



The Honors Beacon.

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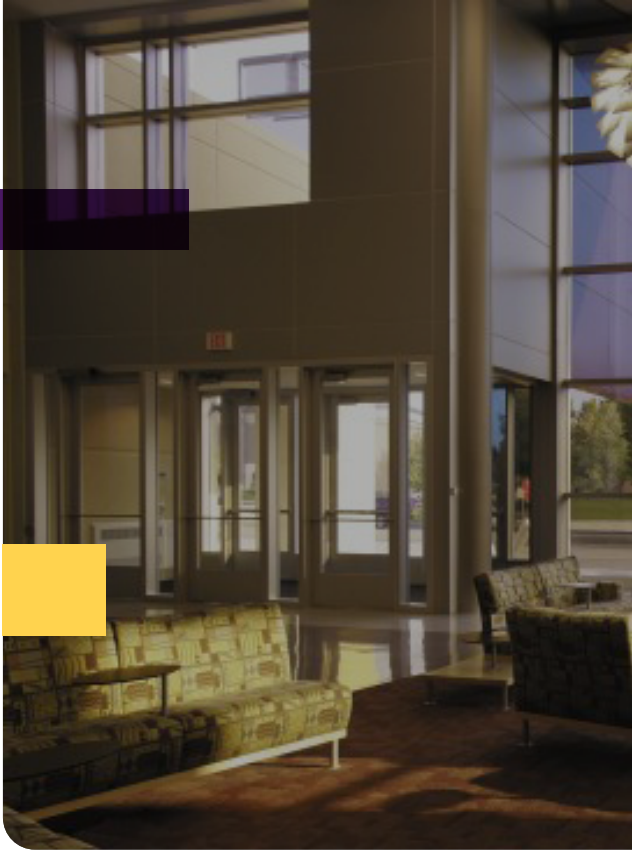
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Editor's Note

Melan Shifa 25' ([Computer Science and Astronomy](#); [Ethiopia/Saudi Arabia](#).)

It was an inspiring journey to be working on the Beacon this year. When I first knew that I will get the opportunity to be the Editor-in-chief of the Beacon I felt that I needed to take a creative and unique approach to it. So I decided to redesign the whole thing and go with a new method of presenting- unlike previous years I proposed the Beacon to be digital this year. What was even nicer was how my supervisors were supportive of my new ideas and experiments with this year's edition. So here we are after months of work, it actually turned out to be successful and we didn't regret risking it and testing new things.

This edition passes through stories of students from around the world and what their experiences look like, I am certain you will learn about different cultures and experiences. From what the aviation program looks like to research opportunities and many more. I hope you enjoy it.

***Note: Blue text are clickable hyperlinks, test it with my name above.**



Meet Ferdi.



**Welcome to Honors
at Minnesota State
University- Manka-
to.**



**MINNESOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY, MANKATO**

HONORS

Director's Note.

Although the past two years of navigating the Covid-19 pandemic meant there were a lot of Honors Program traditions we had to miss, in the spirit of honors innovation, we also used this time to explore new ideas and ways of doing things. One of those changes was shifting The Beacon to a yearly, rather than semesterly, publication. Further, when new Editor Melan Shifa asked about designing a fully electronic newsletter for the first time, we said “sure, let’s try.” This year’s innovative approach to The Beacon is just one of many changes we experienced in Honors during 2021-2022.

In fall 2021 we launched a newly revised curriculum. The mission of the program remains consistent, as we continue to be a competency-based program grounded in engaged experiential learning supported by personal reflection. However, to create a more accessible program that meets the needs and interests of a more diverse group of students, we have revised program requirements to include an even greater emphasis on engaged experiential learning.



Dr. Leah White,
Director of the Honors Program.

Students seeking to complete the Honors Program are now only required to complete three 1-credit Honors designated courses. The courses are intended to support students at three key stages in the program. Each class is designed to help students understand the learning outcomes of the competencies, gain skills in effective reflection, and receive built-in support for portfolio design and development. We continue to offer HONR 201 and HONR 475, but added a new middle level class, HONR 375, in which students can develop reflections with support from honors staff and peers. This new class also provides a much-needed opportunity for honors students to reconnect during their sophomore or junior years.

Next, during their time in the program, students are now expected to engage in and reflect on eight approved experiences designed to help them grow in the three competency areas: leadership; research, scholarly and creative activity; and intercultural engagement. In their portfolios students demonstrate they have achieved “developing” and “application” levels of the three competency areas. Although students are no longer required to demonstrate a second language proficiency, honors students who complete three language courses beyond their level of language learning when starting at the university may earn a “World Language Distinction.”

This year we also started experimenting with alternative approaches to reflection. Students enrolled in HONR 201 were expected to submit each of their three class reflections using a different reflection style. We received audio and video recordings, animations, comic strips, artwork, and traditional essays. Although many students still find the traditional reflective essay most comfortable, the alternative formats helped us expand our thinking about how to communicate growth and learning.

