

Graduation:

May 11,
2019

Minoah Milam



Honors Portoflio

- Honors Composition I
- Honors Composition II
- Honors Intro into Philosophy
- Honors Survey of World Literature from 1650

Section 1: In what ways did the program help you “demonstrate engagement”, “cultivate curiosity,” and explore perspectives” (community, curiosity, and diversity)?

As soon as I joined the honors program, I heard the three words: community, curiosity, and diversity. At first thought, I believed it was the motto the program went by, but it didn't mean those words really meant anything. After two years in this program, I could not have been more wrong. Those words are everything this program is about.

Community. When I think about community my mind goes to two areas. First, I think about all the things this program helps in our community. Blind Date with a Book is a very fun school community project the program puts on. Also, street cleaning comes to mind. Community is about volunteering and helping people whenever we can. The program is not just academics, it is making a difference for people. But the program also goes above this idea. Second, my mind goes to the people in honors. The program's community is their greatest asset. The students and teachers who are a part of this, are what make it amazing. I saw fellow honor students help other students with school work and encourage them in classes. I was in the program an entire year, before I was really able to get involved. I worked too many hours to participate a lot and still do schoolwork. My first real event I went to, was the honors holiday party. I was sitting alone at a table, I didn't really know anyone, and was about to get up and leave. That is when a large group of students, who saw me sitting alone, came over and included me in the games. It was one of the first times in my life someone my age had shown me kindness. I gained several friends that day. The honors program is not just about helping the community outside of school, the program is about inclusivity. The program was about members messaging other members to invite them to hangout, and then making sure they got home safe. Without the kindness and encouragement from other members, the community that is inside the program, inside the school, and in the surrounding towns, wouldn't be as good and successful.

Curiosity. Throughout my time at NWACC, I have gone through honor classes and met members. Classes challenged my views and beliefs and members taught me new ideas. Throughout these experiences, my curiosity increased. My desire to learn about other people and cultures increased. Honors taught me to look beyond myself and see other situations. In my composition I class, we had to do a project on the history and traditions of a holiday or other celebration. I picked birthday traditions. The tradition of blowing out candles on your cake can be traced back to the Romans. The song we sing, is actually traced back to our own American traditions! This project made me very curious, because I had no idea a lot of the things we do for celebrations have been around way before America was even a country. The first paper I ever wrote changed my perspective on my English skills. We had to write a memoir, but Professor Jackson wanted us to be very descriptive. He wanted us to use a lot of similes and metaphors. This was a challenge to me, because I am not the best writer and I don't have the best vocabulary. I would like to share my introduction to my memoir called “Just a Sunburn Away.”

“It has been known for hundreds of years that the sun does not revolve around the earth, yet some people think the sun revolves exclusively around them. The same people who, at Gentry High School, thought those four years would be the best of their life. Gentry, where the stench of teenage sweat was plastered on the walls and the chicken nuggets contained more rubber than the old dodgeballs we used in P.E. class. But past the chipped, maroon lockers and screams of desperation we

called “singing” from the choir room, I found bliss. A sport I could love one tournament and hate the next, after six golf balls found their way to a watery grave. Although golf is a tough sport and one I will never master, it taught me many things. Most importantly, golf showed me how to make the best of any situation.”

This paper was the first time I realized I could write things that I am proud of. Once this happened, my curiosity expanded. Honors classes are about challenging your views and making you curious. Without this program, I wouldn’t know as much, but most importantly, I wouldn’t be as confident. The experience of having this program during your time at NWACC is one that I am glad I did not pass up.

