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HNR 375

Dr. Leah White

### Why Honors?

When I was in high school, I exclusively took AP and Honors classes. I tended to overexert myself in all aspects of my life due to a desperate want to feel successful. When it came time to apply for colleges, I didn't intend to join an honors program because I was so burnt out. However, upon learning that I received one of Mankato's Presidential Scholarships and discovering the learning community for Honors students that would get me priority registration, I couldn't resist joining. I was a little skeptical that any of this would be beneficial to me long-term, but something about being in classes with people who are as driven as me motivates me to do my best, even when it feels like I can't. The Honors program at Mankato has succeeded in many ways for me, from making my transition into college smooth, continuing to push my learning without overexerting me, and including me in a vast network of leaders who precede me- all reasons why I'm proud to be an Honors student.

Being in the Honors program has encouraged me to continue to achieve at a high level by being allowed to take Honors-specific classes. I've taken at least one Honors class each year, and the discussions in these classes are always led in a very thoughtful way. The topics frequently center around things I'm passionate about, but don't often get to discuss in-depth in other classes due to the nature of my major. Topics such as mentorship and multicultural relations have been some of my favorites to discuss in these classes. The interdisciplinary

nature of Honors classes pushes conversations to levels that classes in one discipline could never, expanding my horizons and fostering well-rounded citizens.

However, my favorite thing that the Honors program has given me is teaching me to reflect on my experiences. When the concept of reflections was introduced in Honors 201, I thought it was silly. Why couldn't I just go to a class or do a project and move on? While this mindset hasn't entirely changed for me, I understand and appreciate it now. Taking time to reflect on the experiences I've had has moved me to appreciate the things that I've learned. Encouraging me to document these in written reflections serves as a nice record of the experience and the skills it taught me. I've found that reflecting has now become an unconscious practice which helps me apply what I've learned to real-life experiences in a much more efficient and thorough manner.

Although getting discounted printing on campus and priority registration for classes has been a huge perk, the connections I've made with both students and professors in the Honors program are why I've stayed. There is a very strong sense of respect for the work that everyone is doing around you, and you can always look forward to hearing about the accomplishments of others. I find it very exciting to be part of a community that accomplishes such great things in research, education, and the community. I am confident that the connections I've made here are ones that will be well respected and that I'll be able to continue to go to for support in my future endeavors.