The final exciting change is Emma Morin joined the Honors Staff in July 2021 as a Student Relations Coordinator. Emma works with both Honors and the Interdisciplinary Studies Program. She is an excellent addition to our team!



Honors Student Body.

A Note from the Honors Student Body President - Mallory Steinmetz

I have had the honor of serving as the Honors Student Body President for the 2021-2022 academic school year. I have really enjoyed being able to get more involved with the Honors Program and the opportunity to work with other great student leaders! Together, we have built community, helped shape the Honors Program structure, and developed our leadership skills.

This academic year has been full of events, workshops, and community meetings. To tell you more about the group and what we have done this year, each one of the Honors Student Body Executive Team members answered a question below about their experience. Enjoy!

How would you explain HSB to a new student?

The Honors Student Body is comprised of all students in the Honors Program. More specifically, the HSB Executive Board are students within the Honors Program that overlook the HSB and represent the Honors Program at general/council meetings. The HSB Executive Board consists of students that represent each year of college, a secretary, a vice president, and a president. All of these roles hold individual importance as they take insight from peers and themselves to provide feedback on how to make the Honors Program more suitable for students. Overall, HSB is a tight-knit community filled with students representing similar values and standards.

Hannah Turnipseed, Honors Student Body Fourth Year Representative



What is the main goal/purpose of HSB?

The main goal of HSB is to give Honors students a chance to be more involved in the program rather than just taking the Honors classes. It gives students a chance to get to know other students outside of class and make new connections at social events. While also providing more information about the competencies and ideas for experiences at competency-related events. I think HSB helps the Honors program feel less like checking boxes and more like the fun community it is.

Riley Lehmer, Honors Student Body Third Year Representative

How has being a part of HSB helped you grow as a person?

Being a member of HSB has helped me grow in a lot of ways. I have learned to develop my leadership skills and use them effectively to reach group goals. It has also helped me realize the importance of having a connected community. Since joining HSB I feel much closer to my peers and the Honors Program as a whole, and I value the impact I have been able to have in the Honors Program.

Will Anderson, Honors Student Body First Year Representative

How has HSB impacted your student experience at Minnesota State Mankato?

HSB has greatly improved my experience at MNSU! Through it, I have been able to see the “behind-the-scenes” of the Honors program and appreciate all the hard work that the faculty put into helping us. Additionally, I have developed my leadership and professional skills. I feel much more confident communicating with groups and making decisions to benefit a whole. Above all of these, however, have been the relationships I have formed through HSB. I always look forward to our meetings because it is so much fun to communicate with fellow board members. Through my experience, HSB has truly been a great support system!

Delaney Conrad, Honors Student Body Vice President

Why did you choose to be a part of the HSB Executive Board?

As a freshman, I felt as though I was not connected to the Honors Program. I participated in class and worked on my Honors Portfolio, but wanted to have something else to help me become more involved in the Honors Program. Being on the HSB Executive Board has helped me grow in my leadership skills - delegating tasks to others, brainstorming activity ideas, and connecting with other students.

Mallory Steinmetz, Honors Student Body President

Honors Student Body- Continued.

What is your favorite thing about being a part of the Honors Student Body?

My favorite thing about being a member of HSB is that it is leadership-driven, fun, and interactive. Another great thing about HSB is its mentors. They are supportive as well as welcoming to anyone in need of assistance. Furthermore, I value the network I have built while being a member of HSB.

Eden Gebremariam, Honors Student Body

Secretary

What has been your favorite HSB event?

The honors welcome picnic at the start of the year will be an HSB event that I will never forget. There was a great turnout and I was able to meet new honors students and see peers' faces that I had only previously seen with masks on. We played games outside and had a large picnic together in great weather. I hope that our last HSB event can close out the year as well as we started it.

Aidan Forberg, Honors Student Body Second Year Representative

“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

- Harold R. McAlindon



Life of a student pilot.

I have come a long way to achieve what I have been dreaming of from an early age. If you ask most student pilots, "What got you into this major?" they will commonly answer that they have been dreaming of flying since an early age. For me, I always wondered what does it look like up there? So, I did some research and I got into the aviation world. I started studying as an aeronautical engineer at King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals in Saudi Arabia. As time went on, I realized that this was not really my passion, my passion was to fly those airplanes!

The journey started here at Minnesota State University when I got accepted into the aviation major in 2018. Being passionate about aviation, I remember my extreme excitement to start my classes and being inside those small Piper Warrior aircraft. About a month after my flight training started, the biggest day of any student pilot arrives, it is the day when my instructor endorsed me for my first solo flight.

