organization or sharing their voice to administration?
A: Life is the biggest one. There are a lot of students who have to work full time, over 30 hours per week. You got non-traditional students. So some of them might have families or they may have had a whole career already. They feel that imposter syndrome. It could be because of age, culture, any sort of background, marginalized groups. They don’t feel they are fully valued or fully connected to those planning stages. And if they go into those spaces and they don’t feel truly valued or involved, they’re not going to remain in them. The biggest one would probably be just life obstacles I would say. I think every student is going to tell you that it’s a good idea to get involved. But, if you go down to the why aren’t you involved, you’ll get many that are just lazy. But, there’s a big chunk of students that want to get involved, but life circumstances prevent them from doing that.

Q: How have you heard of on-campus events or organizations that you may share with students?
A: Personally, I have an active list of faculty and staff around campus that I am sharing all these opportunities with. Because of my role, I get them sent to me all the time. It’s actually easy, I don’t have to search for them. So people, now that they know I send out that email list, I’ll have people around campus that will share things with me that they want me to share with them. If it’s run by a department, it will also get to our inboxes, and flyers. I get flyers for most major events on campus and I’ll just post those on my door.

Q: How does the Career Center advertise to students for their events?
A: For me it’s through that list. So, I don’t have an active list of students. I know how to access it through Handshake, but I’m not going to because that’s abuse of their email and
they’re not going to open it up. So, what I would do, is I would forward it to their professors. I think that’s a stronger strategy so they get it from people that they are interacting with face-to-face. Outside of that it’s just I put the flyers up on my door. And when I’m meeting with students, based on the conversation, I’ll think about particular events that makes sense for them to join, same with student orgs. I’ll recommend it that way.

Q: Tell me about a time when you have worked well on a team or in an organization. What worked well?
A: I think one that stands out for me is probably going to be when I worked with one of my colleagues in the admissions office that I really liked. So he and I are both fluent bilingual. He happens to have a background in actual interpretation of work. And so we turned all of the university admissions presentations from English and Spanish and then we worked on identifying places where Spanish speakers congregate and we did some Spanish presentations in Grand Rapids and in the area. Right. So in order to do that we had to reach out to the specific migrant groups. That's one area that was easy to identify places like the Hispanic Center of Western Michigan because we know they're already connected to the community. And we worked with migrant coordinators since they have a lot of Spanish speakers at high schools. So that gave us an easy way in and then all we had to do was bring the material that we created and then present them at those community events. And so that allowed us to get Grand Valley's message out to the parents because we know the students already speak English it wasn't really for them. And so it was catered more towards the parents. And then we just had English material so what will possibly pull the students off to the side and bring some of those things done in English for them.

Q: How did you guys separate roles in that like did you have a specific role?
A: My big role was identifying the organizations and the core pieces to be included. His role at that time was to translate everything and then figure out the correct verbiage that makes sense. So we know that if we're targeting migrant families that a lot of them didn't finish high school. We also got a chunk who Spanish is actually their second language student. They're indigenous to you know areas in Mexico, Guatemala and parts of Central America. So we have to keep the vocabulary also at a place where they could understand it. One thing we quickly realized was that some of the students didn't speak Spanish or
their Spanish might have been like a third grade level. And the parents’ English was at a kindergarten level and so they couldn't even communicate with each other. So on the spot we turned it from a Spanish only to a bilingual presentation. So everything on the screen was Spanish but then immediately we both talked English, and this happened on our own. We both had to use both languages on the fly. So we both have a background in that. So it wasn't an issue but that could definitely be a challenge for something.

Q: Tell me about a time when you have been a part of a team that had problems. What areas needed improvement?
A: So that was an example of an event that worked fairly well. We also had a plan to recreate an event that takes place in the east side of the state. There's something called Detroit Decision Day where students across Detroit public schools would congregate at a high school. All of the public universities in Michigan and a good chunk of the privates in the east side of the state would do on the spot admissions. So students come in the morning bringing their application filled out. Admissions officers would have a team of people there. We get a classroom and review anywhere from three to four hundred applications within a couple of hours. Then they come back and we give them all the decisions on the spot. We wanted to recreate that in the west side of the state. But the biggest challenge were kind of some of the politics involved. So on the east side it was put together by some organizations- it's a long established program. We realized that we couldn't make it happen on the spot. We figured four or five months of planning because it would require getting all the universities on their schedule on the same spot, getting the schools to agree and give up a day of school for that event as well. And pretty much the biggest challenge was we tried to plan it with two little time. Communication was good because the main people in that worked together. We see each other every single day. So internally it was honestly flawless communication, but it was externally that it didn’t work. We were kind of going through loopholes trying to figure out who the right contact would be, and then would include getting right just between us if we just were in the public university say 14 university admissions offices and then all the public schools too. It wouldn't be enough for us. We would then try to pull in probably Wyoming, Kentwood, and it ended up being we didn't anticipate all those obstacles and that's not even talking about figuring out a neutral space to host the event. What high school would hope that everybody would want? And so what we learned from that experience is that
the event works well but you really need to plan it. You know at least a year in advance if you want to host a concert in a successful manner that first time.

**Q:** What kind of impact does leadership have on a person sharing their opinion or participating?

**A:** Okay good. I'm going to give you both because I think there's two points to it. The positive impact is they have a rough idea of what it takes to be a leader. Right. If I'm encountering a challenge you know looking for another office on campus, my first thought is that they're not doing their job. My first thought is they're probably pretty busy. I know that this time of the year they have this event right. The fact that I've been in leadership positions lets me think that way. And I have a better appreciation of the time and effort it takes to do large programming and small programs because I've been involved with a lot of folks over the years. On the negative side some people use that to criticize and some people assume that because they were able to do it that the other person should handle it the same way. But they're not thinking it's their mental health the same as yours. Are they really as busy as you are? Are they actually significantly busier? I know that my involvement before I was married and had a kid was significantly higher than what it is right now. And because of that I judge and I view things differently than what I do right now. You'll also have people who will try to apply one organization's operating structure and norms to another one that's not really the case. Grand Valley operates differently than Michigan State University does. Even though we're both universities. One is significantly larger, just like GV operates differently from Aquinas is because not only are they smaller they're also a religious institution. And people don't always appreciate that and they kind of jumped the gun at criticizing or trying to implement a plan without understanding the structures and norms of the organization that they're going into and so they don't always translate. So, the principles, when you're trying to apply them, you still have to keep in mind that there are certain norm established structures at this institution and you need to take that into account before you try to implement any ideas you have.

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**Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”**
- Yeah. So, I think the one area that this line of questioning is missing is something to be more inclusive. So right now, the line of questioning is just asking about students in general. And the truth is we have too much variety of students. We've got even a question that's general like marginalize students or students who aren't involved and that actively seeks to gain more information about this sort of population. If you want to be specific you could say non-traditional students with disabilities right. But I think that oftentimes when there's programming like this or any major initiative at a university-wide level we're quick to say all students were the true face. If we're saying all students, the majority of students are going to be right. White students, probably middle class, are close to 40 percent of our student population and they are first generation so you're going to get a nice chunk of those. We know that it's not a very diverse set of students that are going to be there. You're already limited in the perspectives there. I say something to be more active in the efforts, to be inclusive of bringing in a diverse meaning more than just race and gender. So, culture, disabilities, age groups; I think that would strengthen the efforts more.

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

- Yes, he is willing to connect further via email, but prefers additional questioning face-to-face.

**Connections this stakeholder provided:**

- GVSU diversity recruitment
- Assistant Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Financial Aid Counselor

**Possible next-steps:**

- Based off of this interview, I think we need to figure out why the students aren’t participating. We have an Honors student organization that seems to have a voice, but Honors students aren’t taking part. This advisor discussed that there is a big obstacle of time among students. How can we get around this? Discussing with a Financial Aid counselor may be helpful in understanding the obstacle of money that may prevent student participation.
Dialogue 9

Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Administration - Counselor

Estimated Age: ____ 20-30 ___X__ 30-40 ___40-50 ____ 50+

Gender: Female

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- To empathize with an Honors Counselor and gain insight on what Honors students typically struggle with and what incentivizes them to become more involved in Honors.

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

- Our team statement is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” This research reflects this statement as the A is a stakeholder in the current Honors governance and thus has valuable insights about the current running of the Honors College.

Summary of Research:

- This stakeholder is an Honors Counselor and advisor. She is involved with the Honors Mentor Council and was able to give insights pertaining to this group and what they do. She also has been trying to encourage student participation in the Honors College for some time and was able to relate what does and does not work to get students involved. In her mind, any form of student governance or organization should be largely student driven and run, with some support from the Honors Office, but the majority of the ideas and drive for the community arising from the students themselves. This stakeholder suggested that ANCHOR and the Mentor Council should coordinate their events and organizations to perhaps make a more seamless transition for students from the Mentor Council their freshman year to participation in ANCHOR for the remaining years.

Important insights:

- The Mentor Council and ANCHOR work closely with Honors Counselors
When students initiate events and recognize needs for themselves there will be more community participation versus when Honors Faculty and Staff recognize the need and then ask for students to help with it

The unifying goals of the Honors College are those carried by the students who opt into the program to obtain the full Honors experience

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: What feedback about the Honors College have you heard from the students you meet with?

A: So I would say, in my day to day job in counseling, I don’t necessarily hear a lot of feedback. I might hear kind of challenges with the curriculum or things that they really like about it but not necessarily getting a lot of direct feedback. ___ and I are in the process of doing a survey of advising and kind of looking at. So my job title, part of it is academic and enrichment advisor and so that enrichment piece has been something that we’ve struggled with a bit to know what does that look like, what do students want it to look like, and how do students want to engage? We know that Honors students are engaged in a lot of different things and do they want that through Honors or how does that look? So we got actually really good feedback through that which I’m still sort of sifting through.

Q: In general, what have you seen? Do students want to be engaged in Honors?

A: On the surface, yes, but what that looks like we’re not quite sure. I think that’s the downfall of giving a survey; ok if I’m given the choice of do you want more of this, oh yeah of course, but then what does that actually look like and digging deeper into that. So we’re going to follow that up with some focus groups to ask some more specific targeted questions because some of the comment were ‘if you offered better events we’d come’ and, what’s a better event to you then and what are you looking for specifically? Some of the students said they’re looking for advising from faculty, what do they mean by that specifically? Are they looking for more mentorship, do they want the faculty to tell them what classes to take, how does that look from a student’s perspective?
**Q:** Who is going to be participating in the focus groups you are going to be working on?

**A:** It’ll be students. So when we gave the survey we asked at the end ‘thanks for filling this out. If you’re interested in telling us more, please sign up for this list’ so we have 13 students who committed to that.

**Q:** What are some ways to get students more involved in the Honors College?

**A:** Again, this is something I’ve been wrestling a lot with. Honors students are highly involved and if you look at any of our senior profile books you can see that. What we’re trying to determine is what does that look like within Honors? We have a community of really amazing individuals and we should be able to get them together to talk about issues, to play music, to hang out, to socialize and on and off we’ve struggled with that. So actually this Thursday we have an event ‘Pasta with the Profs’ and there’s a music aspect to it. So Dr. ____, and I think Dr. _____ are going to play, and I think they’ve recruited students who are going to play with them. I think you played last year and that was sort of informal but we did that. So now it’s more formalized, but we have I think 17 students who have committed to play so why aren’t we doing that all the time, and do students want that? Because a lot of Honors students I think have a background in music but may or may not be doing that formally still but may want to participate. So, how to we get students to initiate that and then support them and I think that’s the key to getting more of a community culture here, getting the students to initiate stuff and so how do we do that?

**Q:** What forms of communication work well for getting in touch with students?

**A:** We don’t know. So some things that we try: We have a newsletter that goes out every Tuesday with information in it, we have a Facebook page, we just started an Instagram page because feedback is that students use that more than Facebook. We have flyers, communicating with the RAs, visiting all of the Honors classes, so for registration this year we’re spending five minutes in every single Honors class to say get a plan for registration basically. So that’s still hit or miss, we’re not really sure and I think students have the same frustration, So like the ANCHOR group and the Mentor Council group we work with both of them and they’re the ones that are trying all of these different things and aren’t sure either.
Q: Do you work really closely with ANCHOR and the Mentor Council?

A: We’re working on that. Every other week I meet with the Mentor Council, not the entire council, with the president and the vice president. Then ________ ___ meets with the eboard of ANCHOR every other week as well, mostly to offer them support because, again, if they’re doing things and we can get in there it’s going to go better because they have their pulse on the students. For example, next week, Monday night, Mentor Council, is doing a ‘Scheduling and Sundaes’ event so they have ice cream sundaes that they’re going to give. I’m going to be there so that I can help students with schedule planning and stuff like that. So trying to get in more, and then also to get ANCHOR and the Mentor Council to collaborate because they shouldn’t be doing the same types of events, or they should be working together if they’re going to do the same types of events. I’ve been in my job a little over two years now, it’s taken us until just this semester to get those relationships to where the students will come in and they’ll email us and they’re willing to work with us.

Q: What is the best thing about Honors for you?

A: The way I sell it to students is that it’s a small community feel at a pretty big school. Grand Valley has become a pretty big institution. We have 25,000 students, that’s a lot. You have a lot of access to resources and things like that but, by joining Honors, you’re kind of committing to the smaller community of like-minded people who come to class really well prepared, who engage in deep discussions and things like that. That kind of community is a big selling point, but I don’t think at this point it extends out beyond the classroom consistently. I think that happens absolutely in the classroom but to filter that out, I don’t think that’s consistent.

Q: What do you think could use more improvement other than community building?

A: Well I think Honors students need to feel like they have a voice and have a place to do things and have the support to do that. So one of the things that’s been really neat with the Mentor Council is that they’ve said, and this has been over time, that was a student created thing, they said ‘oh there’s this need, we want to create this.’ That goes far better than me saying ‘oh there’s this need, students, come do this.’ They’ve said, ‘ok this part
of it’s going really well we could do this better’ and we work with them to make this better. If we could get more students to feel that level of ownership about different things and to feel that level of commitment to different aspects of Honors I think that would be fantastic. I’ve gone to the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference the past two years and, every year, I go to things about student government where they might have a student president and then student vice presidents that oversee different things like a Mentor Council, like an ANCHOR, like ambassadors, service, whatever the important tenants are. Each of those people has a group and then you’re having really good communication, it’s a direct line to the faculty/staff in Honors and so I’d like to see something like that ultimately, some type of formalized structure in Honors because then it also provides the students better support, and that’s part of the reason why we want to work more closely with the Mentor Council, with ANCHOR. Because I don’t think it’s fair to ask the Mentor Council, for example, to set up this whole program but offer them no support on the leadership of the training, because the students turn over every year, or two years, three years, and it’s kind of like starting from scratch every year. We can be a consistent voice in that, and help them with connections for training or things like that. So I think the better we can do with that, the more consistency we can make and the more structured we can make it, I think that will help consistency from year to year because right now it depends on the students. The Mentor Council right now is really communicative with me, but the student next year might not be and so then I’m kind of starting over. But if it’s formalized as part of the process, then it kind of creates a channel for those discussions to happen that doesn’t exist right now.

Q: In our research talking to students, we have noticed that students need a unifying goal to bring them all together and motivate them to participate. Do you believe that there is such a unifying goal in Honors or could there be?

A: I think there could be one, and I think that’s something we’ve struggled a little bit with as far as identity in Honors. Right now, the marketing (in the past) has been more of we’re gen ed replacement and it’s a faster way to finish your gen eds and that’s very much the narrative. We’re updating the curriculum and in the new curriculum we’re selling it as an experience that you’re opting into and, if you don’t want this full experience, then don’t participate in Honors and that’s ok. That doesn’t mean that you’re not good enough or whatever, it just means that just isn’t something that you want. I think it will take some time to settle out who the type of students that participate in that
experience are and what their goals are. Part of that experience that we’re selling is ‘make the most of your education’ which means building leadership opportunities, getting a strong resume, being involved on campus. I think the structure that I’m thinking of would offer students a really strong opportunity to get good leadership skills in a way that maybe they don’t have access to right now or that they have access to on a smaller scale. So I think that’s appealing to students but I guess, I don’t know. In my mind, it should be, but again I don’t know.

**Q:** Do you have other resources for us to look into, such as research to look up or people to go to?

**A:** Well I would definitely talk to the Mentor Council because they have found a way to share their voice and to feel comfortable sharing their voice and to make the things that they want to happen, happen. They’re also very organized about that. I would go on the NCHC website and view past programs and find schools that are doing that and then look at the school websites as far as what are the structures. Those would be the places I would start, like what are other schools doing because there’s a reason that kind of stuff is working, but I think the challenges are the size of our Honors College. If you look at other schools they’re not as big, regardless of the size of their overall institution, their Honors College is not this big and so finding comparable schools, what are they doing would be helpful too.