Diversity. I went to a very small high school. My graduating class was about 100, and it was the same kids who went to Gentry all their life. Their parents went to Gentry, their grandparents, and so on. It was a close-minded community, with nothing out of the ordinary. Everyone was expected to fit into the mold that had been made before them. Everyone was required to have the same views and morals. When I came to NWACC, it was a lot different, especially in the honors program. I learned stories from students with a completely different background than me. Not all the students were 18-21 year olds. Several students in the program were my parents age, with a family of their own, but still managing to go to school AND be in honors! You give a great deal of respect to them. I talked to members who lived in different states, even different countries. You learn what their values and customs are. The honors program was never close-minded. A lot of members have different values, morals, and views, and you learn to respect and learn from them. There is also so much diversity in honors classes. In my composition II class, we did a lot of projects about our life, or our views. We got to do peer review, or even present to the class. You learn a lot about others’ situations and what they have gone through. In my honors world literature class, we read stories from all over the world, in different time periods. You learn about cultures and situations that you did not even realize happened. I remember reading *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad in high school and again in world lit. I did not realize that a lot of the heinous acts being described were true. People in Africa had these things happen. Through the program, either in classes or just talking to members, you see so many different people. It opens your mind and you truly see the world differently.

Section 2: How did this program prepare you for a university? What hard or soft skills will you take with you?

As I have mentioned before, I graduated from high school in a class of around 100 students. Once I graduate from NWACC, I will be going to the University of Arkansas. U of A has about 25,000 students in a grade. That is an increase of 250%. That would have been a very big change for me. Northwest Arkansas Community College has around 7,000 or 8,000 students in a class. NWACC is an excellent stepping stone for me. Even though NWACC is a lot smaller than U of A, I still felt very overwhelmed. The honors program was excellent in letting me find a smaller crowd to be around. English classes have never been something I excelled in. The program allowed the sizes of my English classes to be a lot smaller. This enabled me to talk to teachers and learn a lot more. I think this improved my skills and prepared me for essays and papers at the U of A. If I was struggling with a concept or idea, I was able to talk to teachers and figure out ways to work around it. I have never been great with talking to people. In high school, I had a very small group of friends. I knew them all of my childhood and going to NWACC was a lot different. My first year, I talked to very few people. After starting to do homework in the honors study area, I was able to meet people. I made a lot of friends and got to see them at different honor events. I loved doing honors game night. As silly as it sounds, the honors program helped me learn to make friends. This is extremely important, being a business student. Now I have a lot more confidence for the University of Arkansas. I am ready for group projects and talking to people, because the program prepared me. This program also taught me how to talk to people with different views from mine. In several classes I had students who had different religious or political views than my own. I learned how to discuss and compare our views. Although we see things differently, we shared a love for certain songs and foods. This is an important skill, because we are all human. Although we are different, we can be really similar.

Section 3: What is one experience you had while a member that you'd like to share?

I took Honors World Literature my last semester at NWACC. This class was a huge change for me. I am usually not a literature-minded person. I love math and am an analytical person. Professor Looney taught me a lot in a very short period of time. I could tell I was thinking critically and viewing things in different lights. Part of being in the honors section of the class, I was required to go to a special event at Crystal Bridges. I went to the “Man of Steel, Woman of Wonder” exhibit. It was an amazing experience. There was a lot of progressive views and it was such fun artwork. There were two paintings in the exhibit that I thought were very interesting. There was a picture of Wonder Woman looking at Batman and Superman kissing and a photo of Wonder Woman as an old lady. The photo of Batman and Superman kissing is very cool, because although it changes how we view them, they are still heroes. Who they are sexually attracted to doesn't change their love for justice or ability to save lives. I also really loved the painting of Wonder Woman as an old lady. It brings human vulnerability to a character we view as perfect. I also loved this event because I had an amazing time with friends. I highly recommend honors classes, because you gain amazing experiences.



Left to right:
Reece Hodgson, Minoah Milam (myself), Olivia Schaap

Section 4: Considering all you have written for the above, what advice do you have for new members? This is short and sweet.

When you join honors, you join an opportunity to be part of an amazing program, if you seek it out. You get out of the program what you put into it. My first year, I was not able to participate a lot, because of my hours at my job. Towards the end of my third semester, I talked to my manager. I let her know that the honors program was important to me and I wanted to be there. I was able to work half what I did previously. Once I was able to be a part, I gained so much. The best thing about this program is that you can do anything you set your mind too! I made amazing friends and memories. I wouldn't trade those experiences for the world. The best advice I can give new members: Get involved!!! You won't regret it, because this program can change your life and your views.