I had to get up early to do a final check flight with my instructor to see if I was ready to fly solo or not. I remember walking in the Mankato airport, and I kept hearing people say, "Sharif is doing his first solo flight"- and my heartbeat faster. An aviation student will never forget their first solo flight. The feeling of flying on your own for the first time is something indescribable. There are mixed feelings of happiness, fear, and pride. My flight went smoothly and was even better than I expected. Shortly after my solo, I had my first stage check, where I was evaluated on my flight and ground knowledge. At that moment I found out that aviation is not just about enjoying flying those airplanes and showing off as a pilot. There are at least two-stage checks and check rides for each rating you are taking, in addition to the written exam.

The number one showing-off opportunity for student pilots is cross-country flights. Imagine you show up for your afternoon class while you were in another state that morning!





Cross-country flights are one of the most useful things that give pilots experience and confidence in handling the airplane. They also help pilots build effective communication skills for the pilot, as you will be communicating with Air Control and other Airplanes throughout the flight. That being said, unpredictable weather can easily get you stuck somewhere you do not want. I remember once flying to Green Bay and planning to return to Mankato by 7 pm. Due to some summer thunderstorms, I had to divert two times and did not return until 2 am!

Even with all the weather challenges and the substantial number of exams and stage checks, I am still grateful for the opportunity to be an Aviation: Professional Flight major. As of now, I am working on my commercial multi-engine rating and am looking forward to graduating this semester.

I as the Editor in chief of the Beacon do believe that Rayan's story made me have an interest in Aviation and I learned a lot about what students go through to get that license. Currently, we have 5 honors students majoring in Aviation and we wish Rayan and all of them an enjoyable endeavor.

- Editor's Notes

**Captain- Rayan
M. Sharif**

The English 101 Library Research Scholarship recognizes English Composition Research Projects that demonstrate exemplary use of library services and resources. To apply for the scholarship, applicants must submit a writer's memo or reflection explaining how they utilized librarians, collections, library spaces and/or library technology to support the ENG 101 project. The following is the memo submitted by the 2021 Scholarship winner. See the following link for the student's final ENG 101 project.


- Editors Note.

An experience reflection.

Ms. Possin, my English 101 teacher, assigned us to talk to a librarian to complete the research of our literature review. I was scheduled to meet with Ms. Lisa through Zoom and learn more about using the library services for my research. This session was incredibly beneficial for my research as Ms. Lisa guided me to the many databases particular to my topic within the Minnesota State University, Mankato library. During this time, my topic was Health Disparities impacting minorities and migrants. I wanted to research how health disparities impact minorities and migrant populations, especially during pandemics and epidemics. She also gave me more perspective about my broad topic and shared how I could write about health policies or the causes of the health disparities or the existing measures taken to eliminate racial disparities in healthcare. She guided me toward databases such as Social service abstracts, sociological abstracts, world-wide political, science abstracts, and Science direct. The Social service, sociological abstracts, science abstracts, and the science direct articles more about science-focused articles, including qualitative and quantitative studies. But the world-wide political database gives more of a policy aspect for my topic.

I shared my existing research with Ms. Lisa that I focused on the causes of the health disparities. I also stated my concerns that I wanted to use recent studies by focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, but I was worried that there might not be





too many articles on COVID-19 since the pandemic started less than a year ago. But, Ms. Lisa showed me how I could look for articles relating to COVID-19 and its impact on migrants and minorities in the U.S and how to use keywords to find articles that I think are suitable for my topics. For example, I should search for minorities and health disparities at one time so that I can find more articles. She said I should not search minorities and migrants at once as that would be too specific in the search, and I may not get as many articles.

After this informative session, I utilized science-focused databases such as ScienceDirect and looked for articles that researched health disparities faced by racial/ethnic groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. I also further narrowed my topic after this session. I chose to write about the health disparities faced by racial/ethnic groups instead of minorities and migrants and talked specifically regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the session with Ms. Lisa and the library

services at MNSU was incredibly useful for me. Not only did I get to learn more about my topic, but I also learned how to look for articles within databases and use them in a college-level paper. The MNSU library and the staff, especially Ms. Lisa, are very helpful and well-resourced. I would like to sincerely thank them for guiding me to effectively use the Minnesota State University, Mankato library and its services and incorporate the skills in my research-focused academic writings.

You can access the research paper on CornerStone through this hyperlink- [English 101 Library Research Scholarship Recipient](#).



**Prajita
Chauhan**

My favorite sport in the entire world is racing.