**Q:** What does the Mentor Council do to get students involved?

**A:** They send out an email, that’s coming out soon, and they ask students to apply to be mentors. The mentor commitment is that you’ll attend at least of our overnight orientations in the summer and then that you’ll participate in welcome days and be available to answer questions from your mentees into the start of the school year. The payment for that is a $200 stipend that you get in October, November, December, somewhere around there. It’s also a resume builder. From the students who are current mentors, they elect the Mentor Council from year to year and the Mentor Council coordinates all of that with the mentors. We’re actually working on recruiting a little bit differently this year in that we have asked each returning mentor to reach out to two or three students that they worked with in the last year to tell them ‘hey you’d be a good mentor, you should apply’ because we want first or maybe second year students to be the
mentor for the incoming students. And then the Mentor Council themselves are starting to think about, and this has shifted back and forth over the years, but right now, it’s really just a commitment through Welcome Days and then maybe some texts after that. What we’re hearing from the mentee students is that they had this mentor and then they sort of just disappeared and they’d like it to be a little bit more consistent through the fall, so the Mentor Council is trying to think of what events can we host in the fall and maybe into the winter to keep the community going. The other thing we’ve talked about in the office is, then how do we pull in ANCHOR to keep that community going after the first year? Is there a structure we can provide that is kind of like a seamless transition from one year to the next and maybe those two groups work together for some of those community building events.

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

- Governance looks a lot of different ways and I would think about what ways could students be involved or do students want to be involved? So working with alumni, ambassadors, Mentor Council, the curriculum task force, building use, scheduling, I don’t know what ways student are involved in other places and what might that look like here? Is it really just like the community building piece or are there other things that are part of that? That would be one thing I would think about and then I would also think are there other places on campus that are doing this kind of involvement well? In a major or in a program that we could replicate? I’m all about just borrowing from places what works well either on campus or from other universities.

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

- N/A

Connections this stakeholder provided:

- Mentor Council
- National Collegiate Honors Council
- Successful student organizations outside of Honors
Possible next-steps:

- Meet with ANCHOR and Students Council to gain insight about these groups
- Research programs of the National Collegiate Honors Council’s meetings
- Look at other Honors Colleges and see how student participation in governance looks for them
## Dialogue 10

### Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Administration – Counselor

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**Gender:** Female

### Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- To empathize with an Honors Counselor and gain insight on what Honors students typically struggle with and what incentivizes them to become more involved in Honors.

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

- Our team statement is: *“We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.”* This research reflects this statement as the A is a stakeholder in the current Honors governance and thus has valuable insights about the current running of the Honors College.

### Summary of Research:

- This stakeholder is an Honors Counselor and Advisor. She noted that students don’t often come to her with feedback about Honors. An interesting insight mentioned was that the Honors College is difficult to define aside from being a general education replacement. Other aspects of Honors are constantly changing or are open to change and thus are not set in stone. This stakeholder emphasized that there needs to be a committed group of Honors students to lead and build up groups such as ANCHOR and the Mentor Council who then are able to engage more closely with their peers. Another interesting insight is that the communication used to reach out to students may be outdated in this age of social media.

### Important insights:

- Forms of communication between faculty and students may not be effective because they are outdated and not engaging student attention.
Honors organizations should try to get freshmen involved and then try to keep them involved for the remainder of their years at college.

There is a stereotype that goes along with being an Honors Student that may deter students from being too closely associated with Honors.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Note: for the first half of this interview a recording was taken. The recording failed after a certain point and in place of the exact transcription, notes have been recorded that capture the stakeholder’s responses.

Q: What are the most common comments that you hear about the Honors College, either complaints or compliments?

A: It’s pretty dependent per student. There are 1700 Honors students so it’s pretty diverse and, honestly, when I meet with a student, they’re not in complaint mode for the most part, or even like good mode. They’re just trying to figure out what classes to take. But if there are students that I meet more regularly, that’s when I start to feel for their vibe, what’s going on in their life and what their thoughts and criticisms are. I’d say overall it’s hard to define necessarily what the Honors College is apart from being a replacement to the gen eds, so the idea of that we’re a community and how to create community and those structures that help create community, those are the kind of hard to define pieces of what the Honors College is. Even when we have conversations with parents of potential students, there are things that we name as part of who the Honors College is, but those things are constantly in flux and open to being changed as well. I would say that that would be a complaint, ‘Ok but I’m looking for a community.’ OK great, go build community, go meet people, go do this, and in some ways it would be maybe easier. I say maybe as a possibility, if some of those structures already existed and then students can just put themselves in it, insert themselves into that. I’m always interested in how those kinds of structures are created.

Q: Have you heard from students what would make them want to get involved in an organization like that?
A: Yeah we’re always trying to figure that out actually. I just met with some ANCHOR folks today and trying to figure out what is looks like to welcome students continuously knowing that one student’s availability is going to be pretty different day to day, week to week, and so do they want to be a ‘member’ of ANCHOR, or do they want to just show up every once in a while, and what will get people to show up consistently? Is it an event, is it a specific moment, is it a certain kind of person and what does that mean for our recruitment efforts and what kind of snacks we have? There’s so many moving pieces and that’s just to say how do we get people to come, let alone how to we get students to lend their voice on things that matter, which is a whole separate kind of conversation.

Q: Have you been able to identify things that really work or don’t work for getting students to come to events or get involved?

A: Well you know there’s 1700 Honors students and they’re all at different levels and so ideally it’s partially about getting the freshman class involved right from the get-go and holding their attention for as long as you can. Because there’s so many other things going on on campus, and actually we want those students to be involved in those things, so it’s not like pick this or this, but there needs to be a committed group of students that are willing to, say, work on ANCHOR and build that up, and work on the Mentor Council and to build that up, and to hold their attention, those students, those leaders, hold their attention so that they can then engage their peers more and that is difficult.

Q: What is the Mentor Council?

A: Well, ____ works with them a lot more closely, she and I have kind of divided so that she’s working with the Mentor Council a bit more closely and I’m working with ANCHOR a bit more closely and that might not be the same year to year, but that’s what works out for us for now. The Mentor Council is essentially a group of students who have started the process of selecting upperclassmen in our community who will then be mentors to incoming students in the Fall. It’s kind of like a welcoming committee for the first semester, that summer, that transition into college and then that full semester of that first year, and so these are students that are involved, committed to the Honors College, committed to the Mentor Council, but then also that have the sense of being a hospitable
presence. They get paid very minimally, it’s like a little stipend at the end, it’s really like a leadership development program in that way.

**Q:** What forms of communication or encouragement are students most likely to respond to?

**A:** Well, what we use and what they respond to are probably very different, to be really honest about that. We, as staff members, are using email, the newsletter, posters, kind of these old school traditional methods of engaging students that probably would have been pretty engaging back in the day, whatever back in the day is. Now students are like Instagram, Snapchat, very “on your phone,” now quick move to the next thing. If it’s not fun related or something that riles them up in some way then it’s not worth it. It’s hard because we actually need students to lead the charge for us.

At this point the recording failed. The remainder of this transcription is based off notes from the interview and include just those main points made by the A in response to the questions.

**Q:** What are the best aspects of the Honors College?

**A:** Engaging with other bright students in a living/learning community

However, many students don’t want to be seen as Honors students and will ask if other people will know. People see a social stigma about being in Honors and labeled as the ‘nerd.’ Students just want to be seen as normal.

**Q:** What other resources should we look into for further research?

**A:** Student leadership and involvement on campus in general and at other universities

Background of the Frederick Meijer Honors College

Honors Alumni

Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the difference between what students say they want and how they follow through with those wants?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>More connections this stakeholder provided:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student organizations on campus involved with leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Honors Alumni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible next-steps:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Researching how students are involved at other college campuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Researching the background of the Frederik Meijer Honors College and how student leadership has affected the Honors College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Empathizing with Honors Alumni, particularly those involved in Honors leadership.</td>
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## Dialogue 11

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Faculty/Honors Faculty Council Member, GVSU Allendale Campus

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<tr>
<th>Estimated Age:</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>30-40</th>
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<th>50+</th>
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**Gender:** Female

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

- From this interview, the goal is to understand the perspective of Honors faculty on the issue presented to us. Also, this stakeholder is a leader in the Honors Faculty Council, which provides a unique perspective.

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

- Our team’s mission is, “*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.*” The stakeholder from this interview has insight into the current situation within the Honors College, regarding student governance. She is a faculty member and a member of the Honors Faculty Council, which will help us to gain current information about student participation.

**Summary of Research:**

- From this interview, the stakeholder made several points about how they get student feedback currently. The Honors Curriculum and Development Committee gains student feedback through two students who hold seats. The faculty gets the opinion of these students on course proposals and other events. Each course has course evaluations, but it is hard to get full participation. Currently, there is a lack of further feedback on events, which the faculty would like to have. The stakeholder made the point that the current governance model has been created by the faculty. The best governance model would have more student input on its structure. Students are a key to what events are put on, what courses are available, and how the Honors College community comes together. The stakeholder would
like to see more feedback from students regarding the events put on by the Honors councils, the courses, and communicate more face to face with the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important insights:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✷ Faculty tries to get student feedback through the course evaluations, but they are unable to get full participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ Faculty want insights into what students actually want out of their Honors experience. Do they want to interact more with their professors or more with other Honors students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>✷ The current governance model came from the faculty and what works best in their view. They want to have more of a student perspective on governance. Even though, they have some student voices on the Faculty Council, those may not be diverse voices.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dialogue Questions and Response:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Q:</strong> How would feedback from students impact how you make decisions as Honors College faculty?</td>
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<td><strong>A:</strong> Well, I think that we already do have a way to solicit student feedback in the course evaluations and I should let you know that part of our faculty meeting, even just this morning was you know what do we do with that? We want to hear student’s voices. How do we get more? Because sometimes there's not compliance. Not everybody fills out of course evaluation. Maybe students don't know how they're used or whether they're used. So that does affect both individual professors doing good jobs or not. It affects course offerings. You know it's a great course we think you should continue or this course is like my high school course, you shouldn't offered anymore. So we do listen to the student voices and I think there was some student input in the new curriculum, the development of the new curriculum. We had feedback from your class, that we listened to. We also have two student members on the curriculum development committee and I'm the chair of that committee and, I will turn to the people and say: What do you think? We really do want to hear a student perspective. Our advisors had a feedback form that they asked students to reflect on certain things. You know how do you articulate your experience of Honors or what do you think about Honors? And we had a whole meeting where we just spent most of the time just talking about that. So, we do take student feedback really seriously. Anecdotally, my students sometimes come in and say this, that or the other</td>
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thing. But having said that, I think that we are always welcomed to more. We have the mentors that we get to know pretty well over the summer, especially, and they give kind of informal feedback. So, the word should get out that we appreciate the feedback. We take it seriously and we would always welcome more. That could change course offerings. We want to see more on this. It could change the kind of events that we have. You know we've got that food with faculty or the pasta with the profs coming up and students could come in there and they could say: we want more events like this or we don't. So, we do listen because we want this. There are 10 full time faculty that this is their home and nobody gets into teaching because it's a 9 to 5 job. You want to be able to just interact with people and make a community and have people feel part of that. And anything that would facilitate that we would listen to it.

**Q:** What specific feedback would you like to have from your students that you aren’t receiving?

**A:** I think we would love to know like what do you, what do students want that would enhance their career in Honors. Not just their classes because we do get that through the evaluations and it would be great to have the word out there that people should definitely fill out their evals and they should and definitely take those seriously.

But in addition to that I think we'd just like to know like if we have events are you going to come. What kind of events do you want? You know we think these things up here and then sometimes people come and sometimes they don't. And then interestingly sometimes you get on a forum like I wish there were more events and we're like we have events just nobody is coming. So like what do students want to have more involvement or feel more part of Honors? That would be great.

**Q:** In what areas do you see student input being useful?

**A:** I would separate sort of the classes from the other part of Honors life. Do you want food with faculty events? Do you want events where you know maybe there's a speaker coming and we all walk over together? Would you like that kind of community and camaraderie? Some places have like a book club that people get together or they do news events where they'll get together and discuss the news. Would people like a culture where
that kind of thing happens or not? And that I see as kind of separate from the curriculum itself. It's a co-curriculum.

**Q:** What form of communication do you find most advantageous when communicating with students or another faculty member?

**A:** I always like a face to face meeting. I mean I know that's not always possible. But I love it when my students come up and say this is what I'm thinking, you know the body language and just like hearing it from people. I'll just give you a totally different example. This was a class outside of Honors, I had a student who sits in class. It's the end of February and she has never said a single word in the class. In my mind, she is just kind of checking a box. Doing her gen eds. She came up to me two days ago and she said you know what? I love this class. I just changed my major to this field. I've changed my life. We talk a lot about plastic pollution. Just like I avoid plastic now. And I was blown away. And she said that I'm an introvert and I don't feel comfortable speaking up in class. But I really pay attention and once she said that I realized I guess she's always sort of there. She's not like on her phone or anything. And I said okay well, what can I do to help you feel more like a part of the class? So, we talked about that a bit. And it's the face to face thing and if I had just gotten an email from her I would have probably had to go to my seating chart and see like where is this person. But because I knew the face and it was a personal thing it was much easier. So, I think that's always the best. It's not always possible. For colleagues too, when you go by somebody’s office and you say you know what? That's I think just a nicer form of communication. And I feel like I can speak for the faculty saying, we're a friendly bunch, we welcome student participation, we're all in Honors. Honors isn't a department it's a discipline. You don't major in it. And everybody came here from a different field and we came to Honors because we wanted to be part of something different and bigger than just teaching in your field. It isn't a bad thing or that departments aren't great, but there's more of an expectation here on our part for the kind of curriculum and engagement with students. And so that's why we like face to face.

**Q:** In your opinion, what are the best aspects of the Honors College?

**A:** I would say again, it's really a big animal that works together. So, we have great faculty that are passionate about their subject and about students. We have great advisors. We have two full time advisors. They don't just advise students on classes. They think
about programming, they think about our website, should we do Instagram, should we have this. They think about caring about students. You have this student in your class that maybe needs a care report filed or something like that. They think about all of that stuff sort of big picture stuff. Our secretary, who is also thinking about all this stuff working with the faculty, working with the advisors. We have great student workers and directors. Students don't necessarily know because they maybe just interact with their professors but Honors really is this big beast that's constantly reassessing and trying to think about how to make Honors a special experience for students for years.

Q: What in the Honors College do you think need improvement?

A: We want to know, should we have events? Will students come to them? That's one thing we are working on having more of. More of a connection to the courses that the faculty aren't housed in Honors. So somebody might come and teach an Honors and then they go back to that department and we want to have more understanding like what's going on in that course? What's going on in that syllabus? Some of these courses are 20 years old and they may be great courses, but nobody ever really kind of looked at them in terms of how it is contributing to the curriculum. We restructured a couple of years ago. We have a new director and it's been a really good opportune moment to reset. With change comes opportunity to sort of look at yourself and self-assess. And I think what we've been discovering is we want to have those conversations and we're having them. Some of them we might not have thought about yet, but we will.

Q: Ideally, how would you envision the Honors College?

A: I like the model that somebody said, we're like a college within a university. So, what I mean by that is, you have this big university that has resources where you can bring speakers. You can have labs. You can have film nights and student clubs and all that. And at the same time the Honors College can be a close-knit community, that can then go and take advantage of these great things in the bigger university. I almost think of it like I had a colleague who used to teach in Honors who retired a couple years ago and they moved to a small university town. They're not from that town. They have no family there. And I remember saying why are you moving there. And he said because there's all this great stuff for the university, you know that we can take advantage of as intellectuals. We can attend the events and the art. I like that idea, it's like can we think of ourselves as
family that gets together to do these other things in the university. I think that's a nice model for this.

**Q:** How do you think students would respond to the proposal of increased involvement in the Honors College?

**A:** I hope that they would embrace it. You know, I think we read over those surveys that they had and there were something like 300-400 responses. They were kind of all over the map. Some people, they're not involved, they just kind of forget they're in Honors. It's different classes and some people are like I'm really involved in Honors and all these different levels and most of them are kind of in between. I think if we can increase the amount of people who are more involved in things. The new curriculum kind of gets at that a little bit because one of the classes that's included in the new curriculum will actually go two ways. One is that we're going to be giving students credit for things that they might be doing like Mentor Council, teaching. And so that'll be like okay, you want to get involved in it. It'll probably increase community. And the second is we're having this colloquium course where the students will get together with the professor maybe do some readings. There's going to be T.A.s. So, students can do their community service by being a T.A. Which I think will increase communication between different class years. First year, second year, third year, communicating a little better and then they're going have to attend events on campus together if they can and then they'll come back and discuss them. I think this might hopefully create more buzz. And on another level, the office has an initiative called “Making Waves” which is going to start in Fall 2019 and it's going to be campus discussion about water. There’s going to be new courses, there's going to be guest speakers, there's going to be art exhibits, there's going to be all kinds of things all about water. And so hopefully with it will create buzz and people can start to sort of think about themselves as a community.

**Q:** Based on your experiences interacting with Honors students, what are some ways to encourage student participation and involvement within the Honors College?

**A:** It's funny we just had a conversation about student participation in class, this morning to try to, how do we increase that? Well there's not necessarily a governance model in place but that's not by design. It's just kind of accidental and we're completely interested in student voices. And I think that we have to start with some of the institutions that we
have ANCHOR and the Mentor Council that we have where students can get involved. And maybe, that's where you start and they become sort of representatives for student input that's one way. Or another, through faculty that you know, through the advisors, through the director. It's imperfect at the moment. I would say but we're open to any ideas.

