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Comp I Honors

Comp II Honors

Honors Intro to Theatre

Survey of World Lit to 1650-Honors

World Civ. To 1500 Honors

Principles of Biology Honors

Public Speaking Honors

Section I:

Demonstrate Engagement-

The Honors Program's volunteer requirements pushed me to find my calling in the community. Not only was I able to find a way to give back, but I found a home and a purpose. Volunteering with Soldier ON Service Dogs and Bridges Family Center helped me to become an active member of my community, rather than just a resident. As a recipient of the Single Parent Scholarship, and a former client of Peace at Home Family Center and 7 Hills Homeless Shelter, the generosity of NWA empowered me to enroll in college and supported me in obtaining two associate degrees at NWACC. I wanted to find a way to contribute, and the Honors Program and instructors guided me toward my calling within the community that has given me so much.

I found a way to support Veterans coping with PTSD, anxiety, and other disabilities through my involvement with Soldier ON Service Dogs, an organization that I became familiar with through a Composition I project. Newspaper Lab Supervisor, Mattie Bailey told me about a volunteer opportunity with Bridges Family Center, a non-profit that facilitates court ordered supervised visitation for children. I worked under a Social Worker with 25 years' experience and completed 24 hours of Supervised Visitation Network training. I plan to earn a Master's in Social Work and work with abused and traumatized children. I know I will be a better Social Worker because of my time at Bridges, and my connections to the NWACC community led me there.

Sevin Gallo's World Civilizations course, taught from the perspective of food, took students on a semester-long culinary tour of Bentonville. Dr. Gallo explained the formation of societies around the basic need of sustenance. Our dependence on family groups to eat and survive sparked the creation of the food-centric traditions we see throughout history and today, and Dr. Gallo used food and food rituals as a universal connection to history in this course. We toured a brewery, baked ancient bread, and visited Greek, Salvadorian, and Thai restaurants, among others as, as we discussed the development of those dietary staples and civilizations.

### Cultivate Curiosity:

The service work and in-depth projects included in the Honors courses allowed me to understand each subject within my own world and frame of reference as well as read and hear the perspectives of my classmates.

In Composition I, with Jaqueline Jones, we created informational pamphlets on a subject of our choice. I chose to research service dogs, and, in my research, I found the organization Soldier ON Service Dogs in Fayetteville, leading me to eventually volunteer with the organization as a Puppy Raiser and Trainer, participating in their year-long Train the Trainer course.

In Composition II with Ashleigh Davis, we explored our own linguistic profile, asking ourselves how language made us who we are and how we use language to navigate the world. This class sparked real joy and curiosity in me. I began to understand how a person's vernacular is formed, and how our interaction with language informs our understanding of ourselves and the world. I am pursuing a master's in social work and plan on working with abused children. I will use my understanding of how language forms our reality and informs our perspectives to grow beyond my biases and meet children and families where they are. This class gave me the basis of understanding upon which I will continue to grow in my college and professional careers.

Matthew Connor's Principles of Biology course included a primary research project conducted in NWACC's Living Laboratory. To form a picture of the small mammal population of the Living Lab, we constructed a silt fence to direct small mammals and other animals into buckets along the fence line, where the animal would remain trapped until it was cataloged and released. We created a Power Point presentation outlining our research and findings as a class. This project brought us out of the classroom and away from the preconstructed, uninspiring experiments performed in a traditional Principles of Biology course. This was my first experience with working on scientific research in the field, and I feel more prepared for my Honors Thesis Project at the University of Arkansas thanks to this class.

In Intro to Theatre, Ashley Davis brought her experience as a published playwright into the classroom to provide a real-world, hands-on approach to stage design, acting, and playwrighting. As a class, we attended *Fun Home*, a musical adapted by Lisa Kron and Jeanie Tesori, where we had the opportunity to speak with the cast after the play. Rather than simply reading and passing tests, we were able to touch and interact with the theatre, finding our own specific interests within the diverse art.

Honors courses allow students the freedom to follow their own interests within each subject, leading us to dig deeper and care more about our education.