My favorite sport in the entire world is racing. I love motor racing so much, that I cancel all my plans when it is race weekend. Let me elaborate. I am Nomin Senadheera, an international student from Sri Lanka. I am Majoring in Computer Information Technology while double minoring in Automotive Engineering Technology and Business Management. I'm also an honors student at Minnesota State University, Mankato. After finishing my college studies my plan is to join the workforce in the motorsport field, where I can work in an environment which I love. There are several types of racing series in the world, but my favorite type of racing is GT racing. GT stands for Grand Touring, which means that the race car is based on a car model which is already on the road and being used by daily customers. It is very competitive and there are many teams and manufacturers involved in GT racing. My favorite manufacturer is Automobile Lamborghini, and my favorite team is the one and only international racing team in Sri Lanka, Team Dilango Racing. The team has managed to win 4 international racing championships and has become runners up in 5 more since the team was founded in 2009 by veteran racing driver Mr. Dilantha Malagamuwa. By coincidence, the team was backed by Lamborghini from the very beginning. I was lucky enough to work with the team for 2 years as their social media person and at their merchandising store. It was a dream come true.

**Nomin
Senadheera**

There are many international GT (Grand Touring) racing championships that I follow these days. For example, GT World Challenge America, Asia, Europe, and Australia by SRO motorsport group, is one of the leading championships in the world. SRO group, also known as the Stéphane Ratel Organization, was founded by Mr. Stéphane Ratel to improve and make GT racing more popular in the world. International drivers and teams tend to enter this series, making it one of the most successful and prestigious championships ever created. ADAC GT experts come as the 2nd best and most competitive GT series in the world. ADAC stands for Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobile-Club, a German-based motorsport organization that is also contributing a lot to the benefit of GT racing. The main differences between the two series are that the ADAC series is based in Germany. GT racing is not extremely popular in America yet as much as NASCAR and IndyCar are. The main differences between NASCAR and GT racing are the cars, performance, track layout, and regulations. While [NASCAR](#) was founded in the US and GT racing is a European innovation, GT has spread through the world, unlike NASCAR. But with European and American groups like [SRO](#) and [IMSA](#) (SA (international Motor Sports Association)) stepping up to improve GT racing in America, I think the motorsport fans in the United States would be thrilled to enjoy the racing. When it comes to Formula 1, they travel around the world through a complete season. And the cars used in racing are quite different. They always try to provide and invent futuristic innovative technologies to improve the automobile industry and be more environmentally friendly. Those are some of the reasons why Formula 1 is considered the pinnacle of motorsports. So, the different series have different goals, and, in the end, all provide good racing.

The main reason racing is my favorite sport is that throughout a single race I go through most of the emotions I can go through as a human being. From the qualifying to the start of the race there is so much anticipation of who would get the pole position (1st place) for the start of the race. It is also nerve-racking when the lights go green, and the drivers are completing the first lap because a lot happens through the first lap such as crashes and penalties. If you are rooting for a certain driver or team, it is too tense to watch because racing is so unpredictable. After a few opening laps, the race gets into a rhythm where you can relax a bit and enjoy. However, when it comes to the pit stop time everything changes because each team has their own strategy, and one small mistake can change everything. The final few laps are the most exciting and thrilling. Drivers push it to their limit to get the best results, so until it is officially over it is not over.

I also enjoy this sport because I love cars and seeing my favorite car brands race is very thrilling and exciting. Plus, having a Sri Lankan team is another positive. I have also done some karting whenever it is possible for me to get involved. Karting, or kart racing, is a road racing variant of motorsport with open-wheel, four-wheeled vehicles also known as go-karts or shifter karts. These vehicles are usually raced on smaller circuits, although some professional kart races are also held on full-size motorsport circuits. One of my future ambitions is to compete in one of those championships with Lamborghini and win some races. Hopefully, my higher studies and a decent job will help me find the relevant funds because motorsport is an expensive sport. It would cost around \$20,000 for a racing weekend for GT. So, while it is all fun and games, racing is dangerous and expensive.



What does Islam teach?



As a Muslim international student raised in Saudi Arabia, I was shocked when I came to the U.S. and heard the different images people here had about Muslims. What popular media shows are far from the truth. If I started writing about what Islam actually is and what the teachings are, I could probably write a book so I will keep this article short and sweet. I will focus on a few of the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) that might reflect for you what the actual ideology of Islam is and hopefully encourage you to explore and learn more about the religion.

You might have heard the phrase, Islam is a way of life, this is because it reflects upon every action you take through life not just the everyday prayers. Islam teaches individual morals and morals between a person and society. Islam addresses every aspect of a Muslim's life, from greetings to international relations. It is universal in its scope and in its applicability. In this article, I will share with you a few of the Moralities Islam teaches.

Contrary to the misconception that Islam encourages violence, Islam teaches that no man should starve, that the rich should not defraud the poor, the strong should not oppress the weak, and women should not be forced into marriage but should be able to choose or refuse (Islam addressed gender equality since ancient times) These are not dangerous ideas.