**Q:** You said you are part of the Faculty Council. So, the students on that, what kind of things do you ask them to do?

**A:** It's called the Honors curriculum and Development Committee. It's a committee that mainly looks at new course proposals. We all sit around a table and there's not really a vote per say, we kind of just come to a consensus and we'll get proposals for new courses. For example, we just got one last week for a course, Zombie Physiology. We ask the students, what do you think about this course? Would you take this course? Why, why not? You know so we always kind of ask them. They're not shy. They do speak out but they're in no way marginalized on the committee because it's really important to us. If we're offering a course and students aren't interested in it, that’s a bad idea right? We always want to hear. How does this language sound to you? How would it sound to your high school self? Would it be attractive or would it turn you off or would it make you think that this course could be too hard? So that's how they're involved there. And Dr. Gilles and I make it a point. Not just us. Other members of the committee will turn to the students and say: What do you think? Also, I personally do advising in the summer for those registration days when you come on campus as an incoming first year student. We have Honors days where it's mainly Honors and there's a few Honors students that do that and I talk to them sort of informally, like, what do you think about this? So that's a very informal way. Just simply anecdotal way of getting students involved with the curriculum and the Development Committee is more formal.

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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students have a model. Like hey we have this great idea for a governance structure, what do you think? I think that the faculty would be interested in hearing the people you're speaking to. I should say because if it comes from students then it's more you've owned it right. It's less our governance model and</td>
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it's more your governance model. The things we have existing like the HCDC, those kind of came from us. We have student voices on them, but they're still faculty. I would love to hear pitches or you know your ideas. And last year somebody said it was the same thing, where they came and they had some ideas and I was able to say, Yeah here's what I think of that. So, we would welcome that as part of this clear answer even later at any point I would say.

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

- Yes, email

Connections this stakeholder provided:

- The two Honors advisors.
- Honors Office of Community Engagement Advisor – In charge of getting people involved in the community.

Possible next-steps:

- Figure out how to get a more diverse student voice on the committees or just giving their opinion in some way.
- Contact the Honors Office of Community Engagement.
- Think of ways students can share their opinion without needing to come into the office or speak face-to-face about their problem.
**Dialogue 12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors and Non-Honors Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Estimated Age: 20-30, 30-40, X, 40-50, 50+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender: Male</td>
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**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**
- To gain the perspective of both an Honors and non-Honors faculty member at Grand Valley State University.

**How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?**
- Our team statement is: “*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.*” Faculty are the bridge between administration and students, which is where there is a lack of communication in the Honors College right now.

**Summary of Research:**
- As a professor of both Honors and non-Honors courses, his purpose is always for the benefit of the students. When teaching students, you want a balance between high expectations and students’ well-being to best contribute to their learning. If students thought about their learning first, they would be able to provide beneficial feedback to faculty through course evaluations or other modes of communication, such as office hours. Face-to-face communication is preferred. In the classroom, student motivation comes from the engagement of student interaction with activities such as video projects or blog posts. He stresses that students should have the opportunity to voice their opinions and shape their own education.

**Important insights:**
- The goal of faculty is to best contribute to the learning of the students.
- Honors faculty appreciate being able to talk to students on a higher level of thinking.
Students can learn a lot from each other, not just faculty.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Q:** How would feedback from students impact how you make decisions as the Honors College faculty?

**A:** Well I teach one class in the Honors Program, which is the Latin American Civilization and Culture sequence and I always take into account students’ feedback when I'm planning the next year's course. I have already changed the content a bit. Also, the workload, to respond to some of the students’ comments about the load being too heavy. It's always a challenge because you don't want to water down the content or you don't want to lower the bar, you want students to meet the expectations and want to have high expectations. But at the same time, I want to be mindful of the students’ well-being, and it's a balance we're trying to create.

**Q:** Where do you get all that feedback, such as office hours or through evaluation?

**A:** It’s usually through the course evaluations. I do a midterm course evaluation so that I can make adjustments when it's still early, and also at the end of the semester when I'm looking forward to the next year.

**Q:** Is there any specific feedback that you would like to have from your students that you aren’t receiving?

**A:** Well not that there is any specific feedback that I'm not getting, but I wish students would always consider the learning first. Sometimes you get comments that are more geared to how can we make it easier, not necessarily how can we learn better. If the questions and comments were framed that way, it would be more helpful for us as faculty, and also it would help us meet the goal, which is your learning.

**Q:** In what areas do you see student input being useful?

**A:** It's always about the class, right? If the feedback focuses on what type of activities work best, what type of content you find valuable, how can we improve your experience
in the classroom, how can we achieve the goals which are always about making you become self-learners? All those kinds of feedback are always helpful.

Q: What communication do you find are most helpful when communicating with students or other faculty?

A: I think person to person you know coming to office hours and talking to us, this is the best. Of course I understand that students, being freshmen, maybe makes them a little bit fearful or afraid of coming and talking to a professor, so it takes time. I believe that once students find their own voice, which happens throughout the semester, they feel more comfortable, but not all students come. It's certainly a shame because it's a resource that is set up for you. So when students come to talk, communication works better in person. And I know that evaluations are anonymous, so we don't know who wrote what, which makes sense because that allows students to speak freely without being afraid of retribution, but on the other hand it provides some sort of curtain to hide behind and sometimes say things are not productive just to vent their frustrations. In person, we don't have to worry about that. It also helps us to get to know the students better, and in the future when the student graduates and needs letters of recommendation that contact helps it makes it easier for us to remember what kind of individual he or she is.

Q: In your opinion what are the best aspects of the Honors College and what needs improvement?

A: I can only speak for the course that I teach. I don't know how the program is structured as a whole. What I value about being part of beyond those programs is the opportunity of teaching highly motivated students who really care about their education and who I can set high expectations for, knowing that most of them (not all) will be able to meet those expectations. I also value the opportunity to have conversations about topics that I care about at a very high level. In other words as a professor of languages, as a professor of Spanish, I find myself always having to lower the discussion to the level of the student's ability. That's limiting and most of the time I find myself talking about what happened in the story in a literal sense because if students do not understand that, we cannot go and further. We cannot talk about what it means. I don't have that problem in my own sequence being the class is taught in English and all the readings assigned being an English allows for a more in-depth conversation.
Q: What are your thoughts about an increase in student involvement and representation in the Honors College?

A: I think that would be great. I think students should be involved in decisions that will have an impact on their own education, and I'm surprised to learn that's not the case. There is a Student Senate, but that's not for the Honors programs, it’s for everyone. Having some sort of representation, a student representation, in conversations that will have any impact on the students’ learning would be something that we should do.

Q: What are ways that you motivate students in the classroom?

A: We try to do that every day by designing and creating opportunities for students to interact and to learn from each other, by incorporating projects that are interesting or challenging, such as the video projects that are created or the blog, for example. I think the variety of activities that you do in the class should be part of the design. These activities are designed precisely to keep students motivated. Now if there are other ways that students think we could help motivate them then I wish students would share those thoughts with us or with me. I guess the ball is on your (the students’) side.

Q: Do you have any suggestions of resources to look into or other people to interview that may help in researching this topic?

A: I suppose that you should have a conversation with members of the Student Senate to see if they can give you some ideas about how to get involved in this decision-making process part of your college. I assume that you have already talked to the Director and other members of the staff. You might also want to do some research and see what other programs do outside of Grand Valley. If you do a search in the Chronicle of Higher Education, maybe, you'll find that people have published articles on this and how to get their students involved in decision making processes and those sorts of things. Contacting Student Senate, talking to administrators, and doing research on this topic that would be my advice.
Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”

- Maybe you would be interested to ask about faculty participation in that process too. I don’t know if any of those questions were meant cover that. How do faculty members participate in the creation or the improvement of the program as a whole rather than just focusing on our own classes? There is a structure for faculty governance. There are committees that we have to be a part of at different levels. At the unit level, in my case the Department of Motor Language. At the college level, the College of Liberal Arts and Science has different committees. Also, at the university level. I wonder if asking questions about what type of work we do in those committees could maybe serve as either a model for you or asking questions about how do we think you could help or how you could be part of that process.

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

- Yes, email

Connections this stakeholder provided:

- Student Senate
- Administrators
- Research other universities

Possible next-steps:

- We should have an interview with another member of Student Senate.
- We should reach out to more non-Honors faculty to look into how structure of the university works.
- We should look into the Chronicle of Higher Education for information on other universities.
**Dialogue 13**

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<td>Gender: Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ The primary goal of this opportunity was to get feedback from a current Honors student about our current top 5 innovations. Additionally, this student is currently an Honors Resident Assistant and thus has had experience in and insights about trying to get Honors students involved with events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Our team problems statements is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” This research involves gaining feedback regarding our current top 5 innovations that we have developed based on our research to this point.</td>
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<td>Summary of Research:</td>
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<td>❖ This stakeholder is an Honors student as well as a Resident Assistant (RA) for Honors housing. In general, she was open to all of our innovations. The innovations that she chose as her top 2 were the development of the town hall style meetings and the pairing of students together by major or other interests. She believed that pairing students together their freshman year would be a great way to help students socialize and in fact make them more likely to come to events, since students are more likely to come if they have someone to go with them. In light of this idea, by pairing students together, they may be more likely to come to the Town Hall meetings. This student liked the idea of the Town Hall</td>
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meetings as a networking opportunity with faculty and other students, or as a venue for students to present their work, such as senior projects.

### Important insights:

- Having people to rely and build on freshman year is very important and may be key to encouraging increased participation in events
- Make the Town Hall meetings more that business meetings, possibly with the opportunity for students to present their senior projects
- Student attendance at events that are more casual, fun, and less informative tends to be higher than at other events

### Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Q:** The first innovation we have is to use the mentor program and extending participation past freshman year because we have heard from a lot of students about how there is a disconnect from Honors after their freshman year and one of our ideas of how to encourage this participation is to connect students together by major or by interests, to the point where we would connect more during freshman year and then continue on from there. What do you think of that idea?

**A:** I think that’s great. I’m thinking back to my freshman year where, in my freshman sequence I met ___ and ____ who were both Biology majors. We’ve had classes together and will plan how to take classes together. This year it was so funny I didn’t know anyone on my schedule and I sat down and it was like ‘there’s _____ and ____!’ So we’ve been the ‘Bio-squad’ since our Freshman group. So I love the idea of intentionally placing students to do that since it just worked out so well that they were on the same track as I was, and it has been fun to stay involved with them throughout the years. So would you place them going into it when they assign mentor groups? They would be based on the major groups? I also wonder about undecided students, how that would go in place, but I think that going off interests would be really cool since that’s something that I really leaned on throughout my time at Grand Valley to figure out a way to have more students get that experience. That was just lucky for me. It would be pretty interesting.
Q: We were talking with another stakeholder who said the opposite thing too, who said that they already see a lot of the students who are in their major and may want to meet with students outside of their major, so how do you think we could incorporate this?

A: Maybe keeping with a mentor group idea, maybe if there were mixers inside of that. I’m trying to think of balancing the time you need to form really good connections with just, we’re students, we’re all busy, and especially in the Honors College you have students juggling a bunch of different commitments and finding their home both in Honors and in different clubs and organizations and leadership roles on campus. I’m trying to think of combining, maybe if mentor groups would be paired up to do an event together or to hang out or do more little socials where they could intentionally meet a little bit, that might be cool. I’m trying to think, I don’t know how well the mentor meet up went. I saw advertising for that around, but that might be a cool way to do bigger socials to get everyone together, and then you would still have groups. You’re not just going into an event alone because sometimes that can be really scary to do.

Q: Going off of the mentor meet up event that you mentioned, I know as an RA you have to schedule events and try to encourage your residents to be more social and get more involved so how do you do that? What works or what doesn’t?

A: It’s tricky, it’s really tricky. Doing floor events has been really dire and even community wide programs is kind of hit or miss. As RA’s we have to hit learning components of the pillars of housing like cultural, citizenship, and academic, and students don’t really show up to the educational programs because you get that all the time, so thinking about events that are quick, that you can pop in and out of, that don’t have a scheduled start time is a good method, and then you’ve just got to vary them. We sit down and schedule as RAs like ‘Ok, I got Tuesdays, you get Wednesdays” so we try and make them open a bunch of different times. Different casual activities tend to be the favored events that we get the most attendance at, but it’s definitely tricky getting students to come to things. I don’t know if it’s just because there’s an abundance of things happening outside and not just in the housing community or, like I know personally I felt really connected to Honors my freshman year I came here. I really liked it. I liked having that group of people to start this with, and then after that, when you don’t have your freshman sequence, your connection with Honors kind of fades away. I live here, but I’m not taking any Honors classes so it’s kind of a little bit disconnected in terms of that way. I don’t know if students would feel willing to come to an Honors
event if that had that big class connection because it really does drop off as students become upperclassmen. For planning things, we have to start out early with advertising and reach out to students and, I don’t know if people read the newsletters, but we put our stuff in there sometimes in the big Honors one. But it’s definitely something that we don’t have a great method for, it’s been kind of hit or miss. And I know that attendance is not a new problem for RAs in this building, it’s kind of been an uphill battle since the beginning here. It’s just busy students and if they want something that either really fun, kind of relaxing, or something that is really going to help move them forward.

Q: For our next innovation, we were thinking of having open, Town Hall style meetings, with the faculty and administration, with students being welcome to attend to either bring up concerns that they have or if there is a concern that was being advertised, they might say ‘Oh I’m really passionate about that, I’ll come and talk on it.’ What do you think about that?

A: I like the idea, especially it could be interesting if it was held in the MPR because we have such a beautiful community space, but it’s always silent all the time and it’s such a nice room! I like that idea of having a touchpoint to check in or hang out and to kind of hear what’s going on, I think that’s really cool. Maybe to connect with faculty. I don’t know how much of a leadership position it would be, or kind of just like a casual thing, but I think that would be a fun touchpoint too even if you aren’t in your freshman sequence and your big Honors commitment is done to still have a place to come back and chat within Honors. I think it would be a cool place to connect and utilize the faculty especially and having continual events in the MPR like every month. There is one kind of a way to use that room and make the events more visible. I know ___ is such a great guy and he really wants to be approachable and wants to be utilized by students so I think the Town Hall is really cool. I’m trying to figure out a way to get people there and get everyone to engage in these things which I get really excited about but everyone else is like ‘enh.’ I’m interested to see how it turns out. It would be a neat place for, not just business and complaints, but updates to share what’s going on in other sequences or other Honors students. I think that would be a really fun networking event too where students could say ‘I’m doing this project, or I’m involved with this’ or just a time to show off what you’re doing a little bit. If people share their senior projects maybe that would be really cool because that’s kind of a big shroud of mystery like ‘what does this look like and how do we do this?’ So that would be really neat too.
Q: Another one of our thoughts is to have an Honors pamphlet where, not only are all the student responsibilities and requirements to be found, but maybe other resources on how to fulfill these requirements or maybe all of the opportunities we have in Honors. We aren’t sure if this would be in the form of a pamphlet that they may get during their freshman orientation or even a webpage. What do you think about this?

A: That would be interesting. I think having a physical copy, like a touchpoint, is good because as people go through transitions, the students get overwhelmed like ‘I don’t even know where to eat dinner and you’re telling me all of these academic resources!’ Thinking about that, I think that having a physical copy might be cool. I’m trying to think about what’s on the Honors’ website because there’s not a lot. I haven’t used it in years. That might be a cool resource to put on there or revamp the website. The pamphlet would be cool. I wonder how you would boil down all of that information into some bullet points. I also wonder if that information could be put into a facilitation guide for small group leaders to facilitate within their groups, that might be kind of interesting when you have someone walking you through it. I think that would be cool to have a little Honors checklist. I know they do the big GV banners of your year as a review; like if you’re a freshman you should be touching these checkpoints. That might be cool for Honors because we do have specific requirements and they can kind of sneak up fast. I’m a checklist oriented person, so I would have definitely liked to have one.

Q: Our next innovation involved the creation of a Blackboard resource to connect Honors students and faculty together. What are your thoughts on this?

A: That might be kind of a cool way to stockpile information in there to get back to or I guess a place to go for questions if you have it. I’ve used Blackboard for another online training before, it’s a cool resource, you can do a lot with it, and I guess we don’t have anything for the entire Honors College do we? I know they have the Facebook pages for each class, but I know those aren’t active anymore after the first few months of school it really died down with that. If we had it, I think it would be really important to drive engagement so that it’s not just another resource or rabbit hole to go down. That also may be an interesting way to do Honors-wide announcements, because I know the email stuff gets lost, but the Blackboard stuff everyone would get and you would have to read it. That might be an interesting way to poke at people and say ‘hey you’re still part of
this, what’s up, where have you been?’ It may be a cool way too, like you were saying with interests if people were like ‘I want to do this for my senior project, who else has done this?’ I like it.

Q: Our last innovation was to get feedback from students using a suggestion box for students to put ideas into that would be checked fairly often. What do you think of that?