### Explore Perspectives:

Ashleigh Davis' Comp II class challenged my ideals as a "grammar nazi." She taught this composition course as a linguistics class, helping us to understand the fluidity of language and cast aside the judgements we hold toward those who speak different dialects than ourselves. I love the English language, and, because of this class, my perspective of that language has broadened, and my respect for our differences has increased.

Sabrina Chesne taught me about the politics of "Classics" in her World Literature course. She encouraged me to challenge the way rape and sexuality in classic literature is taught when I

struggled with the *Heptameron*, and she invited me to present a poster on that subject and the Great Plains Honors Conference in 2018. That experience pushed me to trust myself and present my ideas with confidence. I learned about trauma-informed conversation and inclusion for the first time through the sources I utilized for this project. At this conference, I engaged with honors students from Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Texas, attending essay readings, a poster competition, and a tour of Tulsa museums. I was able to attend this conference with my five-year-old, and Sabrina made my daughter and me feel welcome and comfortable. It can be hard to engage in the college experience as a single mother in her mid-twenties, and I'm grateful to all the instructors at NWACC who welcomed and accommodated my daughter when she came to classes and events.

The Honors Study Area itself brought me into contact with a diverse group of talented, thoughtful, interesting people. I met and bonded with students from diverse backgrounds, an experience I lacked greatly before my time at NWACC. The Honors community at NWACC became a supportive, accepting family to me. This family kept me motivated, accountable, and engaged in the college experience. This connection within the college kept me coming even when I felt like giving up. I knew I wasn't alone.

## Section 2:

The challenging curriculum and freedom to explore and create in the Honors courses helped me to solidify my passion. I researched and contemplated the roles sociology and psychology in every course I took. I conducted primary research and created a presentation on the effects of media on pre-school aged children in Composition II, researched and presented a poster about trauma-informed teaching in college courses as part of my World Literature course, and debated the psychological effects of cell phones on adolescents in my Public Speaking Class. The ability to connect each subject to my interests and ultimate career goals helped keep me motivated and allowed me to strengthen my knowledge and experience in my general studies courses. I feel more prepared and confident now in my social work and sociology courses at the University of Arkansas. I feel like I have a foundation upon which to build in my future studies.

I dreaded group projects in my non-honors classes, knowing that I would have to carry the group or accept a mediocre outcome. The group projects in my Honors courses provided me with the experience of working with partners who challenged and supported me. I learned about respectful professional relationships, delegation of tasks, and the worth of diverse perspectives. I learned how and when to lead and support my team members and to trust and learn from others.

Marc Turner encouraged students to find topics important to us for every speech. I loved listening to passionate, insightful speeches about Harvey Milk, an early gay-rights advocate in San Diego, women's changing role in the music industry, and mental health stigma.

Thanks to the high expectations and unfailing support of my NWACC Honors instructors, I feel confident to conduct the primary research project required by the Honors College at the University of Arkansas. I will also take my understanding of linguistics and world cultures into my work as a Social Worker, hopefully making me more accepting, understanding and caring toward the diverse communities I will serve.

### Section 3:

One of my most memorable experiences at NWACC was the opportunity to attend a writing workshop with Pulitzer Prize finalist Lisa D'Amour. This workshop was open to Honors students and theatre majors after Lisa D'Amour's talk at NWACC in 2017. D'Amour challenged participants to create characters starting from our musings on random inanimate objects. We constructed characters from an assortment of random objects, including flowers, a plastic plate, and an apple. From there, we molded that character into a human form and wrote a short scene. This exercise opened my mind to the creative process of fiction writing. I aspire to write novels someday, and I know I will think back to this experience and this exercise when I'm ready to share my voice. I never expected to have an intimate discussion and lesson from such a distinguished playwright at community college, but this is just one of the many amazing experiences I had at NWACC.

### Section 4:

My advice? Take advantage of every opportunity NWACC and the Honors Program has to offer. Use your research projects to grow your knowledge and understanding of your passions. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Keep putting one foot in front of the other and putting words onto paper, even when you feel uninspired and overwhelmed. The creation of a beautiful painting often starts with a rough sketch.