The moral characteristics of Islam are taught by the Holy Quran and are represented by Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h). The following phrase summarizes the moral character of a believer:-

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your property, out of love for Him, for your relatives, for orphans, for the needy, for the traveler, for those who ask; and for the freeing of captives; to be steadfast in prayers, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you made, and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the pious.” (2:177)

The Quran frequently attaches having faith and having good morality together. Islam also gave humanity an ideal code of human rights 14 centuries ago. These rights seek to give honor and dignity to humanity and to eliminate exploitation, oppression, and injustice. Some of the teachings are as the following:

-All people are equal, and no one shall enjoy a privilege or suffer a disadvantage due to his or her race, color, sex, origin, or language.

- Human life is sacred and cannot be violated. Every effort must be made to protect it.
- All people are born free. Slavery and forced labor are abhorrent.
- Both rulers and the ruled are subject to the law, and equal before the law.
- Every person is free to prefer a belief and practice it. No one can be forced to believe or not to believe in a certain belief.
- No one can insult or ridicule the religious beliefs of others. All Muslims are required to respect the religious feelings of others.

Islam is also extremely against pride and encourages modesty among its followers. Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.h) said, **“Anyone who has in his or her heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise. Verily, God is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdain for the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people.”**



Another good character of a believer that makes them closer to God is generosity. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) spent his life and his possessions for the sake of God. Once Umar, his second-best companion, saw him lying on a rough mat and wept. When the Messenger asked him why he was weeping, Umar replied: **“O Messenger of God, while kings sleep in soft feather beds, you lie on a rough mat. You are the Messenger of God, and as such deserve an easy life more than anyone else.”** The Messenger answered, **“Don't you agree that the luxuries of the world should be theirs and that those of the Hereafter should be ours?”**

Trustworthiness and love are two additional essential characteristics of a Muslim. Being honest, fair in dealings, punctual, keeping promises and commitments, and honoring trusts are important teachings of Islam. Loving one another is a prerequisite for belief in Islam. Prophet Mohammed (p.b.u.p) emphasized this point as follows, **“You shall not enter Paradise as long as you do not affirm belief, and you will not believe as long as you do not love one another. Should I direct you to a thing which will foster love among you: make this greeting common among you: assalamu alaykum (peace be upon you)”**.

Respect and care for parents is a very important teaching of Islam and a very important part of a Muslim's faith. The Quran teaches:

“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him alone, and treat parents with the best of kindness. Should one of them, or both, attain old age in your lifetime, do not say ‘Ugh!’ to them (as an indication of complaint or impatience), nor push them away, and always address them in gracious words. Lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy, and say ‘My Lord, have mercy on them even as they cared for me in childhood.’ ” (17:23-24)

Similar to respecting one's parents is the belief in helping, and respecting neighbors, orphans and the needy. Finally, Muslims are morally responsible not only to their parents, relatives, and neighbors but also to the entire mankind, animals and trees, and plants. Hunting for a sake of a game is not permitted in Islam, so cutting trees for no reason.

I hope you learned about some of the teachings of Islam, and how Islam encourages followers to adopt moral responsibilities and foster the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, fairness, and truthfulness towards all creation in all situations; this character is what led to the Islamic Golden Age. I also do hope this showed you how inaccurate some representations might look and how we should seek to learn about a certain faith from the direct teachings before making assumptions about them.

Any information that is right is by the blessing of God, and any word or information that is untrue was not intended and is from a human shortcoming.

****All numbered references are from the Qur'an. (The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English by Ali Unal)***

**Melan
Shifa**



Growing Success ... In the Greenhouse

Grinding large chunks of dirt into fine powder or cutting up plastic bottles into tiny pieces isn't exactly what you'd immediately think to be a fun time, but I found that I looked forward to the time I could devote to these tasks each week. Even though these jobs seem menial and tedious, they quickly became the highlight of my weeks, not because of the task at hand but because of everything else that being part of a research team means to me. Being part of a research team makes me more involved in the campus community. I don't live on campus, so I am often oblivious to what is going on. Being present more than I'd usually be helps me to stay up to date with campus events and keeps my education at the forefront of my mind. Additionally, being needed or necessary for this project to succeed is a very rewarding feeling. I cannot speak highly enough about undergraduate research, and I encourage anyone and everyone to investigate what it could mean for you .

I am a part of Dr. Ruhland's and Dr. De's microplastics research project where we are attempting to find a correlation between residual plastics found in soils and their effect on plant growth and soil quality. As mentioned above, so far, we have been preparing elements for the experiment by breaking up dirt chunks in order to remove impurities. Coincidentally, we have already found many microplastics in the soil. This step took the longest, spanning from October to February. We have also ground plastic water bottles into fine powders which vary in diameter from the largest at two millimeters to the smallest size at half a millimeter. This polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic will be mixed with the soil at various concentrations and various sizes to observe its effects on the soil itself and plant growth. Once this is all completed the next step is measurement and observation. I will be personally conducting the plant measurements including height, fruit production, and fruit mass while the rest of the team focuses on other measurements such as plastic uptake found in storage tissues, soil compaction, and full soil analysis for pH, structures, active carbon, etc. We are hoping to finish the processing of plastics by the end of April in order to start soil analyses and plant growth. We have decided to grow cherry tomatoes (*Lycopersicon var. Cerasiforme*) for many reasons but put simply, they grow fast, produce a lot of fruit, and are relatively small.