A: I think in the lobby would be cool or maybe having another Honors touchpoint in the MPR, I don’t know. I’m really big on getting that space used, but I love it, it’s so great. That might be a cool touchpoint. I like the idea of having a visual indicator of ‘this is a resource for you’ and not just emailing suggestions. I like the idea of a physical thing. I think it’d be interesting, and I’d like to see the kind of comments you would get if it was just like ‘this class is hard’ or interesting things, or events they want to see Honors do or other resources. A suggestion box is interesting, but I also think that prompting people with a specific question to get feedback on like ‘what do you think of our events?’ or ‘what do you want out of Honors?’ would be kind of interesting too. To have something open and then to request certain facets. I think having the visual marker for that would be like ‘Honors Suggestions’ and make it something obnoxious and just leave it for a year so that people can get to know that that’s there as a resource or making a point that it is used and that Honors does care about what students think.

Q: Out of those five innovations, which two do you think are the most practical or would be the most successful?

A: I really like the idea of the Town Halls as a touch point to come back to and as a constant ‘Honors brand’ event because we have the lecture series that happen once every semester and orientation, but other than that we don’t have any Honors traditions or Honors community recurring events. So I love that idea as networking and engagement, and that could really fall into the ‘Honors’ Brand’ or the Honors’ tradition, because we don’t really have any of those yet. That would be really awesome. I think, in order for the Town Hall to work, I like the first one of connecting majors. If we really want to build a community and change our Honors culture as a whole to be more engaging, then we’ll have to build those first, and I think having groups of students in their majors and building off of the mentor program so that we kind of have more
interaction between different classes is really cool. So I think that those two would fit together really well.

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<td>✤ Meet with ANCHOR students to determine how the innovations work with their current set-up</td>
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### Dialogue 14

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Honors Student

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**Gender:** Female

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

- To gain insights to our top five innovations from an Honors student.

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

- Our team problems statements is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” By conducting this research, we are gaining insights into stakeholders that are directly affected by decisions made in the Honors College and our innovations will increase communication and representation of students.

**Summary of Research:**

- The Honors student did not have any major concerns with our top 5 innovations. She chose the companion program and the pamphlet idea to be her top 2 innovations. With the companion program, she would have liked to have known someone in her major that was a bit older than her to receive advice on classes. She liked the pamphlet idea as well because she believes that the requirements of the Honors College is unclear. If it was a requirement to attend a certain number of events, students might think of it as a chore, but she also realizes that it would get students involved within the Honors College. She would like to see more information about the senior project in a pamphlet.

**Important insights:**

- Students will most likely want to be paired by major when wanting connections to other Honors students, but minorities may want to be paired with another minority.
An incentive for attending Town Hall meetings would just be if faculty and administration really wanted to listen and hear from the students, but the students currently don’t know that administration wants to take students’ ideas into consideration.

For students to participate in discussion topics, they should be short surveys and online because of the convenience of the internet and lack of time students feel they have.

Dialogue Questions and Response

Q: What would entice you to join an Honors community organization?

A: Probably if it wasn't too huge a commitment because I’m a busy student, have lots of homework, and president of a club, so it would have to be like maybe like a once a month thing. If it was weekly, I don't know if I would be able to commit to it.

Q: In what areas of the Honors College would you like to affect change in?

A: I feel like they're not very clear with their requirements. I know from my sequence when we took the sequence and then went to talk to the advisers and they said, “you have to take two junior seminars because your sequence wasn’t enough credits,” but they didn't tell us that ahead of time. It’s kind of screwed a lot of people because now they have to take up an extra class that they weren't planning on taking. Just being clearer with the requirements would be really nice or something that talks about what each class covers and if you take that class, you will have to take two seminars.

Q: With our innovation, called the Honors College Companion Program, how would you prefer to be paired?

A: I think being paired by major would probably be best because then you have someone when you're coming in as a freshman. You could have someone like me where I'm like “I want to do anthropology” and then you have someone who is also doing anthropology so you can talk to them about what the classes are like, and what the professors are like and just how to help guide you through the program so you already know someone in there. With students that are undecided that might be harder because they don't know what their
major is. If you're pairing them with upper level students, the older student who did come in undecided can talk to a student about how they came about deciding on their major.

**Q:** How do you think others would want to be paired?

**A:** I think it really depends on the person. I think a lot of people would like being paired by major. I think also people who might be in minorities in the Honors College, who are maybe of a different ethnicity, might like being paired with someone of their same ethnicity. It might make them feel more comfortable having a peer.

**Q:** What did you like about the mentor program?

**A:** I think there were like six people in my group and we only met during the first week. I didn't really feel connected to them. I like my mentor because she was really nice and she made us goody bags. I just didn't really feel like it did much for me personally.

**Q:** If Honors administration where to post discussion topics on blackboard on issues that they would like to improve in the Honors College, why would you participate in that?

**A:** I would participate if it was like of a quick questionnaire, like a survey. If it were to say to write a paragraph about what you think then I don't have time for that. It would have to be something quick. I like filling out surveys, so I would do it.

**Q:** Would you prefer to be anonymous and why or why not?

**A:** I think I would prefer to be anonymous because then I can feel like I could be very blunt. If I know that they're going to know who I am, I might not be as critical because I'll feel bad. I don't want them to be like “she’s so mean” and I think “I’m sorry, I’m just being honest.” I don't know if they can do this but if you can give them your email so the people who are looking at the survey results don't see who's giving input, but when they're done with it, they are able to send out an email to everybody who participated and can see the results.
Q: With regards to the Honors pamphlet, why would you read it?

A: Another weird thing about me, I like reading pamphlets so I would especially if I was still looking at the Honors College as an incoming freshman. I would like it to decide whether I wanted to do the Honors College. Also, if it had information about how to go about doing your senior project, I would definitely read it because it's kind of confusing to do that.

Q: What do you feel like your role is as an Honor student?

A: Basically, to be an academic role model. I think just putting a lot of effort into schoolwork, being a leader on campus, taking charge in clubs, and just representing Grand Valley well. I know where a lot of the Honors events and programs are going on.

Q: Why do you think that as an Honor student you should be going to Honors events and programs?

A: There's not really a requirement to, so I don't really do it. If they had a requirement, like if you have to attend two Honors events per semester, I would go. If they don’t, I’ll think the event they’re having is cool, but I don’t have time to.

Q: Why would you prefer to have that requirement?

A: I feel like it's hard because if there was a requirement, it would feel like a chore. At the same time, I think it would be good because I would feel more involved in the Honors community. I'm not really sure if I would prefer it to be a requirement, but maybe instead of saying a certain number per year, just have an overall requirement, like four events, over your entire Honors College experience.

Q: With the suggestion box idea, when would you find it to be the most useful?

A: I would use it if I had an issue with college or with an advising issue. I guess just if I had a problem, I think I would write a suggestion.
Q: Where should it be placed to get the most feedback?
A: I would say online because I think students will most likely not write it down on a physical piece of paper since everything’s online now. If there was a link on the Honors College website or on social media somewhere, they could go and make suggestions. You could also have a physical box, but that would probably go in the lobby in Niemeyer.

Q: When would be the best time to have a Town Hall style meeting?
A: I would say later, maybe 5 p.m. or so. Most people are done with classes by then and it should probably be on Mondays since a lot of clubs don't meet on Mondays. I think that’s when a lot of people have more availability.

Q: Where do you think these meetings should take place?
A: They would probably be in the multi-purpose room so it’s more open.

Q: Why would you attend a Town Hall style meeting?
A: If they were giving information about curriculum changes, I would probably go. If they were addressing issues, like the senior project setup, then they can say “let’s meet and we’re going to discuss how we can improve this for students.”

Q: What would you like to hear from other students at these meetings?
A: I would like to hear people's honest opinions about how they think the Honors College is going and what they think we can improve on. I like honesty.

Q: How do you think these innovations will improve communication within the Honors College?
A: It seems like they're giving students more of a voice and telling the people in charge like how the Honors College is working for them and how it can be improved. It is
allowing students to feel like they’re involved, not someone from higher up saying you have to do this. Students get to interact and say what they want to do and find a middle ground with administration.

**Q:** Which two innovations do you find to be the most interesting?

**A:** I think the Companion Program is really interesting because I would be interested to see whether it will work out. I think it depends on the student, who the students are, and whether they're actually going to put in the effort to meet with each other. I also think the pamphlet is really interesting. I would like to see how that would work out and what kind of information would be included in it. With the Companion Program it would be cool if you could do it like the roommate questionnaire that housing does to find roommates. If the Honors College can have a survey like that, but about who you want to be matched with, such as listing your major, that will be good. But, if you're matched with the older student, that might actually not work out because a lot of people live off campus. A couple people on my tours that I give are Honors students. There was one girl that wanted to be in the Honors College but said her test scores aren't high enough. I told her she can still apply because the test scores aren't a hard cut off and if you really want to do, they might work with you. I feel like that's not really communicated well enough. A lot of people think that the Honors College is too hard to get into and it’s just not clear what the requirements are.

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

- “How has your Honors College experience affected your college career?”

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

- Yes, and she prefers to be contacted in person or by email.

**Connections this stakeholder provided:**

- Mentor Council
- Other Students
Possible next-steps:

- We will need to define the topics students will like to see in an Honors pamphlet.
- We will need to develop a way to incorporate all the students’ wants and needs for a companion to figure out how to go about pairing the students.
**Dialogue 15**

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Honors Mentor Council President

**Estimated Age:** __X__ 20-30 ____ 30-40 ____ 40-50 ____ 50+  

**Gender:**

**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

- To discuss our top 5 innovations, specifically the Honors College Companion Program innovation, to design with the Honors Mentor Council.

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

- Our team problem statement is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” The Honors Mentor Council bridges the gap between Honors administration and students. Their insights are valuable to understand what will be desirable to students and feasible within administration.

**Summary of Research:**

- Honors mentors work primarily over the summer and within the first semester of school to contact and meet with freshman to essentially provide for a smooth transition into Grand Valley State University and the FMHC. The mentors are open to talking about whatever the mentees want to or need to talk about, so the openness of conversation is a valuable asset to the mentor program. They are working on getting students that could not attend Welcome Days (a couple days before Fall classes begin) involved and updated on important information about the Honors College. Regarding the Honors College Companion Program, she believes that it would not interfere with the current mentor program, as that program is focused on freshman during their first few months of school.

**Important insights:**
Students can act differently in a group and would potentially feel more comfortable with a one-on-one partner.

Mentors feel like they have to work a little harder to get the shy students to engage.

Mentors do not have any requirements to how many times they have to meet with their mentees or a certain number of events they must attend, so their involvement also decreases after the first few months.

Dialogue Questions and Response

Q: Can you tell us about the mentor pairings, like who chooses and how did they choose who you mentor?

A: When all of the incoming freshmen are accepted into the Honors College, they get an e-mail with all the mentor profiles. It has questions, like your hometown, your major, and your minor. It has some silly questions, like your favorite movie show, and your hobbies. Then, they try to pair mentors and mentees closely together, but we don't necessarily focus so much on pairing people of similar majors or people from similar hometowns together. That is just to kind of get them to know other people outside of the major that they're going to be in all four years. The Honors office does all of that. Then, each mentor gets assigned, typically about six to eight mentees, and they're with that group for the entirety of welcome days, and the mentor gets to know them before welcome days. They're kind of their first point of contact in the Honors College and Grand Valley as a whole.

Q: How many people do you think are in charge of the pairings?

A: I know the student assistants help with it a lot, or the Honors College Assistant. I don’t know exactly who takes charge on it, but I know it’s a lot of work. The mentors get those pairings about end of July and then we start contacting them and then during welcome days, which is a couple of days before school starts.

Q: What kinds of things do you do with the students you mentor?
A: Beforehand, we get to know them and we get to help them answer any questions about living here, about their classes, and what they should expect. Then, when they come to Grand Valley, the welcome days program is Tuesday and Wednesday. Their mentor is with them all day Tuesday and then from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday. We go through a lot of events. On Tuesday, we go through more lecture-styled events. We have presentations from study abroad and we actually incorporated an Honors curriculum presentation that the counselors do, which goes along with that you guys are saying about what to expect from students and what to get out of Honors. We also have an idea of doing a student panel discussion with some academic tips on how to actually comprehend what you're reading, etc. Then, they go to a lunch where they can get to know each other a little bit better in a group setting and the mentors can interact with one another. We also have them interact with other mentor groups to make more connections. They also get to meet their freshman sequences ahead of time, which a lot of students really like getting to meet the students they're going to be with all year. Then, we do a photo scavenger hunt tour to get to know campus a little better. We offer a downtown tour too for the students that have classes down there. We also have some optional events on Tuesday, which have games, like Body Body and Capture the Flag. Wednesday is more the closing activities, and that's actually when the sequence meetup is and take a big picture as a class so that they can look back on that and see their classmates and how they change. Then, we have a closing ceremony where we talk about how now you're preparing to take on Honors. You talk about how to be a mentor and what being a mentor means. Then throughout the year we try to have events planned on a regular basis to let the mentees and the mentors reconnect. We plan on having events like study sessions in the MPR. We've had an ice cream and scheduling event. We've had a popcorn and productivity event. We just more opportunities to connect as a whole.

Q: What do you do about the students that don't attend the Honors orientation?

A: We know marching band students have a hard time attending, so we've been looking into that a lot. This year we've been working with the marching band director and looking into moving the timing of some things. If a student can't attend, we try to have their mentor collect all of the pamphlets and all of the information that they would have received if they went to the lectures. We like making sure that they meet up with that mentee outside of welcome days, like maybe hosting a dinner inviting that student to come with so they can kind of make that connection. We also looked into having a
specific marching band mentor just for the students because they're at marching band practice that go right through welcome days. We’ve heard a lot about that, but we haven't really finalized anything with that yet. We’re definitely still looking for ideas.

**Q:** How do you think being paired with one student would impact the relationship you build?

**A:** I think that it would be a pretty different relationship because I think that some students interact differently in a group setting, like maybe being more shy in a group setting. That's one thing as a mentor is you have to notice the shy students and reach out to them a little bit more to get them to engage. I think in a one on one setting you would have a different relationship and might be stronger and might be weaker depending on how the student feels about being that one on one situation. The only thing that I see about that is that sometimes we've noticed that they cling onto one person and don't really make friendships outside of that. Maybe you could have the pairs and then you had an ice cream social night where all of the pairs go and meet in the MPR to socialize with each other. One thing we’ve noticed is sometimes a mentee will cling onto their mentor and not really make any other friends.

**Q:** What do you think works well with mentors currently?

**A:** I think the openness to talk about whatever you want to talk to about and we don't give them a script like “I think you need to talk about these things when you're conversing with your mentees,” but they can talk about real life stories and are free to make those connections however they want to. The mentors then act more like friends than “a paid mentor.” We focus on building those friendships and acting as role models rather than giving all this information, because they're going to get that other places. I think that's one thing that works.

**Q:** What are the requirements of a mentor?

**A:** The mentors have to contact their mentees at least once before welcome days. We'd like to have them contact their mentees multiple times, obviously, to start making that relationship. Then they have to be there for all of welcome days. They have to help people move in on Monday and be there for the entirety of Tuesday and Wednesday.
They also have to go to trainings before welcome days. There is one that happens in April and then we have another training the Monday before welcome days. We want them to attend at least one extra event that we have. We have events planned for October or September that go all the way through the next April. You want them to attend at least one of those. There’s nothing in the contract of being a mentor for event requirements. Technically your job as a mentor ends in October, but we do like them to continue to attend events. This year we’re going to try to suggest some emails or texts to send to the mentees around midterms to make sure they're taking time for themselves and maybe suggesting to go to office hours and again, before finals to text them and make sure they’re still doing okay. We do have a lot of mentors that can meet up with their mentees the first month change it to every other month and have dinner as a group. There are a lot of mentors that go above and beyond, which is ideally what we would like to see. It’s sometimes hard to get them to want to go to those. After about a month, you start making our own friends. We’ve had groups that don’t want to hang out with their mentor anymore. It really just depends on the group. This year is hard because the Council switches over in November. After the new Council switched over we wanted to focus on having more frequent events. We’ve had two this semester so far and I’m planning another one, but we just have a hard time getting them to reconnect. We’ve had a little bit of turn out, but we have maybe 20 people tops. It’s just hard to get students engaged and that’s why we decided that if we have a plan set for welcome days we can kind of tell them about it at welcome days and be like look out for this event in September. It could help if you have those Town Hall meetings because then you could announce all the events that are happening. We find that food is a good incentive, but we have a hard time finding other incentives.

**Q:** What do you do about students who are sophomores or juniors that don't have a mentor anymore?

**A:** Some mentors still connect, like I talk to my mentees from previous years. Acting as a mentor, you should be there for all of your mentor groups and you should be there all the time with everything you do. I know we’ve talked about with the Honors Office of doing Welcome Back Days because we've heard from a lot of people that after your freshman year you don't have that connection in Honors anymore. Maybe it’s because you’re not taking many Honors classes your sophomore year and you haven't started your junior seminar yet and you're not really in Niemeyer anymore. We thought that if there was
some sort of event to welcome back those upperclassmen, it could get them to connect
with one another. We thought that ANCHOR could do something like that because
ANCHOR tries to include everyone in Honors. The Mentor Council plans an event with
them in January, but they've been going through some board changes, so it's been hard to
plan things. We would like to do more stuff with them, because we focus more like on
the freshman aspect of things and they focus on everyone. It would be cool to have
Honors, as a whole, have events together.

