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English Composition II Honors  
Intro to Comparative Politics Honors  
Art History Honors

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Associate of Science - Liberal Arts and Sciences

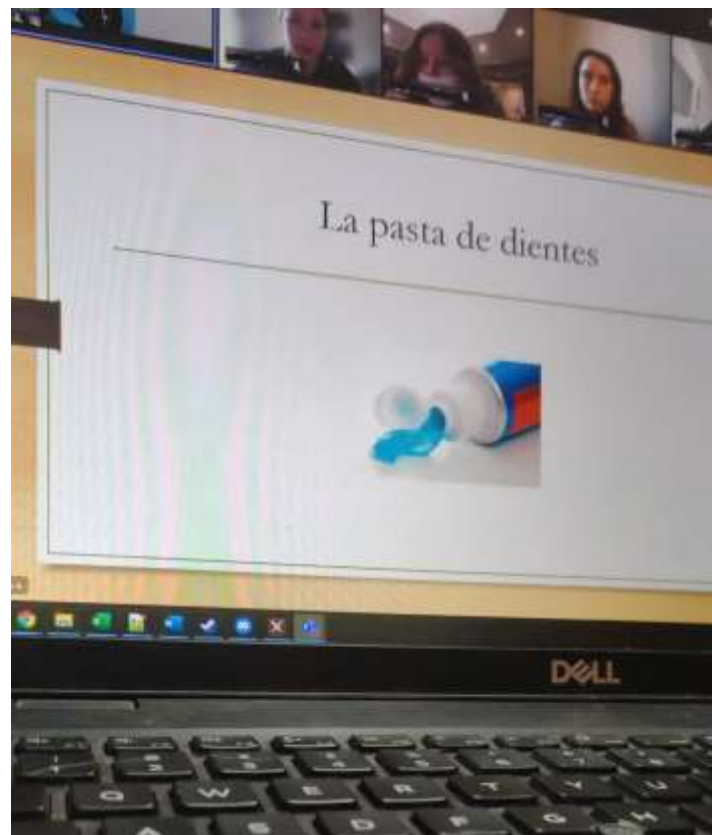
**Section 1: In what ways did the Program help you “demonstrate engagement,” “cultivate curiosity,” and “explore perspectives” (community, curiosity, and diversity)?**

Over a decade ago, I went to NWACC just after graduating high school. I had no real direction on what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, what I should study, or why I was even going to college, aside from it’s what everyone said I should do. I was one of those students who never applied herself, scrapped by with B-/C+ grades, and didn’t bother with homework. After failing a few classes, I quit. I found a full-time job, traveled around the United States, did a lot of camping, and made many fantastic friends. However, after six or seven years of soul searching, I found that I was far from where I wanted to be. I discovered that I didn’t want to work for a for-profit company but serve the community and those in need. I wanted to get out of the technology field, and community based Social Work was the best way to do that.

In the fall of 2020, I decided to go back to school, despite also working full time at a place that was not the best for my mental health. I started with a few classes to dip my toes in the water. During my second semester back and in the middle of English Composition I, my professor recommended that I apply for the honors program, as they would push me to be my best and allow me to apply my creativity, explore my curiosity, and give me additional perspectives that I may not have had before.

Turns out she was correct. The Honors Program allowed me to apply my real-world experience and hard work, forging my current level of success. The friendship and support I found within the other Honors students helped me set standards and achievable goals for myself, despite the pressure of the CoVid-19 pandemic, working full time in a toxic work environment, and balancing social relationships.

The additional Honors Program’s exclusive projects, programs, and opportunities allowed me to explore and satisfy the curiosity that I simply didn’t have an outlet for in high school, first time at NWACC, or even prior to joining the program. Further, despite traveling and making many friends in other parts of the country, national origin, and political perspectives, the Program allowed me meet younger people, spend time with them, and gain knowledge of what current challenges they are experiencing.



**Section 2: How did this program prepare you for a university (or for a workplace, if you aren't transferring at this point)? What hard or soft skills will you take with you?**

As a nontraditional and transgender student, I have a very different viewpoint on life than many of my classmates. I know I would have hated to hear it just out of high school, but most students simply lack the majority of life experience and really know what it means to be independent. For many young people, college can be quite the shock in terms of minimal handholding from the professor. Personally, I found having to hold myself accountable for my



grades was a real cranial lavage compared to my experience in high school. However, self-accountability is an extremely valuable skill that I finally learned after many years in the workforce.

Fortunately, I see many of the other Honors Students learning self-accountability far faster (with fewer life consequences) than I did. The Program fosters an environment that allows for that type of personal growth and improvement. Had I had that knowledge when I first started at NWACC, I would have joined HP on day one.

While I cannot go back and change my history, the Honors Program has helped prepare me for other future challenges that I know I will experience.

One of the most important lessons stemmed from the interaction with people a decade younger than myself, helping me be mindful of the "I know more than you silly younglings" attitude that I often experienced from older people while in my late teens and early twenties. Being mindful of this can be extremely helpful when building a trust relationship as a mental health physician and help prevent having the unbudging mentality found at the beginning of this section.

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

Easily my most memorable experience was for Intro to Comparative Politics Honors, where we went to Saint Louis for Midwest Model United Nations. For four days, we worked with other students from around the United States to negotiate, write, and propose solutions to a given crisis. Leading up to the conference, we had to learn as much as we could about our assigned country, anticipate potential pushback from other countries, and try to step into the mind set of a delegate from that country.

My team and I were assigned the country Eritrea, and I was assigned the United Nations Environmental Assembly. Eritrea is home of some of the world's worst human rights violations and has had several war crime violations that we had to try to explain to our fellow delegates. Fortunately, my co-delegate and I were both strong speakers, so we were able to work around that.

Now, if you have ever tried to herd cats, you may understand what it takes to get a group of people to work together. At one point during the general assembly, we had ten minutes to vote on which proposition we would bring forward, but instead of getting that done, the group sat there and debated on how we should vote. Unfortunately, I have seen this same pattern of behavior in my business experiences. Therefore, I took the initiative and said, "hey everyone, we are going to do it **this** way, and if anyone would like to change that, we are welcome to vote on it." Oddly enough, no one had a problem with it and we got things done after that.

Despite the real-world challenges presented by the assignment, we were able to come up with a plan that could realistically address the climate crisis and energy needs for African countries. Further, we had to learn a lot about the human condition to work with a hundred other students to successfully write a resolution. We had to work together, argue your points, and work out the best path forward. It was a fun, life changing, and amazing experience that I am very excited to see what happens next year. I highly recommend anyone with the ability to participate to do so. Despite it being only a model, it taught me so much about politics and how to work within a large group to get things done.



**Section 4: Considering all you have written for the above, what advice do you have for new members?**

Some food for thought that I wish I knew just out of high school:



-If you decide that college is not your path right now, don't be afraid to come back to school later. It is okay to go get some life experience under your belt, think about what you really may want to do, and bring back those experiences to enrich the Honors Program. There is a lot of world out there to experience, and each of those experiences can bring new perspectives, spark new curiosity, and bring value to your communities.

-When you find yourself in a situation where you are unhappy, sometimes doors open themselves, sometimes you get thrown through the door, and the rest of the time you have to kick it down yourself. I was thrown out the door from my last corporate job, and despite the stress and worry about bills, I now work for a non-profit that has grown my soul fulfillment tenfold.

At an SCA Toys For Tots event, November 2018. This is just before I came out of the closet and started shaving my face daily to present more feminine.