This project is still in its infancy and because I am not leading this project, there are many factors, analyses, and conclusions that I don't know currently. Even as we are reaching the end of this semester, our project is still going strong. We plan to continue working over the summer as the tomatoes begin growing and finalize our project with its presentation at the undergraduate research symposium in the next school year.

Being part of this team enabled me to make connections outside of classes and clubs that will extend throughout my academics here at Minnesota State University, Mankato and beyond. First off, when I committed to helping with this project, I was very anxious about who I'd be working with, the awkward silences, and other uncomfortable social moments. On the contrary, in this semi-structured environment, there was always the topic of the project to discuss and for me personally, not needing to rely on "small-talk" made the difference between this experience being uncomfortable and not. I have been told that I'm not socially awkward, but I can say for a fact that I am. Despite this, I found it much easier to get to know the other people on the project because I could ask my teammates questions about themselves or the experiment. Within the group, I have already gotten to know professors and other students quite well. I can already tell that these positive relationships will greatly help me in my future at MNSU and after. Following my time at MNSU as a biomedical science major, I plan to move on to another university and get a Ph.D. in integrative biology and physiology. My research experience and connections with university faculty already gives me an advantage over other applicants. Additionally, as a future re-

searcher, my current research experience will be invaluable. I want to end by providing some tips and tricks to anyone who wants to do research but doesn't know where to start. Getting involved with undergraduate research can be daunting but reaching out to professors and making connections can be very helpful in future classes as well as in life after university. I'd recommend doing a bit of your own research by getting to know professors and their research interests and projects. This can help you figure out which professor you want to reach out to and learn more from. Additionally, it's important not to limit yourself to just professors from your major department. Research doesn't need to be perfectly specific to your future. For example, my current research project consists of mostly plant science, but I plan to go into the biomedical field. My research experience will show that I am a motivated and curious person who can contribute well to a team. In my personal hunt for research, I contacted professors about existing projects with which I could help, however, professors also can help you with getting original projects started if you have a research question/goal. One final benefit of undergraduate research is of course fulfilling the honors competencies. Undergraduate research can of course qualify for the research, scholarly, and creative activity competency but leading a research project would qualify for the leadership competency. As a final piece of advice, I'd like to stress that none of these tips are necessary, they are simply helpful suggestions. This is an experience where everyone's path is going to be different. When thinking about your future career path, I want you to step out of your comfort zone as much as possible and even though it's completely unnecessary, I encourage everyone to consider [undergraduate research](#).



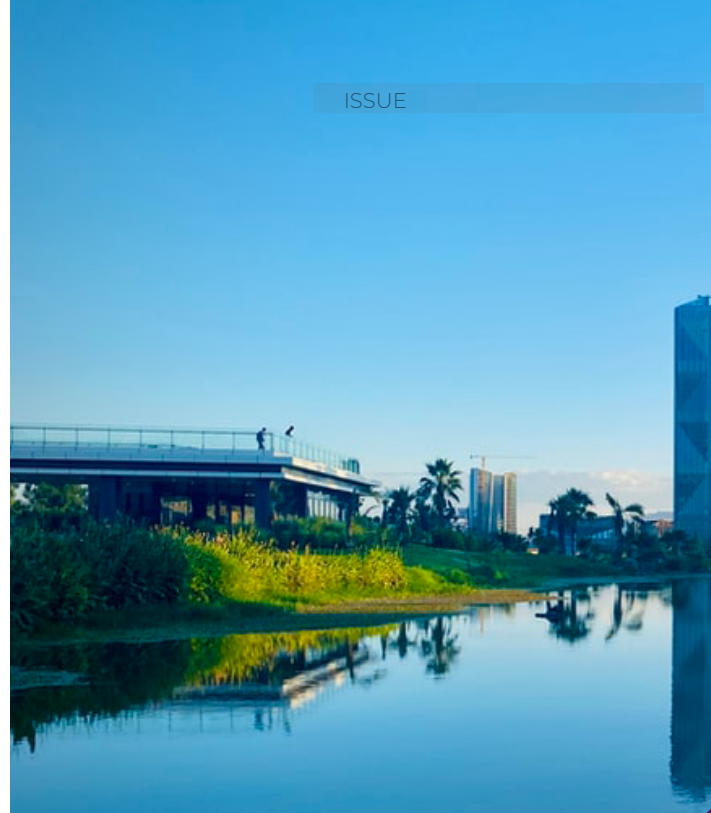
**David
Rezac**

Visit Ethiopia

Have you ever wondered where coffee originated from? Coffee originated from my home country Ethiopia. Ethiopia is rich in history, culture, and agriculture. There are more than 80 ethnicities with their own different cultures and language. But the national language is Amharic. Ethiopia is the only African country with its own alphabet.