**Q:** In the Honors College Companion Program innovation, how do you think people
would prefer to be paired?

**A:** I think most people would prefer to be paired with someone with the same major. I
think a lot of times, especially with mentees, we've noticed that when they don't have the
same majors, they tend to freak out and don’t know who they’re supposed to look up to
and ask their questions to. I think it'd be nice, especially if you have a major that’s not
very common and if they don't have a club for that major, then you don't really know who
to ask about your schedule or ask about professors.

**Q:** How do you think that the Companion Program could conflict with the current mentor
program?

**A:** I don't really think it would conflict that much because the mentoring program focuses
on initiating them into Honors. I think with the Companion Program, the intent is that
you have a companion that’s meant to just be a friendship and someone else to talk to. I
don't really think you can have too many role models. I think that having more innovative
students and more leaders to look up to can't really be a bad thing okay.

**Q:** What are any concerns you might have within the pairings?

**A:** It would be similar to what I said before is making sure that they didn’t solely talk to
that companion and that it doesn’t prevent them from branching out and making different
friends outside of their major.
Q: Do you know how much time it takes to do the mentor pairings?

A: I'm assuming maybe a month. I don't know how much time out of each day they spend on it, but it takes a while just to make sure that they have all of the entries and they have everyone's information. The only thing I would see being an issue is just making sure that every student would want a companion. I could see a little bit of an issue if people see it as babysitter type thing or that you're another mentor and they might not want that. It could be something that was voluntary the first year or if you had people sign up to get a companion and then after they signed up, then you compare them. Then, if you saw how that went, you can go from there and decide whether to do it voluntarily in the future.

Q: What recommendations can you give us to improve the Companion Program?

A: You could have a Companion Council or Companion Board. If you have the rolling application, you could apply at any time, and that board can handle the pairings. This way it won't be just the freshman being involved. It would be hard to have it how we do the mentor/mentee pairings because that's just freshmen and upperclassmen. If there’s someone who always thinking about it or looks for different then that’s one way I you can fix that.

Q: What do you think about having the same form between the Mentor Council and the Companion Program so students don't have to fill out two forms that are similar?

A: You could potentially get copies of them, but the only issue is that, say I filled out that form before I came to school here and then sophomore year I decided I wanted a companion, then I might have different answers my sophomore year than before when I was a freshman. If you had the option to revise the previous form or just fill out another form, I think that would be the best.

Q: What innovations caught your eye or anything that you would want to see in the Honors College?

A: I see the blackboard would be really cool. I really think that it would be a way for the Mentor Council to post on there, ANCHOR could post on there, and even the Companion Program and the Honors office. It would be a more interactive way than just email. I
know the Honors office just started an Instagram. We made it and then they adopted it. We're going to do Mentor Monday, they're going to have ANCHOR do one, they're going to Faculty Friday, and then they're going to post events on their story or events and pictures. That's one way they're thinking of finding a more innovative way to talk to students. I also think the Town Hall meetings would be pretty cool because I think it doesn't necessarily have to always be a meeting. One time you could have a speaker come in or have the Office of Undergraduate Research come into present. It could be a monthly thing that students expect to get knowledge out of and then they could announce events at the end and little tidbits of information. I also think the pamphlet would be pretty cool too. The counselors pass something like that out at the Honors curriculum presentation days and welcome days, so it's almost same thing. You could also put that on the blackboard of what to know about Honors, what I need to do in Honors, and list opportunities, because I think it's always important for people to know.

Q: Where are those pamphlets that you mentioned located?

A: I don't think they're sitting out anywhere. They should be out on tables, like in the Honors office or on the counter, just sitting out to talk about Honors and the benefits of being in Honors. It would be cool to see the senior project idea in the Town Hall too. I know ANCHOR did a senior project panel one time and I always hear really good things about it. They had current senior come in to talk about how they came up with a new project idea and how they went about doing it because there's so many things you can do and everyone gets overwhelmed.

Q: When would be the best time to have a Town Hall style meeting?

A: I think 9 p.m. on a weeknight. That's when we make our events because then everyone's included in that. The one thing we always try to avoid is the night that ANCHOR has their meetings. Now they have them Mondays at 9 p.m., so we just always try and be mindful of the other Honors events that are going on. I think if you did every other Tuesday night or the first Tuesday of every month at 9 p.m. I think then students can expect it.
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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
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<td>❖ N/A</td>
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<td>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Yes, and by email.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connections this stakeholder provided:</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ ANCHOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Resident Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible next-steps:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Discuss who will be filtering the forms to pair students involved with the Honors College Companion Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ Develop what students would like to see on the Honors Blackboard section</td>
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## Dialogue 16

<table>
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<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: MPR</th>
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<td>Estimated Age: __<em>X</em> 20-30 ____ 30-40 _____40-50 ____ 50+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
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### Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

- To gain insight on our innovations from a mentor perspective, and to gain further insight into the mentor program.

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

- Our team problems statement is: *"We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College."* By conducting this research, we are gaining insights into stakeholders that are directly affected by decisions made in the Honors College and our innovations will increase communication and representation of students.

### Summary of Research:

- Unfortunately, in the middle of our conversation, we lost the recording (unbeknownst to me), and we didn’t capture the questions in which we discussed the specific innovations. However, the interviewee was able to provide more information regarding the mentor system and how it’s actively identifying and combatting certain issues that run parallel to our needs statements. For example, they expanded on the issue of the sophomore dissociation from the Honors College, and how the Mentor Council has been discussing how best to reinvigorate Honors Students to get involved in events. The interviewee also elaborated on the mentor pairing system and how effective it is right now.

### Important insights:

- Pairing system in place for mentors is good
Sophomore gap is recognized, and being actively discussed and combatted
Mentor and ANCHOR are the two organizations communicating and “governing” on behalf of the Honors Students

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Q:** What incentivized you to be a mentor in Honors? What got you to do that?

**A:** I was a mentor in high school. I really enjoyed the guiding aspect of helping incoming freshmen, and I know college can be overwhelming for people. Having someone to go to that isn’t faculty, because that can sometimes be intimidating. It was a good chance to practice leadership.

**Q:** Are you going to use it as a resume builder?

**A:** Yeah, I have. Being able to move up into a council position the last two years, that’s been a great resume builder.

**Q:** Tell me about mentor pairings, and how you end up pairing each other off.

**A:** Okay. So, what we do is, in the application process for mentors, after we’ve chosen them, chosen on a few questions, Honors has the final say, but we read their responses on why they want to be mentors. They fill out a questionnaire about their major, their interests, something they struggled with their freshmen year. That’s all put into a spreadsheet and sent out to incoming freshmen. The freshmen pick their top 5, based off the responses, they never see the name or gender of mentor so it’s unbiased. The freshmen get the email in June, and it’s an initial “welcome to Honors”. The end of July, they’ve been assigned mentors and they get an email, so they have the whole of August to have a mentor to answer questions about move in and stuff.

**Q:** Do you get a lot of early questions, as far as move in or advice?

**A:** Just based on personal mentor experience, they tend to ask a lot of housing relevant questions, or sometimes it has to do with their sequence, or buying books and stuff. We
try and provide them with resources from the get-go, connect them to Facebook in Honors so they can be connected.

Q: Do you find that to be effective for a lot of the incoming freshmen?
A: I think so. I definitely appreciated having that before I came in: a link with Grand Valley. Especially because the mentors explain what it’s like when you get there so it’s a bit easier.

Q: What specific things have you done with mentee’s that have been effective for both them and you?
A: So, last year we did fine tuning on welcome days when freshmen get here, and after the moving process, which is very beneficial for them. That’s when mentors get to practice their leadership skills. A huge push for the leadership council this year is to keep having events that connect Honors students to the Honors College, not necessarily just freshman, but it’s easier to communicate with them. We are trying to have study sessions and utilize the MPR. We are also trying to get advisors to come to more events so students recognize them and are more comfortable. We really noticed once students moved out of Niemeyer, they felt a big disconnect from Honors. So, your sophomore and junior year, well you get a little with Junior seminar, but you’re still not living in Niemeyer, and the senior project isn’t a class in Honors. So, we noticed that students feel less and less connected to Honors, then they graduate Honors, and they think: “well, what does that mean?”

Q: How many mentee’s is a mentor generally paired with?
A: We try to keep it between 6 and 7. We don’t think that’s too many because sometimes freshman drop, or they’re in marching band, so they drop and the group only has 5 or 6. We still want them to meet other students so we try to have mentor groups pair up and meet so you have more people. During welcome week, they have scheduled lunch times. Sometimes they have different majors, so the students get a change. We even theorized a welcome back day for sophomores. After the welcome days, maybe at the end when the freshmen are still busy with transitions. We’d have something in the MPR that would have games and food to bring sophomores back to Honors. The staff really supports it.
We’re trying to make Niemeyer seem more social, so it’s not pegged as being such as a dead zone.

Q: I remember, personally, I couldn’t find anyone to be social on my floor when I lived here during welcome week.

A: We just had a meeting with transitions and the Honors College Director, and we were talking about how to make Niemeyer more social, and one thing we talked about was getting door-stoppers that actually hold open the doors. Do you remember, having to use the corner of your bed? And, when we told him that, he was surprised, like he just solved the whole problem. Well, that’s not the solution because Niemeyer attracts more antisocial people so…

Q: What is good about the Mentor Program that’s working right now?

A: We have certain presentations that the Honors office provides that are set in stone. That’s during the welcome days, but for the actual mentoring, the way we let them choose their mentors works out really well. We are always trying to adjust in little ways.

Q: Do you have trouble keeping students?

A: Not initially. During the first move in days, they’re looking for social clubs, to know people. The first week they move in, it’s really easy. Also, since Honors Students move in before, they get that initial social group, and they go into transitions already knowing a few people. Having these events throughout the year is what we are trying to help with because right now, after the beginning, we don’t do much until exams. That huge gap of little communication is when the freshmen are adjusting well, so we’ve done our job, that’s our goal, and we aren’t their parents, so we don’t force them to go to events. But we want them to say hi, and them to feel comfortable enough to ask for help if they need it. We want them to be able to use us as a resource, and sometimes the mentors forget, and sometimes they text about dinner too much, so they have to find the balance.

Q: So, what are your concerns along that line, overall for mentoring?
A: As much as we are working with communication with the Honors office, we still find pride in being a Student run council, so we don’t want to be eaten by the office. So, we are a form of governance in a way because we have that communication, and ANCHOR is also an organization that communicates with the office. When we talked about the advisor being there to support us, originally the idea was to have Kelly at the meetings, but then we talked about it as a Council and decided that it shifted the dynamic of the meeting so we changed it to a biweekly meeting with her. It’s making sure that the division – the line – is still there.

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

Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?
 Yes; email.

Connections this stakeholder provided:
 Mentor Council.

Possible next-steps:
 Construct solutions for the “sophomore problem”, wherein students feel disconnected from the Honors College after their freshman year.
 Incorporate the Mentor Council and ANCHOR into Honors governance without being “consumed” by the office administration.
### Dialogue 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors College Student, Allendale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Age:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The primary goal of this opportunity was to receive feedback from a current GVSU Honors College student regarding our top 2 prototype concepts. The insights provided by this student will be used in our consideration of our top prototype concept from our 2 prototype concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our team’s problem statement is: “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” This research involves gaining feedback regarding our current top 2 prototype concepts that we have developed based on our research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of Research:</td>
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<tr>
<td>This stakeholder is a current GVSU Honors Student in her Sophomore year. She thought both prototype concepts could be possible and helpful in the Honors College. She believes that pairing students together would be a great way for students to make friends and make students more likely to attend Honors events if they have this pairing. Focusing on the Town Hall meeting, she thinks it could be easily implemented into Honors. The students could be more likely to attend if there was food involved, they had a friend in attendance, or the meetings gave time for students to connect with others. She did make the point that we may need to work hard to reach out to students that don’t live in Niemeyer.</td>
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Important insights:

- Will attend an event, like the Town Hall, if their friend is also going or asks them to go.
- Likes the idea of the Companion program, thinks it would have been great her freshmen year to gain a peer connection right away. She would attend more Honors events if she had someone who was also interested in going.
- Thinks the Town Hall should have a focus, but also there should be opportunities to meet other people in attendance, like student or faculty.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

**Q:** Go ahead and read our first prototype, the Companion Program. What do you think of the Companion Program?

**A:** I like that it would give students an instant opportunity to meet someone new. I think it is a good idea to have this option open to freshmen and other school years. I know one of my friends transferred into the Honors College and struggled to connect with any other Honors student because she didn’t live in one of the Honors housing option and didn’t have a freshmen sequence.

**Q:** What kinds of things would you like to connect with a person over, like interests, major, etc.?

**A:** I think it would be nice to connect with someone in the same major as me. It would be nice to have someone taking the same courses as me to maybe plan our courses together or have someone that is going through the same pain before even beginning classes. I did enter into college undecided, so I don’t know how that would work if I were to do it my freshmen year. Other things could be like my hobbies, maybe if someone shares my other language/culture, or if they like to volunteer. I definitely think there should be more in common between people **besides** just their major.
Q: When would you have liked to be connected with another student that shares your interests in the Honors College?

A: I know there is the Mentor Program, but this would be good for making friends freshmen year. Also, there have been times when I wish I had someone to go to events with, so I would do it now too.

Q: Now, you can read the second prototype, the Town Hall meeting. What do you think of the Town Hall meeting?

A: I think it’s a very practical option, it may be easiest to implement. The only thing is, how are you going to get students to continue to come each month? There would definitely need to be a lot of advertisement. Possibly RAs could try to get their students to come as a big group. I live off campus, so I think you need to make sure to somehow reach out to the students that don’t live in Honors housing.

Q: How likely are you to attend a Town Hall meeting, if it were held once a month?

A: It really depends on the time and my schedule. I know towards the end of the semesters I tend to start skipping club meetings in order to make time for school work or studying or just time to myself. So, it is very dependent on what is currently going on. If there is an issue that I am passion about, or would like to have a say in, then I would try my best to go.

Q: What would entice you to attend a meeting?

A: Free food. I always think about going to an event based on if I will be getting something out of it. There could also be some sort of game with rewards involved. As long as the meetings are kept free and there isn’t a membership sort of fee, I would be willing to attend meetings. I also like to know someone who is also going. This could be someone that asks me to go with them or I know ahead of time that they are going to the meetings. It may be a good idea to make each meeting a Facebook event so people can select interested or going. Because I sometimes will look at events on Facebook and if I see one of my friends is interested or is going, I may be more tempted to go. Even though
I am willing to go alone at the beginning of the semester because I figure there will be a lot of people there that may not know a lot of people or may want to meet new people.

**Q:** Where would the best location be for the Town Hall meeting?

**A:** I think the MPR is a good location. You could even switch it up each month and move it to Kirkhof or Holton Hooker. Those living in Holton Hooker may not come to a meeting due to the distance from the Honors College. I do think distance may always be an issue though. It could be hard to get students off campus to also come. If you do just have it in the MPR, you may just be reaching out to students who live there. Of course, if someone really wants to have their voice heard or take part, they won’t care too much, they will find a way to attend.

**Q:** What kinds of things do you think should be discussed at a meeting and how would the meeting be run?

**A:** I figure things like events, courses, and problems raised by students or faculty. If I imagine a normal Town Hall meeting, there would be voting taking place. Maybe you could somehow allow for students to vote who weren’t able to make it. I do think to engage people it shouldn’t be all business. This might make people bored especially if you want the meetings to be 2-3 hours. There could be an ice breaker so students can meet one another and connect with faculty. It would be great to have faculty be in regular attendance. Even have time for people to just chat, maybe splitting people up into smaller groups. In those groups maybe they could come up with some problems they may like to present to the whole meeting. There could also be committees that work on particular problems after they are presented. Each could have at least one faculty member. I do like the idea of having people present their senior projects at the meetings. It would be really helpful for students that don’t even know where to begin on a project. Maybe, whoever leads the Town Halls could be in charge of making an event that showcases all of the senior projects or for whoever wants to share their senior projects. You could definitely incorporate other things besides just the business end of it. Of course, you also need to keep on track, or else it may just become another club instead of a Town Hall meeting. So, there could be like a set time for an ice breaker, an open mic where people can suggest problems, a time to present the problems that are going to be discussed, voting, and maybe at the end you could have people present their senior projects. You just need
to make sure you don’t take too much time because even if people can come and go as they please, it can be kind of awkward just leaving a meeting in the middle. So, when you advertise you could send out a specific set schedule of timing that the meeting will be based off of so people can plan when they could leave.

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<tr>
<th>Stakeholder response to “what is the one thing I didn’t ask you that you think I should have?”</th>
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<th>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, in person or over email.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Three more connections this stakeholder provided:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Other Honors students</td>
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<tr>
<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Take into consideration her suggestions when refining each of our prototypes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Get other students’ opinions on if they would be willing to take part in either of our innovations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Figure out a way to combine some of our innovations to make one stronger one.</td>
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Dialogue 18

Stakeholder Group/Location: FaceTime Interview; Honors Student (senior)

Estimated Age: __X__ 20-30 ____ 30-40 _____40-50 ____ 50+

Gender: Female

Primary Goal of this Opportunity:

The primary goal of this opportunity was to get feedback from a senior Honors Student regarding our top 2 prototype concepts for the FMHC.

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

The current work reflects our problem statement because our innovations are focused on facilitating communication (faculty-peer, and peer-peer), and creating a minor governing body in order to have input in decision making.

Summary of Research:

The interview was quick, and they didn’t have a lot to correct as far as our prototype concepts are concerned. They liked both of the proposed ideas, and suggested that we tighten up certain aspect of the Companion Program in order for it to be viable. They also pointed out some flaws in the current mentor system. In regards to the Honors Open Assembly, they said that it would be a good implementation of Honors governance, at least at the foundational level. It would be interesting to see where the Open Assembly would go.

Important insights:
The interviewee felt that both ideas were solid, and that they would have found use of them in their freshman year and beyond.

- Make sure to implement a resubmission process for Companion Program.

**Dialogue Questions and Response:**

**Q:** Please read this description of the Honors College Companion Program. How do you feel about that?

**A:** It’s a good idea, but you have to be able to resubmit. If I hate my companions, I will feel more distant from the Honors College so the ability to resubmit is a great idea. It opens up the perspectives that you may not get along with them but find out that you do. It will be helpful freshman year, but after that you have your own friends and it’s sort of on you to go out and do things and make friends after freshman year. It seems like only a freshman year commitment.

**Q:** How could a program like this have affected your freshman year?

**A:** The mentors didn’t always follow up, or maybe I forgot, but, I definitely don’t remember the people that were in my mentor group. If there’s more push for leaders, or a forced coordination once a month, that’s how the mentor group could be better. The companion group leaves the responsibility to students but events can help. You could send out emails and remind people and their companions. We also did this fun thing for campus ministry called a “coffee crawl” were we went downtown and hopped around to different coffee shops. That would help give new students experience downtown, help make their friendships stronger, and overall improve their health.

**Q:** We would like to increase student involvement and awareness of the decisions being made in the Honors College through the establishment of an Open Assembly event. Please read this description. How do you feel about this?

**A:** I think it’s a good idea because people who have ideas aren’t required to come but can. I think it’s informal and that’s good. It reminds me of Gilmore Girls, the entire town votes on things and you have a voice, but you don’t have to run for office or anything. Students who want to practice public speaking or building ideas can also find use out of
It’s good to have everyone together. Passionate people would come, but Honors students are lazy so I don’t know how many will actually come.

Free food would be great, I completely agree.

Q: Do you think it fulfills governance and would give you a voice?

A: I think it will for sure. Yes, it’s not a formal sense of government, but it’s good because you don’t have to run for anything. It’s a good replacement for a governing body. It’s like using the popular vote in the presidential election.

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

No answer.

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

Yes. Text message or phone call.

Three more connections this stakeholder provided:

- Honors Students

Possible next-steps:

- Conduct more Student research regarding our top innovation.
- Inspire passion in Honors Students so that they continue to attend Open Assembly.
- Investigate “coffee crawls” and other activities for groups to do downtown.
### Dialogue 19

**Stakeholder Group/Location:** Honors Student

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<tr>
<th>Estimated Age:</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>30-40</th>
<th>40-50</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td>Female</td>
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**Primary Goal of this Opportunity:**

The primary goal of this opportunity was to present our top two prototype concepts to an Honors student in order to get feedback from them on the pros and cons of these concepts and how we can further improve upon them.

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

Our team problem statement says that “*We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.*” By reaching out to students and getting their feedback on our top two prototype concepts, we are gaining empathy with them and can alter our designs according to their feedback in order to cater to students’ specific needs.

**Summary of Research:**

This stakeholder liked the Town Hall style meeting the best. She felt that it would have been good place to go, especially freshman year, both to meet new people and to determine her own role in the Honors College and how Honors would help her fulfill her goals in college. While she was interested in pairing students together by major, this student did not feel that this would be best for students who, like herself, are a part of a very small major where everyone is already familiar with each other. An interesting insight this student gave was that she is unaware of the power students have within Honors to implement changes. Without this knowledge, she felt that places for students to give feedback would not be utilized since students have no knowledge of whether their ideas will be used or not.
Important insights:

- Going to a student group with questions and problems is more comfortable than talking to faculty or administration
- Students don’t know what powers they have to change the Honors experience
- Connecting people by major would not work well for people in a small major or program

Dialogue Questions and Responses:

**Q:** What do you think of the innovation in which we pair people by majors?

**A:** I think it would be really great for people who are in a larger major. For me, because there is not a lot of music majors, I already know all of them so that’s the same community that I always talk to, whereas if I was in a larger major like engineering for example, I could know, ‘Oh hey, this person is in Honors, I can talk to them, but still have my group of engineering friends over there.’ For me it’s the same community, but for others it may be two separate things.

**Q:** If you were to participate in a program like this, how would it work best for you then?

**A:** I think it would be nice to know people who also enjoy music, like ___ for example, I think it’s awesome that she plays the piano and flute, so knowing her would be really awesome so I could talk to them about music things.

**Q:** So people with interests related to your major but not the people in your program who you see all the time?

**A:** Yes, but I don’t think that that works for every major, I think that’s kind of specific to mine. There aren’t a lot of majors that are that small I don’t think. There’s a handful I think.

**Q:** What do you think of the Town-Hall meeting? Would you go to a meeting like that, or how could we make it that you would go to a meeting like that?

**A:** I think it would depend on how it was advertised, especially if you aim it at the freshmen coming in like “hey, this is a super awesome community for you to join” so that they’ll be like “Oh okay, cool, I can actually talk to people who aren’t my roommates.” I think if you start it with the freshmen and then continue it on from there then it would grow really well. I think you would have a hard time reaching the upperclassmen because we’re all super crazy busy living our lives. We’re all like ‘Oh yeah I’m part of
the Honors College, but it’s just kind of there, it’s not the most important thing that I’m
doing.’ I think it would be a really great idea, you just couldn’t expect it to be big right
away. I think you could get a lot of professors on board too. It’d be great to have the
professors also kind of explain the Honors College. Because I know for me I had no idea
that I would have to take two junior seminars and when I came I thought it would be
great to do an Honors program even though I have all of my gen eds and I don’t really
need to be here, so that would be nice too.

Q: In relation to our problem statement, especially related to student governance, what
other ideas do you have or what are we missing?

A: I think it might be nice to have, I mean we have the mentors and depending on who
your mentor is and the level of interaction you have with them, because my mentor, I met
her once because I had band and couldn’t go to the meeting stuff and then we never had
any communication after that. So I think it would be nice to have a designated panel of
Honors students, maybe in their junior or senior year who are always there to answer
questions about the Honors College that, I don’t know, it would have to be worked out, or
maybe just having stricter rules with the mentor on what they need to do or how much
they need to reach out to their mentees. Yeah, maybe improving that or having a board
of people you go to if you have any questions about the Honors College itself.

Q: What do you think about ANCHOR fulfilling the kind of role that you’re talking
about?

A: I think this is something that could be done kind of like an election rather than just
saying ‘here are these people who are interested in being mentors and want to be one.’ So
if this was someone that the Honors College community votes on. If you implement the
Town Hall-esque idea that would be a great place for people to network with other
Honors students, figure out who would be great in this role and then they can use that
Town Hall area to also help other students while they’re there. I think this is also
something that mentors can do as well, it’s just limiting their role or defining their role a
little bit more and in that, giving them more power or less power.

Q: We also have the Honors student group ANCHOR, have you heard of them?

A: I have not, I have no idea who they are.

Q: Ok, they are an Honors organization on campus who are trying to get Honors students
more involved in things.
A: So yeah, I mean, if ANCHOR, if we can get them to be more active with the Honors community because I literally live here, and I have no idea who they are. I think the whole Town Hall setting would give them an opportunity to make themselves known. I think they could also do a lot more during freshman week getting to know us, and maybe they were and I was just in my freshman blur of ‘Oh! This is new!’ That would be really nice to have that resource because I don’t really know who to go to if I have Honors questions like I emailed last year.

Q: Who would you go to now if you had problems?

A: Now that I’m more comfortable with things I would probably just go to open advising that they have. I really haven’t gone there this year though. I’ve also talked to other students if I have problems, like I’ll talk to ____ and say ‘Hey, how does this work?’ I think it’s more comfortable to go to a student group than it is to go to an advising session. If it’s this one group that I know they exist and I know that they’re there to help me, but also I know them personally, then I would be like ‘Hey you, answer my question’ rather than feeling uncomfortable about having questions.

Q: Between our top 2 prototype concepts, which one do you think would work better and which one is the most practical?

A: I think that the whole Town Hall meeting would work the best because I think it just gives you a lot of opportunities to meet people and figure out what you’re really doing and how it’s going to work out with your degree. I think partnering people by majors and minors is more practical. If you can somehow combine the two, I think that would be really nice like if we had these Town Hall meetings and then had everyone raise their hands if they are in a specific discipline then you could get them to do it during those meetings. I think it’s just going to take a while for the Town Hall thing to really set off, at least a year or two, at least in my head it is.

Q: People aren’t necessarily as likely to go to events on their own though, so what if we paired people by majors and then encouraged them to go to the Town Hall meetings because then they would have someone to go with?

A: I think definitely if I had people to go with I would probably go, especially if I knew that the first few meetings weren’t just going to be informational. Like if I knew there would be other activities going on. From there I think the next few sessions could be informational or on this topic or that topic.
**Q:** Which of the two prototype concepts do you like the best?

**A:** I definitely like the Town Hall one a lot more because, like I said there’s not really a lot of people in my major that I don’t know, so I think it would be very nice because I didn’t really know anyone in the Honors College. I knew my roommates and then I knew ____ because we had class together, but other than that I didn’t really know what I was doing with my degree or how this fit in, so that would be very nice, especially the first couple months of school and then from there on I can do whatever.

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

**A:** Maybe my opinion on the other three topics.

**Q:** What is your opinion on the other three topics?

**A:** I can’t remember what they are.

**Q:** We were thinking of having something on blackboard to connect everyone, students and faculty and they could just ask whatever questions they wanted or even just having announcements on there instead of emailing them.

**A:** I think that is a, kind of like our Honors Facebook page, the Honors Class of 2020, so it’s kind of like a more organized version of that. That’s okay. I personally would never use it. I would be like ‘oh…people. They’re going to see my name and know that I’m confused.’ I probably wouldn’t use that.

**Q:** Would it be better if it was anonymous?

**A:** Yes, but I’ve taken classes where there’s been an extra discussion thread for if you have any questions about the course, just put them there and no one uses it, even though we all have questions and I’ll talk about my questions with other students, but I will not post my question in that discussion board.

**Q:** Another of our top 5 innovation was creating some place for students to give feedback, like a suggestion box. Something that will always be there for students to use to give feedback.

**A:** I think that’s a great idea. Again I don’t know how much it would be used, like right now I don’t have any critiques of the Honors College, but I’ve also only taken one
Honors class. I guess it would depend on who would use it or not and I don’t know how much that would change things. I guess I don’t really know what can be changed if that makes sense, like what power do we as students have over how the Honors College is run? I know we really don’t have a lot of say in matter like ‘you have to take these classes to get your Honors degree’ or maybe we do, I don’t know, so depending on how much we have the ability to change would determine how successful that would be.

Q: Are you interested in knowing what powers we do have as students or not so much, it doesn’t really matter?

A: Yeah, I think if that information was available to students like right now, it kind of feels like everything is set in stone, like here we are, we’re going through the system. If there was a way for me to know what I could change then yeah. I don’t know if I would necessarily change anything.

Q: Going off of that, our final innovation was having an Honors pamphlet or somewhere to go where all of the information was written down and students can always access it if they have any questions that could be answered there.

A: That would be very nice. That would also get the group of people who don’t like to go out to big social events where they know there’s going to be a lot of people, so we could have these Town Hall sessions and we can have you buddied up, but if you’re the kind of person that’s like, “I’m not going to interact with people” then they can go here and get that information. I would also make that available for students who are coming to GV that are interested in Honors because I remember trying to find this information on the Honors College before my essay competition and I had no idea what I was getting into and I had no idea how it was going to help me in any way, I was just like ‘Oh Honors, that’s fancy’ and I probably wouldn’t have joined the Honors College had I known more about that because it’s just extra classes that I don’t need.

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

N/A

Another connection provided by this stakeholder:
The people in Honors who are in charge of finding perspective students

**Possible next-steps:**

- Talk to Honors staff who are responsible for interacting with incoming freshman and their families to see what their expectations and wishes are regarding Honors
- Talk to Honors freshmen to see how their experience in Honors compares with what they were expecting or what they were lead to believe about Honors
**Dialogue 20**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group/Location: Honors Student – Honors Housing RA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Age: <strong>X</strong> 20-30  30-40  40-50  50+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender: Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Goal of this Opportunity:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The goal of this interview was to get feedback on our top two prototype concepts from a resident assistant in order to refine them and come to the decision of our top prototype concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does conducting this work reflect on your team problem statement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our team problem statement is “We will establish a way to better facilitate communication and representation of students regarding decisions that directly affect the Frederik Meijer Honors College.” Our top 2 prototype concepts came from insights gained through research and needs statements. This interview gave feedback on those two concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Research:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We received pretty positive feedback about our top two 2 prototype concepts, but some important insights were also drawn from this interview. The Companion Program needs to be clearly distinguished from the mentor program, because the interviewee believed they sounded too similar. The Town Hall meeting could be very effective, but only if students actually show up and participate. Therefore, incentives like food may be necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important insights:</td>
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</table>
In addition to the definition of their roles and responsibilities, students need a better definition of the opportunities and power they have in the Honors College to take control of their own education.

- Students need a catalyst to bring them together.
- Students need to be more involved beyond their freshman year.

Dialogue Questions and Response:

Q: One of our top 2 innovations is The Honors College Companion Program. It will be the catalyst to unite students within the Frederik Meijer Honors College. Every student within the FMHC will be paired with one or two other Honors student according to intended major, hobbies, class year, gender, etc. according to the students’ wants and needs. This will be completely separate from the mentor program as students will be paired with peers. What do you think about this idea?

A: I think this idea sounds pretty similar to the mentor program. So, I’m not sure about what the main focus of this group would be.

Q: As an RA, how do you think this could come in handy getting residents to meet people other than their roommates?

A: I think it would be very handy in getting residents to meet other people besides just their roommates. Honors students are normally more closed off, so having this program could help bring students out of their shell.

Q: The matching system used would be similar to the system housing uses to match roommates. How do you think the system does at the pairing compatible roommates who develop friendships?

A: I think the current system that Housing uses to match roommates does a terrible job at matching people because it doesn’t ask enough personal detail questions about personality. It mainly focuses on the bigger picture and not the smaller details that could make a big difference.”
Q: What are the most common types of complaints you get from your residents about their roommates?

A: I often get complaints about how messy they are or complaints about roommates bringing people over and not telling them.

Q: This is our 2nd innovation: We would like to increase student involvement in and awareness of the decisions being made in the Honors College through the establishment of a Town Hall style meeting. These meetings would occur once every month and would provide opportunities for students to network with faculty, administration, and peers. What are your thoughts on this idea?

A: I think that this would be a great way for residents to get to voice their opinions and concerns about the Honors College as well as be able to contribute to Honors. I think that the differences between this meeting and ANCHOR meetings should be made clear so that people will not confuse them.

Q: How could you encourage your residents to go to these meetings?

A: I could encourage residents to go to meetings by telling them about incentives they would receive for going such as food, if food were to be provided.

Q: What are some issues you’d like to see addressed at these meeting? Speaking as both an RA and as an Honors student?

A: I think issues on how to get more student diversity should be addressed. I also think that issues around how to reduce mental health problems within the students in Honors should be talked about. This is because students in the Honors College normally have high rates of mental health issues.

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

N/A
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Will this stakeholder agree to reconnect for further inquiry? How do they want to contacted?</th>
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<th>For Dialogue:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Incentives like food are necessary to draw students to events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ The matching system for The Honors College Companion Program would have to go into more personal personality questions in order to make compatible matches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ ANCHOR meetings and the Town Hall meetings would need to be clearly distinguished.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Possible next-steps:</th>
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<tr>
<td>❖ We will be drawing insights from our top 2 prototype concepts interviews and from our upcoming collaborator debrief to narrow down and refine our concepts to arrive at one prototype concept.</td>
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</table>
Research Bibliography 1


Reason for including this source in your work:

The abstract for this article sounded extremely relevant to our design problem. The article includes research about student participation in university governance and proposes ways to facilitate more student involvement.

Main argument:

Student participation in university governance should be simplified for ease of involvement. There should also be many different ways to participate and at different levels of decision making in the university.