Ethiopia is located in the horn of Africa, bordered by 5 countries: in the north Eritrea, in the east Somalia and Djibouti, in the west Sudan, and in the south Kenya.

Our capital city is Addis Ababa, which translates to new flower. I live in the city but my grandmother from my mother's side lives in a village, and I went there to visit her for a week. There is fresh air, a beautiful environment and I also learned a lot about my culture. I used to bother her to move to the city, but she always said no and told me she prefers it in the village. After I went there, I stopped asking her to move. Ethiopia is also a place to learn about ancient culture, with archaeological finds dating back more than 3 million years. One of the oldest human ancestor's fossils was found in Ethiopia aging 3.2 million years old. Among its important sites are Lalibela with its rock-cut Christian churches from the 12th–13th centuries.



Ethiopia has different types of foods. Specially, if you are vegetarian there are many options for you, and that's because Ethiopia there are millions of orthodox Christians in Ethiopia who fast on Wednesday and Friday from animal products. A thing that might surprise some though, is we include raw meat in some of our foods.

Ethiopia is also unique, as it is the only African country that fought back its colonizers and won. The battle of Adwa is one of the greatest battles in African history because it led to freedom for other African countries. This battle meant that African countries were equal partners in the world community. If you have noticed most African countries have green, yellow, and red in their flags, that is because Ethiopia was admired by many African independence movements.



What I'm about to tell you might be confusing, but currently, in Ethiopia it's 2014. We are 7 years behind the rest of the world. Why? We use a Georgian calendar. If you want to get younger you should consider moving to Ethiopia. The thing I like about our calendar is we have 13 months. Every month has 30 days except the last month, which will be 5 or 6 days depending on whether it's a leap year.

It's not only the calendar, but the way we count time is different too. The morning starts at 12 and it gets dark at 12. So, if you are in Ethiopia setting up meetings make sure to double-check the time, because it might be confusing.

I hope you have learned something about the country called Ethiopia. Ethiopia is not only a country where all these things started it is also a country where human life started. It is a country mentioned in the bible and a country that plays a big part in the religion of Islam. There is a lot to learn about Ethiopia, and I hope you have enjoyed learning about my country as well.

Fahmi Nuru

I hope you learned something about this beautiful nation. Did you know that Ethiopia holds the first place for the largest number of international students here on campus, and 12 of them are part of our Honors program.

- Editor's notes.

NCUR Presenters

Lelti Asgedom, Liberty Hombe (URS and NCUR presenter)

Using Deep Learning in Detecting Breast Cancer in Ultrasound Images, Computer Science

Ryuto Hashimoto (co-presenter) (URS and NCUR presenter)

Impact of Two Courses Critical Race Theory and Human Relations in a Multicultural Society on Intercultural Competency of Undergraduate Students.

Morgan Rud

Evaluating Platinum-based Compounds in Glioblastoma Cells. Biochemistry

Dessie Yeabsira (URS and NCUR presenter)

Interrelationship between Retinoic Acid, Leptin, and Norepinephrine Signaling in Brown Adipose Tissue,

Liberty Hombe (co-presenter) (URS and NCUR presenter)

Quantitation and Characterization of Bacteria Present in Dental Clinic Water Systems, Biology

James Ziegeweid

An examination of discursive violence against the victims of gun violence and their families and how they have taken back power. Communications

URS Presenters

John Shrestha

"Car Vs Bus: Should you drive to campus or take a college bus?" and "How can we make MNSU a greener campus? Current and Future approaches."

Eden Gebremariam

Calmodulinopathies and oxidation affects in cardiac calcium regulation

Marius Vold

Using Optically Stimulated Luminescence to Date Grave Mounds at the Kiwanis Site

Hannah Turnipseed

Effect of Disinfectants on Biofilm Formation by Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

Muna Awel

Myosin Oxidation and Effects on Magnesium and Actin Binding

Molly Hill

Filtration Capacity of Sand and GAC for Phosphate Removal

URS Presenters



Makenzie Reed

Who needs an energy boost? Do differences in energetic requirement to perform a tail-flip jump cause differences in muscle composition?

Rachel VanKeulen

Proteoglycan targeting drugs decrease growth of glioblastoma tumors

Meaghan Keohane

Understanding How Notum and Heparanase Promote Glypican-3 Shedding in Hepatocellular Carcinoma.

Ainslee Hemmen

Seeing the Effects: Developmental Thyroid Disruption and Photoreceptors

Samantha Sunnarborg

Implementation of a high dose rate irradiator for living samples using 400keV electrons.