Important ideas:

- Students are not informed about how they can participate
- Students don’t know who their representatives are
- Very low rates of student participation
- Opportunities to participate need to be time efficient
- Simplification of electoral processes
**Evidence:**

“most students responding to the questionnaire say they are not well informed (56%) or not informed at all (24%) with regard to this issue”

“77% do not know who their representatives are on the respective boards of studies, 86% do not know which students represent them on the faculty boards, and over 88% do not know who their representatives are on the governing committee of their faculty”

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

“most of the decisions taken by the governing body of the university affect students directly is also given as further reason for their participation to be taken into account”

“This article focuses on analyzing student participation in the governance and functioning of the university, with the specific aims of demonstrating the principal difficulties perceived and identifying proposals that may favor the increased and improved involvement of students in these processes.”

“students do not yet play a greater and more demanding role, especially when we discover that many of the competences considered essential for the degree subjects being taught are being put to use in these channels of and structures for participation”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td> Data</td>
<td> Research was done on Spanish universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> Proposals for solutions</td>
<td> Low participation rates in research questionnaires</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

185
**Connections:**

- The end of the article gives some proposals on how to get students more involved, which is what our challenge is.
- Statistics are provided regarding student involvement/knowledge of representation.
- The article addresses some limitations as well, including student time constraints and willingness to get involved.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How does this data compare to data of students at GVSU?
- Would any of the proposed solutions be feasible here at GVSU?
Citation:


Reasons for including this source in your work:

This article includes several points about the benefits of student participation in the governance of universities. There is also a discussion on the different types of participation and actual student experiences. The article interviews students at a university. The students give their insight on why they joined a university committee and how it impacted them. The article give an example of interviewing students for research, which will assist our team when creating our dialogues.

Main argument:

Student participation in the decision-making of a university is important for the students and the school. There are various reasons for students to become involved in university committees, understanding these reasons will be helpful to encourage future participants.
Important ideas:

- The support and attitudes of supervisors or directors influence student participation. Students look to a director of the department to determine how they should present their opinions or issues. They’re more likely to speak up if they feel the supervisor is welcoming.

- Role Theory is an important concept that should be followed by organizations. It allows for the people involved to know how to behave and what needs to be done.

- Many students go into a leadership position to represent the student body to gain experience. If this is their motivation, they tend to end up learning a lot from their involvement.

Evidence:

- In interviews, students stated that they learned from their participation and gained leadership skills and communication skills.

- Students report that they are positively or negatively influenced by their teachers or supervisors to participate and share their opinion. This is important to know, so superiors can find ways to positively influence the students.
Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

Quotes:
“better understanding of the processes of student participation will enable the design of strategies to both motivate capable students to ‘sign up’ and effectively support their ongoing involvement” (72).

“...even though university policy may emphasize student-centeredness, its practical implementation often focuses on ‘managing the student body’ more than responding to the experiences of the students” (71).

“Student representatives described several types of challenging attitudes or ‘mindsets’ their fellow students had towards their role: lack of awareness… lack of motivation… lack of efficacy… and lack of respect” (80).

Terms: Role ambiguity, heuristic, constituency, efficacy.

Concepts: Role Theory, Extrinsic motivation v. intrinsic motivation, role strain, role conflict.

Strengths:
- Shows the interview process with students.
- Gives the student perspective on participation.

Weaknesses:
- Research done at an Australian University.
- Small number of students interviewed.
Connections:

- Students found that sending out group emails to students got the fewest number of responses. This is important information that our team can use when discussing the best possible way to communicate information with the Honors student body or in getting student feedback.

- Students are motivated by what they can get out of being a part of an organization. This is an important point on why students get involved. Our team can think of ways to make communication with the Honors College a priority for students.

- There are many ways to get in contact with students; personal networks (using contacts, hearing of an issue, talking to staff), outreach (suggestion box, email survey, discussion board), outreach forums (announcements at lectures or inviting people to talk after class). These ideas connect to our challenge to increase communication between the students and the Honors College. It’s possible that these forms of communication could be a part of our final solution.

Questions/Concerns:

- How do the students feel about the Honors organizations?
- Do students see the faculty and staff as positive influencers to their participation in the community?
Research Bibliography 3

**Citation:**


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

This source addresses student involvement, investigating why this involvement occurs, why it is beneficial to the student, and comparing the proposed theory of student involvement to other theories addressing student development. As our work similarly will be determining how to increase student communication and involvement in the Frederik Meijer Honors College, this source is relevant in providing insight to what student involvement entails.

**Main argument:**

Student involvement is the amount and quality of time devoted to various aspects of the college experience. The student involvement theory of development surpasses other theories of student development in light of how this theory focuses on how the student’s motivation and use of time contribute to their learning experience, as opposed to emphasizing the teaching of a specific curriculum or the utilization of specific educational resources as other theories do.

**Important ideas:**

- The theory of student involvement links together variables that are emphasized in other theories of development
- Student involvement in campus activities positively correlates with academic retention and success
- Student involvement is encouraged by many different factors: living on campus, Honors College participation, increased student-faculty interaction, etc.
- Teachers should focus less on the content of the class and how it is taught and more on how to achieve the desired result
- Policies and personnel can be evaluated by how well they encourage student involvement in the college environment

**Evidence:**

Studies examining the reasons students give for dropping out of school have found that these reasons can be linked to a lack of student involvement or an insufficient amount of free time that the student can devote to college.

Conversely, students who are actively involved in activities such as sports, living or working on campus, or participating in an Honors program tend to have higher retention and general satisfaction rates.

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

**Quotes:**

“Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience.” p. 1

“In other words, the theory of student involvement argues that a particular curriculum, to achieve the effects intended, must elicit sufficient student effort and investment of energy to bring about the desired learning and development.” p. 5

“The principal advantage of the student involvement theory over traditional pedagogical approaches (including the subject-matter, the resource, and the individualized or eclectic
theories) is that it directs attention away from subject matter and technique and toward the motivation and behavior of the student.” p.12

Terms: Student Involvement, cathexis, pedagogical theories, locus of control, attribution

Concepts: Student Involvement Theory, the Individualized Theory, the Resource Theory, the Subject-Matter Theory, Quality versus Quantity in student involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ Defines student involvement</td>
<td>❖ Does not go in depth on how students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Gives various student involvement</td>
<td>become involved in the first place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scenarios and their benefits</td>
<td>❖ May be outdated information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Compares to other theories of student development</td>
<td>regarding current developmental theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ Includes advice for professors and administrators</td>
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</table>

Connections:
❖ The resource gives recommendations on how to increase student involvement in a college setting, which is a portion of the problem we are solving for.
❖ The source additionally shows several examples of successful student involvement and how this involvement is beneficial for the student. Having the examples and outcomes of student involvement may help us to combine these examples into a new solution for how to facilitate communication with students in the Frederik Meijer Honors College.
❖ The article points out that student time is a finite resource, which is important to consider when attempting to motivate Honors College students to become more involved. This realization can help refine our solutions in the long-run as we adjust for this constraint.
The resource mentions the use of counselors to determine how students are motivated to become involved. This thought is interesting, and it might be useful to talk to people in the Honors College administration, not necessarily counselors, to determine if they have received student feedback related to our team problem.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How exactly are students motivated to become involved in campus affairs in the first place?
- How will student involvement in other areas affect additional student involvement in the Frederik Meijer Honors College? Will the areas of involvement work well together, or will time restrict involvement to only one or two areas?
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
“Respondents from six different institutions agreed most strongly with the conceptualizations of engaging broad student interests and creating clarity about the role, purpose, and mission of the governance unit.” This quote from the abstract aligned closely with our desired outcome.

Main argument:
Student governance has not adapted well to commercialized higher education of today. Student involvement in university governance is viewed as a non-serious component of the overall university governance. The competing interests of higher education create a tension that does not support shared governance generally, and with students specifically.

Important ideas:
- Arguments against student involvement include: age and maturity, self-interest in immediate outcomes as compared to long-term thinking, naiveté about politics and institutional structures, and that higher education should be governed by the best and most capable.
- Students are typically left to govern student organizations with little direct input into other institutional operations.
- The study findings emphasized the need for student governance bodies and their leaders to find a meaning and role for their bodies and their efforts.
Evidence:

“Data were collected using a researcher-developed, literature based 26-item survey instrument that was divided into three sections: characteristics of an ideal student government body, elements that determine governance body effectiveness, and the ideal characteristics of student governance body leaders.”

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“The current study was designed to explore the ideal characteristics of student governance bodies, their leaders, and elements to be used to determine organizational effectiveness.”

“For college administrators across campus, and those in student affairs in particular, there is a need for the examination of what ideal student governance bodies look like, what measures are used to identify their effectiveness, and who is best qualified to provide leadership for them.”

“The challenge, as suggested from this exploratory work, is to construct a future for student government bodies that represents broad interests and undertakes meaningful work for the welfare of the current and future generations of college students.”

Strengths:
- Data was provided
- Very relevant to our desired outcome

Weaknesses:
- Small study (6 universities in the Midwest)
- Survey was used to collect data (can be leading)

Connections:
- Little importance was given to the use of data in decision-making
- Need for equitable and broad-based student leadership
- Interests of all students needs to be represented
- Define roles of officers
Questions/Concerns:

- Do students know how to get involved in the governance of GVSU?
- Are the roles of governing officers defined somewhere?
Citation:

Reasons for including this source in your work:
This paper provides insight into the ideas of students participating in university governance and how this can positively or negatively impact the decision making of the university. With this in mind, the paper gives important background information into why we may want students to participate more in university governance.

Main argument:
The main argument of this paper is the need for an increase of student participation in university governance. Students should be involved in the high-level decision-making. The paper makes points for and against the participation of students in university governance.

Important ideas:
- A main reason students may be excluded in the formulation of educational goals is because many believe that this task is only for the teacher or educator.
- Reasons against student participation: students won’t be able to promote the interest of their groups, can lead to conflict of interest, students are inexperienced in the process of decision making.
- Students need to be involved in issues they care about. Positive results will only come when stakeholders fully support the mission of the organization.
Evidence:

- Including students in university decision-making makes the implementation of policies easier and can help recognize weaknesses in the structure of the university.

- A reason against student participation is the unbalancing of powers associated with the university, lowering the academic standards.

- Any academic decision impacts the students directly.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“It thus appears important for student involvement in decision-making to extend to high-level, strategic issues as opposed to routine, procedural matters” (238).

“Effective student participation was not possible due to a number of organizational constraints, which included unnecessary bureaucracy and lack of adequate information” (241).

“The offering of courses that explicitly address democratic practices and civic education has been suggested as one way of providing this encouragement” (241).

Concepts: Organizational audits, Council of Europe Project on Education for Democratic Citizenship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discusses a study done of students, board members, and teachers.</td>
<td>Paper is over 10 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives pros and cons of student participation.</td>
<td>Research is mainly done in Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at universities in the US and Europe.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Connections:

- Our topic is about student governance in the Honors College, this paper can give our team the pros and cons of increasing student participation in the Honors College governance.
- The paper suggests what decisions are better for students to take part in. Specifically, the bigger decisions over the small weekly decisions.
- Students want to see the change being made, which helps to increase student participation.

Questions/Concerns:

- What factors may hold back Honors faculty from encouraging student participation?
- How much information are students given regarding big decisions made by the Honors College?
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
This source discusses political cases of student representation in decision making. It is important to understand main conceptions and objections to student involvement in university decisions.

Main argument:
The author states that student representation within university decision making is often limited. Different political cases addressed in the article provide insight into complementary and contradictory views to understand why student representation may be limited and to also justify the variance between levels of governance in universities.

Important ideas:
- Students have the right to participate in institutional government according to the *Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students* endorsed in 1968.
- The reasons for and against student representation involve the perspective of student activism dependent on the roles of being a student, act as consumers or users, or members of the institution and community.
- Objections include too much student power, short-term perspectives, and lack of knowledge in life.
- Students should have some control over their learning environment.
Evidence:
Using several credible literatures, the emphasis is on the students and their representation and recognition from higher authorities representing four different views.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

1.) Politically-realistic case: focuses on power of students involved
   “students are internal stakeholders…and therefore ought to be involved in governing the university.” (pg. 1446)

2.) Consumerist case: refers to students as clients and consumers of education
   “as clients or consumers of the products and services provided by universities, students affected by decisions that are made…should have a voice in the making of these decisions. (pg. 1448)

3.) Communitarian case: the role and status of students are to be members of the educational process at the university
   “students’ claims to an equal voice and to equal authority in the university community should be tempered in view of their limited knowledge and experience” (pg. 1450)

4.) Democratic and consequentialist case: students are viewed as citizens and student representation is a means to exercise democratic practice
   “benefits to the university may be a more open, peaceful and responsive academic environment, insofar as student involvement in university decision making is expected to moderate student demands (and those of other participants), generate trust, and improve the quality of decisions.” (pg. 1451)

Strengths:
- Offers several ideas of political views

Weaknesses:
- Views can vary between and within institutions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provides insight into potential opportunities for student involvement</th>
<th>Does not fully evaluate the consequentialist case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Connections:**

- In many institutions, students are underrepresented. This is a common theme in which we, as a team, want to improve.
- Students should be informed of their rights as a member of the university and involvement in the decision-making process.
- Variability in student representation is good for justifying ideas within university decision making.
- Proposed solutions include student representation in committees, student feedback surveys, staff–student liaison forums, and informal meetings between student leaders and university leadership.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Does the Frederik Meijer Honors College classify as any of the political cases or is closest related to one over another?
- Would the views of the faculty committee in the Honors College agree with these views or present new challenges to not wanting student representation?
- How can we account for a shift in faculty/administration views and student representation in the future?
Citation:


Reason for including this source in your work:

The title caught my eye because it implies the article will explore some reasons that students might not participate in university governance. Upon further examination, I realized that the article would be exploring higher education in Czechia (Czech Republic), but I figured students in the United States would have a lot of the same reasons.

Main argument:

Student participation in university governance is often quite low despite democratic academic structures that are open to student involvement.

Important ideas:

- Student involvement in academic governance prepares them for future democratic processes as citizens, prevents discontent and disruptive student political activism, and improves the services provided by the university.

- There are many reasons students do not participate in the university’s governance: lack of time, knowledge, and interest.

- Most studies show a decrease in student participation despite ample institutional opportunities for involvement.
**Evidence:**

“A rough estimate across European countries suggests that student turnout in most cases is less than one third.”

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

“There are any easy institutional fixes, such as internet voting or making elections simultaneous that could make elections more attractive and thus generate higher turnout among students?”

“Student participation in academic governance defined most basically as the “students’ formal and/or actual ability to influence decisions made in the context of a HE institution or administration” (HE = Higher Education)

“Differences in turnout across faculties range from a meager minimum of 3.9% at the Faculty of Social Studies of the University of Ostrava (only 28 of the 709 students cast their vote) to a maximum of 53.9% in the Film and TV Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. Furthermore, the turnout rate varies significantly across study fields.”

**Strengths:**

- The article examines the effects of different variables on student participation

**Weaknesses:**

- Explores student governance in Czechia
- The article’s data is specific to elections

**Connections:**

- Time is a major factor in the participation of students.
- Policies to increase turnout should consider strategies beyond structural and organizational changes.
- Students in different areas of study have varying levels of participation.
Questions/Concerns:

- Is the division in participation at GVSU like those of the universities used in the study in this article?
## Citation:

## Reason for including this source in your work:
This source brings the idea of checks and balances into education through the communication of students, faculty, and professionals. When innovating the increase in student involvement in institutional governance, communication is a key aspect for successful and productive outcomes.

## Main argument:
Students, faculty, and professionals can benefit from bridging the collaboration gap between these groups to produce a stronger society. Students gain critical thinking and professional skills; faculty continues to stay updated on the trends; professionals get new ideas. Through collaboration, institutions that balance the three groups are well on their way towards an integrated community.

## Important ideas:
- Students have a different mindset than professionals and that transition is generally difficult.
- The main issues of communication are differing goals, time, reputation, and processes.
- An un-invested person can negatively affect institutions, so feedback loops and an exit strategy are vital.
- Long term collaborations increase respect and allows for better understanding and dialogue.

**Evidence:**

“Sometimes it is easier for faculty to focus on the gap between students and the professional world without being willing to acknowledge that there can be false perceptions on both sides of the faculty-professional equation” (64).

“Like any good partnership, there needs to be a shared vision of goals to work towards as this will help to also make sure that mutual benefits are gained by each party involved” (65).

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

- “The innovative ideas shared here can be categorized in three ways: bringing the students to the professional world, bringing the professional world to the classroom, and increasing the networking between the people in both worlds” (58).
Directly from page 63, figure 2. outlines the concept of the “triple gain” where students, professionals, and faculty gain from bridging communication gaps.
The Triple Gain

The triple gain simply refers to our belief that by bridging the gaps between students, faculty, and professionals (utilizing the previously discussed ideas and others), all three parties stand to benefit in substantive ways (see Figure 2) that are rarely in conflict with each other. In addition, the public often benefits as a result of the collaboration producing, a potential quadruple gain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Beneficial Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• External motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure to diverse populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure to complex issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Career path direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiential and authentic learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploration of big questions of the discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help for bite-sized projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fresh perspective on “old” events and process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation skill refinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure to next generation perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity to help craft future employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure to current trends and issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Context of daily struggles and triumphs in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ideas and samples of authentic assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Balance for the abstract and the practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pipeline for research agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visibility of content and skill gaps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2. Delineation of Potential Benefits by Audience*

**Strengths:**

- Stresses importance of communication
- Contains innovative ideas on bridging the gap

**Weaknesses:**

- Does not discuss the feelings of students, faculty, and professionals
- Does not have data on putting this idea into practice

**Connections:**

- Students, faculty, and professionals all receive great benefits to collaborative efforts in decision-making.
- Student motivation for bridging this gap may be gaining professional experience and networking.
- Constraints include differing goals, time, reputation, and processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions/Concerns:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Long term respect is important, but what happens when you get a different team of students every year?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In what ways can we bring the professional side of the institution into the communication between faculty and students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What should we do if there is an un-invested person involved in the institution?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
This source addresses factors that influence student interaction with faculty. As involving students in Honors governance will inevitably involve interaction with faculty and administration, it will be interesting to note what affects this interaction and whether these findings can be applied to our problem statement.

Main argument:
The main argument proposed in this article is that reticent students are less likely to use methods of simultaneous communication, where both participants in the conversation are speaking together, than non-reticent students who utilize these modes of communication more often.

Important insights:
- Reticence negatively affects face-to-face student-faculty communication
- Reticent students avoid conversations that could result in negative feedback on themselves
- Non-Reticent students are more comfortable with face-to-face interaction with faculty
- Not knowing what to say affects the comfort level students feel when visiting faculty at their offices
Email may have encouraged reticent students to make their voice heard more often, but conversely might increase the anxiety felt about face-to-face interactions.

**Evidence:**

Data collected from samples of both reticent and non-reticent students supports that reticent students are more comfortable having face-to-face conversations with faculty while non-reticent students were more comfortable using email to communicate with faculty.

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

**Quotes:**

“Reticent individuals report communication problems associated with anxiety, knowledge, timing, organization, delivery, and memory”

“Problems with knowledge (knowing what to say) appeared to have the greatest impact on comfort level about visiting faculty at their offices.”

“Delivery problems seems to present the biggest challenge for speaking to them (faculty) after class.”

“Non-reticent groups tended to prefer face-to-face communication for all situations, but for some situations they preferred an office visit

**Terms:**

Reticent: Not revealing one’s thoughts or feelings readily

Synchronous: Existing or occurring at the same time

Asynchronous: Not existing or happening at the same time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths:</th>
<th>Weaknesses:</th>
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</table>
Students are acknowledged as a diverse body with more than one classification within this category. Conducts detailed study collecting data to test hypotheses. Only examines the results of reticence on communication and no other factors. Number of reticent participants was smaller than the number non-reticent participants.

**Connections with team problem statement**

- Student communication is affected by the students’ comfort in revealing their own thoughts and feelings.
- Acknowledgement that different students are more comfortable with different forms of communication is important to recognize when others are communicating with students.
- Since faculty are involved in Honors governance, it is important to know how students prefer to communicate with them.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Does this same concept apply to participation in organizations or is it solely applicable to student-faculty interaction?
Citation:
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4223920/

Reason for including this source in your work: This source is valuable because it illuminates certain insect hierarchical systems that are generalizable to other dominance hierarchy situations (such as ours).

Main argument: Insect colonies are a good way to evaluate information flow, because their organization revolves around effective communication and information transfer. Good communication results in individual regulation of responsibility. Dominance behavior is also caused by natural selection.

Important ideas:
- Dominance behavior in the social wasps has been adapted for information transfer in addition to its primal function of reproductive monopoly maintenance.
- Dominance behavior is known to have existed, not only in insect societies, but also in many other group-living animals; for example in birds [69], cattle [70], fish [71], primates [72] and in other quadrupeds [73,74].
- We found that the individuals who spent less than 25% of their time outside the nest showed more frequent dominance behavior (2.90 ± 7.30, n = 91) compared to the others who spent 25% or more time outside the nest (1.41 ± 1.61, n = 96, t= 1.909, p = 0.029), whereas the frequency of the dominance received by the two groups is indistinguishable (2.23 ± 2.68 and 2.04 ± 2.08, t = 0.537, p = 0.296).
Evidence:

- Individual ants who held dominant positions spent less time outside the nest than other ants.
- Dominance cannot be attributed to sexual selection.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“To understand whether the information transfer through dominance can indeed be called efficient, we model the dynamics of information transfer using simple Boolean functions and compare our results against a suitably randomized ensemble. Our result supports the idea that there exist common evolutionary design principles by which the biological regulatory networks are optimized.”

“The queen in the most studied primitively eusocial wasp *P. dominulus* is known to use dominance to gain reproductive monopoly over her colony members [11]. But in the colonies of tropical species *R. marginata*, the queen usually shows very little or no dominance at all.”

“Such dominance behavior among the workers cannot be associated with the reproductive competition, because there is no correlation between the dominance rank of an individual and the probability that she will replace a lost or removed queen [68]. With some experimental correlates, it has been argued earlier that the workers use dominance to transfer information about the colony needs to their co-workers, which is essential for their self-organized regulation of work.”

Strengths:

- Solid statistical work
- Careful conclusions

Weaknesses:

- Confusing linguistics
- Not many statistical conclusions
### Connections:

- This source provided information regarding time spent inside the nest and outside the nest, which doesn’t specifically correlate to our problem statement. However, it’s interesting to note that the more dominant insects left the nest less frequently.
- Another important finding was that worker insects didn’t display dominance towards one another, theoretically because they are not worried about sexual selection and competition.
- Information transfer is essential to not only all insect colonies, but also to other animals as well.

### Questions/Concerns:

- The dominant insects tend to stay inside the nest longer, presumably doing less of the “hard work”.
Citation:


**Reason for including this source in your work:** It’s important to understand how the rest of the animal kingdom organizes their social structure in order to innovate and progress. There is some valuable information included in the field of study related to insect socialization and work effectiveness.

**Main argument:**

Task allocation is the backbone of insect social organization. It’s important that each unit (ant) can function individually from the rest of the colony and is given a task that they can perform quickly and effectively. There are two types of factors that dictate the ant’s role: Internal and External factors. Internal are those of genetic or biological differences between individuals, and external are those environmental conditions thrust upon the ant. In the more recent work, most species of social insect are shown to be influenced more by external factors.

**Important ideas:**

- Each ant performs a task dictated by Internal/External factors.
- Internal: Body size, worker age, genetics.
- External: Changing circumstances, weather patterns, shortages.
- Social interaction rate is one way to determine if there are too many, or too few, workers operating a certain task.
- Frequently change social organization in order to produce desired outcome.
Evidence:

There are subtle cues that direct ants to whether or not they should engage in a task. For example, if there is a shortage of nest-building materials, the ants will recognize the extra time it takes to get their supply of material and reallocate themselves to foraging.

Larger ants are more often appropriated to defense of the nest, while smaller ants may be allocated towards foraging.

Also, in honeybees, younger bees will work inside the nest, while the older, more experienced bees, will venture out to forage.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

“Recent theoretical work shows how task allocation can operate in the absence of intrinsic differences between individuals. In this work, all individuals are considered identical; that is, any individual can perform any task, and an individual’s task and activity level are determined by external stimuli.”

“The ‘foraging-for-work’ model differs from neural network and self-organization models in that environmental stimuli are more important than interactions among individuals. An individual’s decision whether to engage in a task depends on whether it finds itself in a location where execution of that task is required.”

“When a new food source suddenly becomes available to a harvester ant colony, which competes with other seed-eating species for food, ants previously engaged in other tasks will switch to foraging, allowing colonies to take advantage of sudden increases in food availability.”

Strengths: | Weaknesses:
- All ants are individual entities, with requirements for work that change dependent on environmental cues/patterns.

- Aspects of communication innate to ant civilization are foreign to us, and therefore isn’t applicable to our particular solution.

**Connections:**

- Whatever needs to get done, gets done. Resources (individuals) are allocated to the necessary location when required.

- Each individual is equal in their responsibilities (besides the Queen)

- Age and physical ability can affect task allocation.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- In what ways can we communicate goals so that the governing body can operate without constant micromanagement?
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
The article showcases some of the grievances that some governance scholars have with students being voting members of committees. By knowing some of their reasons, we can work to dispel their concerns.

Main argument:
The article examines the behaviors and interactions between students and student board members to determine if the student trustees focus primarily on student issues and vote in the interest of themselves.

Important ideas:
- Passive representation is characterized through the inclusion of an individual with demographic qualities.
- Active representation proposes that an individual’s characteristics can influence their behavior.
- Student board members are not representative of the institutions they serve in terms of race and passive representation is present while active is not.

Evidence:
“Students reported having their views influenced the most by other student leaders (M = 1.78) and the least by other board members (M = 2.28), and they reported feeling the most pressure to vote from other student leaders (M = 2.94) and the least from other board members (M = 3.32). “

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
“Governing boards in the United States carry out at least five major responsibilities: identifying and evaluating their institutions’ leaders; maintaining and communicating their institutions’ mission statements; safeguarding their institutions’ financial health; interacting with outside stakeholders; and assessing their own performance.”

“Challenges in service that these respondents identified included competing demands on their time, limited amounts of time to learn the role and serve in the position, and the need to be proactive in building relationships.” (“these respondents” = 30 students serving in student board positions or public boards)

“Understanding the pressures these students face as they balance their identity as a student with the fiduciary duty they owe to their institution is vital.”

Strengths:
- The article provided insights to what students who do vote on boards may be feeling.

Weaknesses:
- The article provided a very limited scope of research and only explored issues related to voting student members of boards.

Connections:
- Students are not trusted or taken seriously enough by administrators to have a voting position on boards.
- Student trustees feel pressured by student organization leaders.
- Student trustees feel torn between loyalty to their fellow students and loyalty to the betterment of the institution.
Questions/Concerns:

- Do the voting student members in the FMHC feel pressured? I would expect the opposite given the lack of student involvement, knowledge, or interest in the issues being voted on.
Citation:

Reason for including this source in your work:
I included this source because it discusses the relevance of informational pamphlets, which is one of our top 5 innovations. It also describes the movement of information from print to online.

Main argument:
A growing number of health institutions are moving much of their public health information and education, from pamphlets and other physically distributed materials, to online platforms.

Important ideas:
- Examples of online sources of information can include website/webpages, eLearning modules, eBooks, streamed classrooms, audiobooks, and online health videos.
- Very few studies have examined public preferences between print-based and online health information. Most of the comparative studies that are specific to public awareness and prevention campaigns offer mixed results.
- Whether online or print, health information content needs to be of high quality, current, and written in plain language.

**Evidence:**

“Despite the ease with which Canadians can access online information, in 2013, 20% of Canadians were unable to access the Internet even once that year.”

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

“Are pamphlets still a useful modality for patient information and education when so much is available on the Internet? If so, what should be the relationship between print-based and online health information and education, and when should one modality take precedence over the other?”

“The strongest proponents of online health information modalities have often cast the debate in false terms, making it one of “pamphlet versus online information”, “old versus new”, “low-tech versus high-tech”, or “low versus high accessibility”.

“Depending on the study, participants expressed a preference for either or both modalities…we argue in favor of the strategic co-existence of both print-based and online health information and education.”

“Health literacy” describes a person’s “ability to access, understand and act on information for health”.

**Strengths:**

- Uses data to support its argument for a combination of online and print pamphlets for information.

**Weaknesses:**

- Article pertains to healthcare information
- Article represents those in Canada

**Connections:**

- Our Honors pamphlet needs both a print-based and online component.
Socio-Economic status plays a role in whether people prefer print-based information or online accessibility.

Whichever method of distribution is chosen for the pamphlet, it must be easily understandable and simply formatted for optimal readability.

Questions/Concerns:

- Do Honors students at GVSU prefer print-based or internet-based sources of information?
- Is the socio-economic component a factor for college students with access to computers/internet on campus?
## Citation:

## Reason for including this source in our work:
One of our top 5 innovations is to pair students in a relationship based on major or other interests, perhaps utilizing the existing mentor program. This article discusses what mentoring is, what it entails, and its pros and cons. This information will be useful as we continue to look for practical ways to encourage student’s participation in the Frederik Meijer Honors College, including the possibility of focusing on mentor programs.

## Main argument:
Mentoring programs in general have many positive outcomes, both for the mentor and mentees as well as for the organization forming the programs. However, mentoring also may have some negative qualities where, in some cases, even no mentoring at all may be better. A program must be well thought out in order to minimize the dangers of these negative outcomes and encourage more positive outcomes in order to be successful.

## Important ideas:
- Across the three disciplines of education, business, and medicine, research has identified common themes between the pros and cons of mentoring in each of these fields.
- Overall, mentoring offers more positive outcomes than drawbacks.
- There is minimal research which addresses mentoring as a completely negative experience.
**Evidence:**

The main argument, that mentoring has more positive than negative outcomes, is supported by the multitude of articles read addressing mentoring programs and their effectiveness. For every aspect of mentoring mentioned, the author cites the percentage of articles from the studied disciplines which support the claim being made, for example: “Of the education studies reviewed, 35.8% reported only positive outcomes as a result of mentoring, and four studies (or 2.5%) reported exclusively problematic outcomes.”

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

**Terms:**

Reflection: Looking back on one’s own methods and knowledge as a result of having to teach this knowledge to others

Mentor: Someone who sponsors and guides the development of a less experienced person

**Quotes:**

“The results from our study revealed, not surprisingly, considerable commonalities in outcomes across the three reviews of the literature.” p. 531

“Despite the shortcomings of mentoring, our findings suggest that mentoring appears to offer far-reaching benefits for mentors and mentees.” p. 531

“Mentoring has enormous potential to bring about learning, personal growth, and development for professionals.” p. 536

**Strengths:**

- The research cites many different sources in order to back up the claims made therein
- Three different subsets of works on mentoring were identified, which was useful, as mentorship in

**Weaknesses:**

- The research is not very current; therefore they may be more modern pros and cons related to mentoring that did not exist during the time range of this study
The relationship between the number of works found addressing mentoring in the three disciplines was unequal, with more of the works addressing business and educational mentoring and fewer addressing mentorship in the medical field.

### Connections:

- Mentoring has many positive effects for those involved, as well as for the institution, which connects back to our innovation about grouping students together by major in a similar kind of mentoring relationship.

- It is important to note, if we end up trying to implement change in the mentor program, that one of the main drawbacks of a mentoring program mentioned in this research is the negative effects that can result from a mismatched mentor and mentee.

- One of the positive aspects of mentoring found in the research is that mentoring is a good way to encourage discussion about ideas, in the case of this project, perhaps encouraging discussion about the Frederik Meijer Honors College, and to transmit the collected feedback to the Honors administration.

### Questions/Concerns:

- With all of the positive aspects quoted in this research about mentoring, why is it that much of our primary research has shown a general lack of interest or knowledge about the mentor program? What can be done to overcome this ignorance?
Citation:

Reasons for including this source in your work:
This article discusses research on suggestion boxes in the workplace. One of our team’s top five innovations is implementing a suggestion box into the Honors College. The authors of this article examine how a suggestion box has been implemented, the ways people were encouraged to participate, and how they made their response. These are all important factors to consider when thinking of ways to effectively place a suggestion box.

Main argument:
Suggestion boxes can be an effective tool in the workplace to take away any boundaries to communication. Allowing students, employees, or customers to anonymously express their concerns opens up lines of communication to superiors. Another side of this is that the suggestions are not read, causing the box to become ineffective. In turn, this would discourage participation.

Important ideas:
❖ Organizations may publish their response to suggestions in newsletters, posting, or compensate the people who provide suggestions.
❖ A suggestion box provides employees with an openness to participate in the workplace and assist in the flow of communication.
- During the study at a university, each slip stated that suggestions become property of the university, to avoid legal concerns.

- Publically responding to suggestions is important for people to know the suggestions are being read.

**Evidence:**

- A study at a university noticed that there was always a new problem presented after one was solved. Often, the suggestions seemed to give the desired solution instead of what needs to be solved.

- The response to suggestions helped to make the suggestion box seem effective.

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

**Quotes:**

“On an individual level, the box can provide a voice for subordinates or customers, and, on a collective level, it can provide feedback important for organizational survival.”

“...suggestion box critics argue that suggestion systems can be perceived as token gestures in many organizations because the suggestions are ignored.”

**Concepts:**

Suggestion box syndrome (people would rather receive their information from superiors), suggestion box mythology (may help facilitate communication or may just serve as a symbol).

**Strengths:**

- They did a study at a university.

**Weaknesses:**

- The article is dated.
- Provides examples of suggestions and responses.
- Some of the main points focus on a workplace

**Connections:**

- It is stated that suggestion boxes provide an opportunity for people to share their real opinions and ideas. This would be the result we would hope for in the Honors College. Our team wants to facilitate communication between students and administration. We could also include faculty in this.

- An important factor in the suggestion box innovation is the response. In our research, we know students want to know that they are being heard. This article confirms that more participation is likely if responses are made to the suggestions.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we encourage students to provide suggestions?
- How will we inform students that their suggestions are being heard?