Kennedee Weber

MYC Proto-Oncogene Inhibition by AZD4573 Targeting Cyclin-Dependent Kinase 9 in Diffuse Large B-cell Lymphoma Cell Lines Represents a Superior Targeted Option to Venetoclax

Marissa Sullivan

Virtual International Learning: Exploring Healthcare Similarities and Differences

Deepshikha Sanjel

Modeling and Forecasting Renewable Energy

Jessica Wimp

Seeing the Effects: Developmental Thyroid Disruption and Photoreceptors

McKay Gray

A Brief Zoom-Facilitated Mindful and Intuitive Eating Intervention to Decrease Disordered Eating

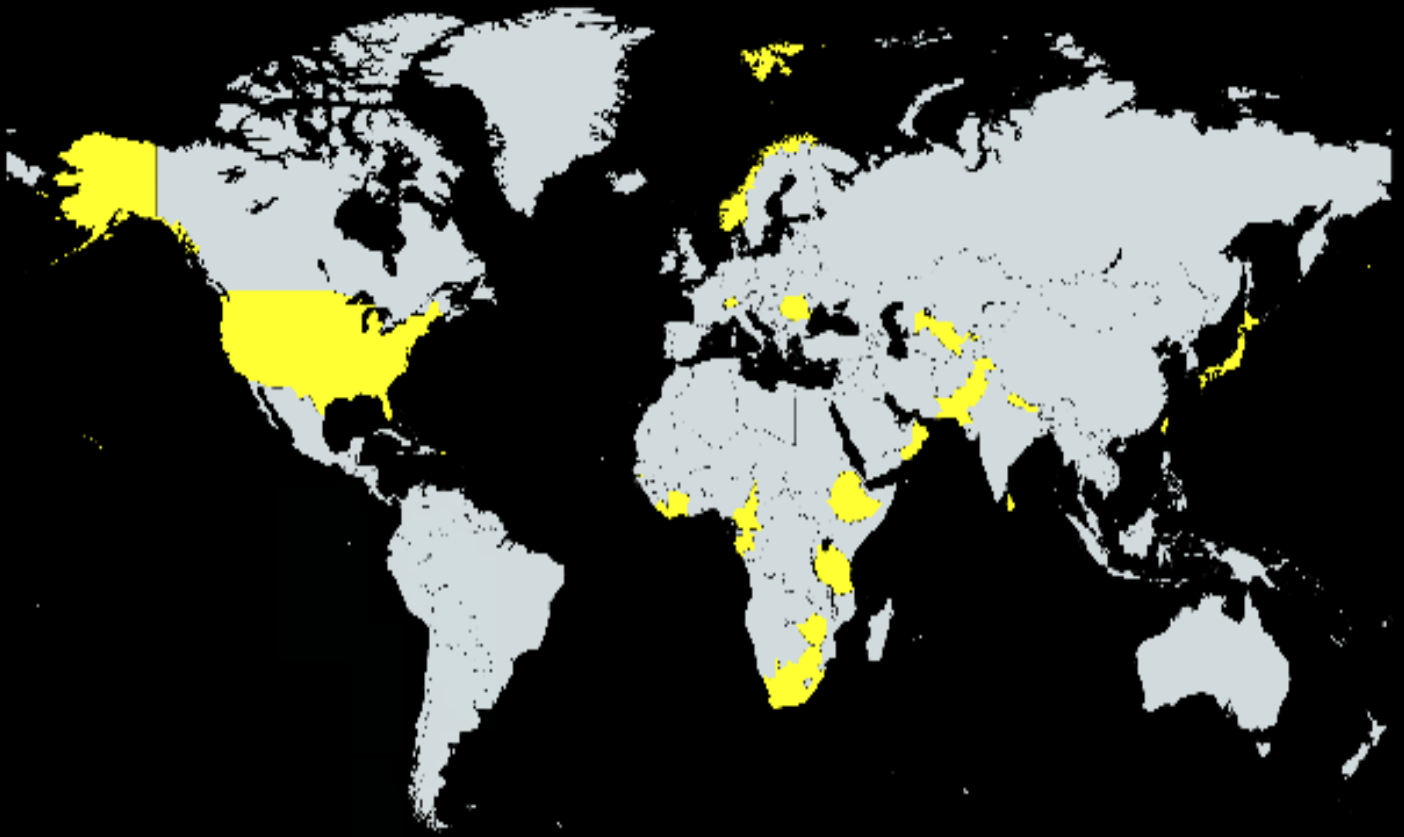
Vanessa Kotek

Physical Therapy Use Among Collegiate Dancers

Katie Ebeling

Presence of African American English in Narrative Language Sample

Posters of presentations
are available at- [http://
link.mnsu.edu/2022urs](http://link.mnsu.edu/2022urs)



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